

The “Avicennian Pandemic” in Context: Insights into the Spread of Avicenna’s Logic across the Islamicate World

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*We disavow, in regard to God, a group of people stricken
with disease by the Book of Healing (Kitāb al-Shifā’).
How often I said to them: “O people, you are
on the edge of an abyss from which there is no healing (shifā’)!”
As they were making light of our teaching,
we came back to God. He suffices us.
They died in the religion of Aristotle
and we lived according to the Sunna of the Elected.¹*

With these polemic verses, allegedly borrowed from the Sufi Abū Saīd ibn Abī l-Khayr (d. 440/1049), the Muslim Ash‘arī theologian Abū Naṣr al-Qushayrī (d. 514/1120) intended to stigmatize the ever-increasing spread of Aristotelian philosophy in his day.² By the viith/xiith century, Aristotelian philosophy was in fact increasingly insinuating itself in the study curricula of educational institutions in the Islamicate world. In al-Qushayrī’s invective, the much-lamented diffusion of Aristotelian philosophy is associated with the spread of the “Book of Healing” (*Kitāb al-Shifā’*), the largest and most comprehensive encyclopaedia of Aristotelian philosophy ever written in Arabic, composed by Ibn Sīnā (d. 427/1037), the renowned philosopher of Persian origins, best known in the West as Avicenna. The spread of Aristotelian philosophy conveyed in Avicenna’s *Book of Healing* is compared in the verses above to a plague, and those who devote themselves to its study are regarded as being *stricken by a disease* from which there is no *healing (shifā’)*—evident wordplay on the title of Avicenna’s summa. At the time, Muslim theologians compared the unprecedented and unparalleled diffusion of Avicenna’s philosophy to the spread of a

¹ Michot, *An Important Reader* 158.

² Michot, *An Important Reader* 157-8.

disease—in their eyes this was an ‘Avicennian pandemic’ (“pandémie avicennienne”), to borrow an expression coined by Yahya Michot.³

According to a view that was fairly well established in scholarship until the 1990s, one discipline that theologians looked at with concern is logic, which had made its entrance into the institution *par excellence* responsible for higher-level education in Islamic juridical matters, namely the *madrasa*. The emergence of polemics and bans against the teaching of Aristotelian logic as early as the VIIth/XIIth century has led part of the scholarship to claim that philosophy and logic were altogether excluded from the *madrasa* curricula. According to this hypothesis, the *madrasa* mainly functioned as a juridical institution of learning, where the teaching of non-juridical disciplines was prohibited.⁴ Recent research, however, has gathered sufficient evidence to the contrary.⁵ The very existence of invectives against the spread of Avicennian Aristotelian logic may prove, in fact, that by the end of the VIIth/XIIth century Avicennian logic and philosophy were widely studied in the *madrasa* tradition; from then forward, logic remained a fundamental part of *madrasa* education in all centers of Islamic learning until the beginning of the XIIIth/XIXth century. Nevertheless, it still remains extremely difficult to determine precisely, from a diachronic and transnational perspective, how and in which contexts these texts were concretely transmitted, read, and studied across the Islamicate world.

This chapter aims to address the issue of the diffusion of Avicennian logic from a new standpoint, analysing a source of information that has remained almost unexplored so far, namely the substantial manuscript tradition of the Logic section (*jumlat al-mantiq*) of Avicenna’s *Shifā’*. Some preliminary steps towards a systematic study of these manuscripts have been taken within the PHIBOR project,⁶ in close collaboration with the PHIC-PHASIF project, directed and coordinated by Maroun Aouad.⁷ The survey of extant manuscript witnesses of the Metaphysics of the *Shifā’* has greatly benefitted from the seminal fieldwork conducted within the PHIC-PHASIF project in the libraries’ funds. The joint work carried out within the two projects has also marked a substantial advancement in our knowledge of extant manuscripts of the Logic

³ Michot, *La pandémie avicennienne* 287-344.

⁴ Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges*; Makdisi, *The Rise of Humanism* 67-70.

⁵ Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice* 83-7; Street, *Arabic Logic* 524; Endress, *Reading Avicenna in the Madrasa*; Brentjes, *Teaching and Learning* 255-62; Al-Rahim, *The Creation of Philosophical Tradition* 28-31; El-Rouayheb, *Logic in the Arabic and Islamic World* 690-1; El-Rouayheb, *The Development of Arabic Logic* 15-20; Griffel, *The Formation of Post-Classical Philosophy* 27-32.

⁶ See the project website: <http://project.avicennaproject.eu/>.

⁷ See the project website: <https://www.phasif.fr/>.

of the *Shifā'* with respect to the pioneering contribution of existent Avicennian bibliographies.⁸ On this new basis, it was also possible to conduct the first systematic investigation of the manuscript tradition of the opening work of the Logic section, the *Kitāb al-Madkhal*.⁹

In this chapter, we intend to broaden our scope of knowledge by proposing the preliminary results of our research on the manuscript tradition of the entire section of Logic. The underpinning assumption of this contribution is that the analysis of the manuscript tradition of Avicenna's works may contribute to solve part of the research questions on the reception of philosophy in the post-Avicennian period that remain unanswered. For example, we are currently unable to determine precisely, from a diachronic and transnational perspective, how the study of Avicenna's works has been integrated into the higher education system of different areas in the Islamicate world. This is partly due to the fact that school curricula in the Islamicate regions have long been, in many areas, unstandardized, and the texts on which teaching programs focused could vary widely; additionally, documents listing the texts studied in various schools are scarce. Moreover, education has not been exclusively entrusted to institutionalized learning environments: personal study with a teacher, for example, or association with intellectual circles played a non-minor role in the transmission of knowledge in Islamicate contexts.

Other sources of information available to us—and on which most historical reconstructions of the post-Avicennian scientific and philosophical tradition are currently based—are prosopographical accounts, such as the biographies of philosophers and the chains of authorities. These sources tend to form a narrative of the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next based on the master-pupil tradition. Contemporary scholarly literature has already highlighted the risks of answering research questions concerning the reception of Avicennian philosophy by relying solely on prosopographical sources. Two major problems arise: first, the information we draw from them regarding the Avicennian philosophical tradition is relatively scarce; secondly, it is not entirely reliable, as it tends to sacrifice historical reality in order to construct a narrative on the transmission of ideas as the result of a series of encounters between great minds and famous intellectuals.¹⁰

⁸ In chronological order: Ergin, *İbni Sina Bibliografyası* 22; Anawati, *Essai de bibliographie* 29-79; Mahdavi, *Fihrist* 125-74; Ergin, *İbn-i Sina Bibliografyası* 32-3; Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* 420-2.

⁹ Published in Di Vincenzo, *Avicenna, >The Healing, Logic: Isagoge<* lxix-xciii.

¹⁰ See Al-Rahim, *The Creation of Philosophical Tradition* 9-28; Endress, *Reading Avicenna in the Madrasa* 410-5; Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Islamic Reception* 193-9.

In this state of affairs, the methods of ‘material philology’ applied to the analysis of the manuscript tradition of Avicenna’s major works may come to the aid and provide a wealth of new data otherwise unavailable with which the reliability of prosopographical accounts may be verified. The expression ‘material philology’— first employed by Stephen Nichols in 1997¹¹—refers to the branch of philological studies which focuses more on the material characteristics of written artefacts than on their transmitted text. The purpose of this type of study is to investigate the transmission of texts in different and changing socio-cultural contexts through the analysis of material evidence (such as the physical characteristics of the artefacts, marginalia, ownership notes, scribal signatures, etc.).

Far from representing the final and definitive stage of such an investigation, this chapter aims to lay the groundwork for future systematic research of this kind in the field of Avicennian studies. In this study, we will take a bird’s eye view of the manuscript tradition of the Logic section of the *Shifā’*, according to the data acquired as part of ongoing research. For this purpose, we will deal with two types of data: (1) general contextual data, concerning the extant manuscripts’ current geographical distribution (1.1) and their content (1.2); (2) historical data obtained from the paratextual elements of the manuscripts—such as the date and location of copying, copyists, owners, etc.— in order to provide a preliminary reconstruction of the periods (2.1) and the scholastic and intellectual contexts (2.2) in which Avicenna’s work was copied and studied. This will hopefully contribute to offer a wide-ranging, albeit provisional, overview of the diffusion of the Logic of the *Shifā’* from a diachronic and transnational perspective.

1. Overview of the Manuscript Tradition of the Logic of Avicenna’s *Shifā’*

1.1. Geographical Distribution

According to the preliminary results of the survey presented here, the manuscript tradition of the Logic section of the *Shifā’* counts at least 207 witnesses¹². As we will see in more detail in section 2.1, these copies were produced over a period of about nine centuries—from the VIth/XIth to the XIVth/XXth century—

¹¹ Nichols, *Why Material Philology?*. The discipline is also known as ‘New Philology’, as it was first named by Nichols in 1990 (Nichols, Introduction).

¹² Listed in the appendix of this chapter.

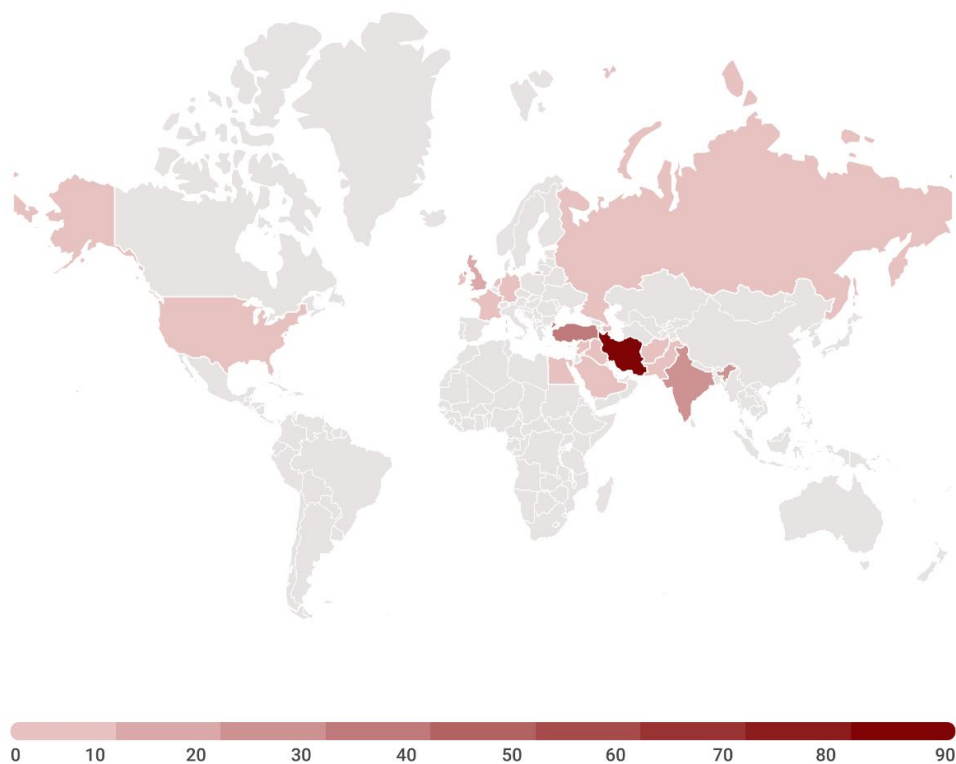


Figure 19.1: Places of preservation of the manuscripts of the Logic section

and were disseminated throughout areas under Islamic influence, from al-Andalus to India. Figure 19.1 shows the current global distribution and concentration of the 207 manuscript witnesses. Although the manuscripts of which we are aware are currently scattered across the most diverse areas of the world, most of them appear to be concentrated in libraries in Iran (97 manuscripts, 46.9%), Turkey (34 mss, 16.4%), and India (27 mss, 13%).

While most of the manuscripts of the *Shifā'* known to us are now preserved in public libraries, we estimate that a significant number of them are currently part of private collections, especially in Iran. The difficulty of ascertaining the contents of these private collections, to which we have had very limited access so far, is one of the limitations of our investigation. An additional difficulty that must be taken into account in the present investigation is that of keeping track of the exemplars sold at auction; for the Logic section of the *Shifā'*, in particular, we are acquainted with at least one manuscript advertised for sale by Sotheby's (see Appendix, n^o 207).¹³ Given these variables, the total number of manuscripts and our knowledge of their geographical distribution are expected to vary significantly as research progresses.

¹³ The manuscript is an elegant exemplar penned by Aḥmad Ibn 'Alī al-Shīrāzī in Jumādā I 897/March-April 1492.

1.2. Content

The manuscripts that preserve the different sections of the *Shifā'* come in various formats and with varying content: they may either contain the entire summa—in a single volume or fragmented into several separate volumes—or, very frequently, single parts of it, occasionally associated with each other according to criteria of thematic contiguity that do not necessarily abide by Avicenna's original arrangement of the work.¹⁴ The manuscripts that preserve the Logic section of the summa are no exception in this regard; as shown in Figure 19.2, most of the manuscript tradition known to date is represented by witnesses that contain exclusively the Logic section, although there are also numerous complete copies of the summa. Combinations with one or two other sections of the summa are less frequent; so far, we have recorded manuscripts containing Logic and Natural Philosophy (probably half of an entire summa),¹⁵ Logic with Natural Philosophy and Metaphysics (an entire summa with the exclusion of Mathematics),¹⁶ and Logic and Metaphysics.¹⁷ Notably, combinations with Mathematics and Metaphysics (an entire summa with the exclusion of Natural Philosophy) and with Mathematics alone are much rarer.¹⁸ The

¹⁴ For a classification of the different formats, see Bertolacci, Avicenna's *Kitāb Al-Shifā'* 280.

¹⁵ This is the case, for instance, with MSS Hyderabad, Salar Jung Museum Library, 76 (Appendix, n° 19) and Isfahan, Mahdavi, Muşlih al-Dīn 85 (Appendix, n° 43).

¹⁶ Namely, MSS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub wa-l-Wathā'iq al-Qawmiyya 262 *ḥikma wa-falsafa* (see Appendix, n° 4); Rampur, Rampur Raza Library 3476 *ʿayn* (Appendix, n° 32); 3478 *ʿayn* (Appendix, n° 34); Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Arabic 3983 (Appendix, n° 140); Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Or. 4 (Appendix, n° 146); Damascus, Maktabat al-Asad al-Waṭaniyya, 7905 (Appendix, n° 153); Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 894 (Appendix, n° 157); Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hamidiye 795 (Appendix, n° 172); Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa 1748 (Appendix, n° 179); Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Ahmed III 3262 (Appendix, n° 186); London, British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, Or. 7500 (Appendix, n° 191).

¹⁷ Namely, MSS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 6829 (Appendix, n° 11); Tehran, Kitābkhānah-i Milli Jumhūri-yi Islāmi-yi Iran 7590/1 (Appendix, n° 129); Najaf, Maktabat al-Imām Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 1096 (Appendix, n° 139); Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah 1425 (Appendix, n° 167). A number of manuscripts combine the Metaphysics section with a specific part of the Logic section, namely the *Kitāb al-Burhān* (the fifth work); they are MSS Tehran, Kitābkhānah-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, 10198 (Appendix, n° 96); Tehran, Kitābkhānah-i Markazī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihārān, 238 (Appendix, n° 104); Zanjan, Imām Jum'a Private Collection, 171 (Appendix, n° 136); Ankara, Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Kütüphanesi, 36910¹¹ (Appendix, n° 154).

¹⁸ Manuscripts combining Logic with Mathematics and Metaphysics are MSS Austin, Ḥāfiz Farmānfarīmā'iyān Private Collection, no number (Appendix, n° 204) and London, British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, Jones 114 (Appendix, n° 192). The only manuscript to preserve the Logic section and (part of) the Mathematics section is, to our knowledge, MS Tehran, Kitābkhānah-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, 1893 (Appendix, n° 89).

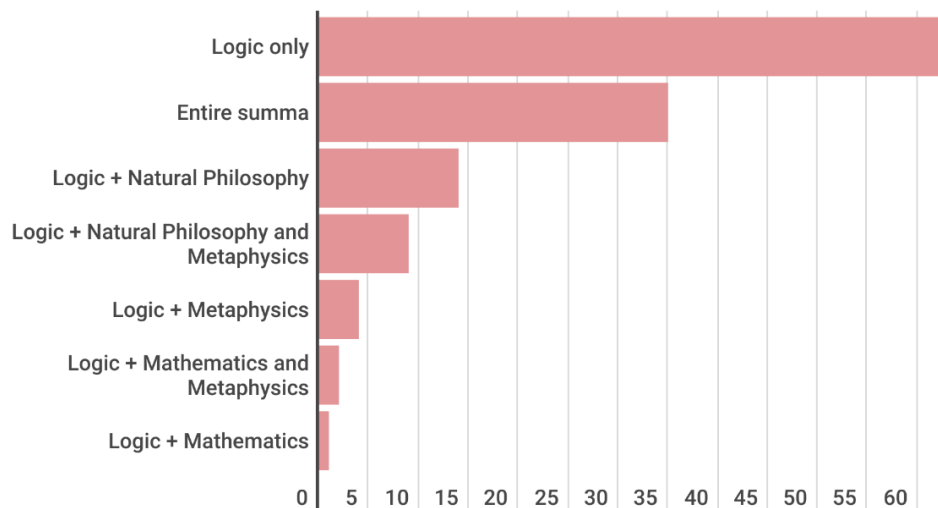


Figure 19.1: Content of the Logic of the *Shifā'* manuscripts

reasons why the Logic section is preferentially transmitted along with some sections and not others are still not fully understood; this can reasonably be expected to depend on the contexts in which the work was received and studied, but further research is needed to clarify the issue.

By analyzing the contents of the manuscripts that are currently extant in greater detail, it is also possible to get an idea of which of the logical works of the *Shifā'* were most widely read and disseminated and which, on the other hand, were less widely distributed. As is evident from Figure 19.3, the most widely read logical work of the *Shifā'* belongs unquestionably to the *Kitāb al-Burhān* (which corresponds to Avicenna's reworking of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*), which counts 149 complete and 4 partial extant copies. Moreover, the *Burhān* appears to mark a watershed between the first half of the Logic section—devoted to Avicenna's reworkings of Porphyry's *Eisagoge*, Aristotle's *Categories*, *De interpretatione*, and *Prior Analytics*—which has been transmitted in quite a homogeneous manner, and the second—devoted to Avicenna's reworkings of the *Topics*, the *Sophistical Refutations*, the *Rhetoric*, and the *Poetics*—which appears to have been significantly less widespread than the first half. It is difficult to attribute this state of affairs merely to accidents of transmission; rather, it is likely to reflect a greater interest on the part of Arabic-speaking intellectuals in the first half of the section on Aristotelian logic, *i.e.* that considered propaedeutic to the theory of demonstration. In closer detail, the massive

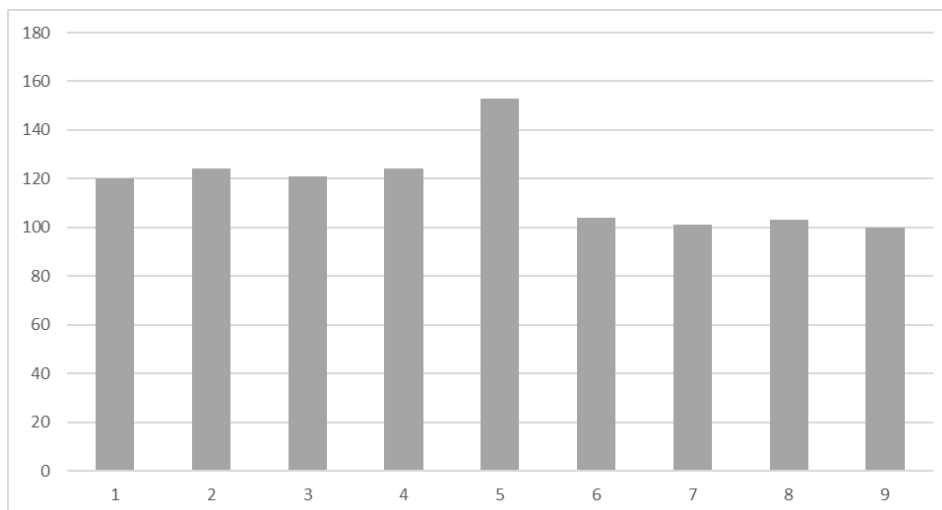


Figure 19. 2: Number of extant manuscripts for each work of the Logic section

Legend:

1. *Kitāb al-Madkhal* (corresponding to Porphyry's *Eisagoge*)
2. *Kitāb al-Maqūlāt* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Categories*)
3. *Kitāb al-'Ibāra* (corresponding to Aristotle's *De interpretatione*)
4. *Kitāb al-Qiyās* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*)
5. *Kitāb al-Burhān* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*)
6. *Kitāb al-Jadal* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Topics*)
7. *Kitāb al-Safsaḥa* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations*)
8. *Kitāb al-Khiṭāba* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*)
9. *Kitāb al-Shi'r* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Poetics*)

transmission of the *Burhān* may be read in light of the keen interest in the theory of demonstration in the Safavid era,¹⁹ during which a surge in the production of copies of the *Shifā'* was also recorded, as we shall see in what follows.

The greater prevalence of the first half of the Logic section of the *Shifā'* with respect to the second might actually be in line with the way logic was conceived, studied, and taught in the post-Avicennian tradition. As early as the VIth/XIth century, the study of logic in the Arabic-speaking world shows a tendency to classify logical matters into topics pertaining to the domain of conception (*taṣawwur*) and topics pertaining to that of assertion (*taṣdīq*). An example is given by the structure of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 606/1210) *Mulakhkhaṣ*, a compendium of philosophy whose section on logic encompasses a first part on the acquisition of concepts—dealing, therefore, with universal terms, definitions and descriptions, which are in themselves neither true nor false and are not, therefore, the object of assertion, and a second part on assertion—dealing

¹⁹ See El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History* 69-70.

with the different types of propositions that are the object of both conception and assertion, as they are subject to truth or falsity, as well as with syllogisms, to conclude with demonstration.²⁰ A similar structure and selection of topics is also evident in other highly influential thirteenth-century logical textbooks, such as al-Kātibī al-Qazwīnī's (d. 675/1276) *al-Risāla l-shamsiyya* and Sirāj al-Dīn al-Urmawī's (d. 682/1283) *Maṭāli' al-anwār*.²¹ In this arrangement of logical matters, little or no space is devoted to the topics covered in the second half of the Logic of the *Shifā'*, which appear, therefore, of secondary interest for the study of logic. One plausible reason to explain this phenomenon is that the topics covered in Aristotle's *Topics*, *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics* (namely, those that are reworked in the second half of the Logic section of the *Shifā'*) ended up being regarded as somewhat extrinsic to logic. Dialectics and rhetoric (called, respectively, *ādāb al-baḥth* and *ma'ānī wa-bayān*) were indeed cultivated in the *madrāsas*, but as disciplines in their own right. In this form, the two disciplines were related—but absolutely not reducible—to Aristotelian logic. It seems legitimate to speculate that the prevailing interest in these two independent scholarly disciplines, especially in the Ottoman period, may have partially interfered with the transmission and study of the corresponding works of Aristotelian inspiration.²²

2. Avicenna's Logic in Context

The contribution of the analysis of manuscript sources to the study of the reception of Avicenna's philosophy has proven to be more and more fundamental as research proceeds. The methods of material philology applied to the manuscript tradition of the Logic section of Avicenna's *Shifā'* can be expected to increasingly contribute to framing the historical and geographical context in which the Logic section was copied and transmitted through the analysis of paratextual elements. In this part of the chapter, we will complement the data available in the catalogs with the data collected through the analysis of the manuscripts. So far, we have only been able to examine a fraction of the 207 manuscripts of the Logic that we are aware of—123, *i.e.* approximately around 60%. The information on which we will rely in this section is therefore necessarily partial; nevertheless, it is sufficient to provide a preliminary overview of the diffusion of Avicenna's Logic. The following subsection offers a preliminary look at the chronological distribution of the manuscripts we

²⁰ See El-Rouayheb, *The Development of Arabic Logic* 40-1.

²¹ See El-Rouayheb, *The Development of Arabic Logic* 57-9 and 61-3.

²² See El-Rouayheb, *The Development of Arabic Logic* 16; El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History* 60-96.

currently have knowledge of (2.1) and a tentative historical reconstruction of the cultural contexts and schools in which the Logic section was copied and studied (2.2).

2.1. Chronological distribution

Figure 19.4 provides a schematic representation of the chronological distribution of copies of the Logic of the *Shifā'* of which we are currently aware. The data represented in the graph are based either on the dates preserved in the colophons of the manuscripts (when present), or on conjectural dating based on the material characteristics of the artefact (in the absence of explicit indications of the date of copying). In the chronological distribution of the manuscript copies of the Logic section displayed in Figure 19.4, we observe a trend similar to that observed for the *Kitāb al-Madkhal*,²³ as well as for the section on Metaphysics.²⁴

The first two points that stand out are the lowest and highest peak reached by the production of manuscript copies, respectively in the VIIIth/XIVth and in the XIth/XVIIth centuries. With reasonable certainty, the decrease and the increase in the manuscript production observed in Figure 19.4 can also be interpreted as characterizing the reception of the text of other sections of the *Shifā'*, although a systematic investigation of the sections on Natural Philosophy and Mathematics is still lacking. While the sudden increase in the production of copies of the Logic of *Shifā'* in the XIth/XVIIth century can be tentatively explained within the broader framework of the climate of general cultural renaissance promoted by the Safavid rulers, the causes of the drastic decline in the manuscript production in the VIIIth/XIVth century remain instead less evident. The VIIIth/XIIIth century had witnessed some important political upheavals that involved centers that played, at the time, a leading role in book production. Among these events, it is worth mentioning the takeover of Baghdād by the Mongols in 656/1258,²⁵ which had such a destructive impact on book heritage that it was to be remembered for centuries to come. The Ottoman diplomat İbrahim Müteferrika (d. 1745 CE), in his essay *Vesiletü't Tiba'a* (The utility of printing) offered to the vizier Damad İbrahim Paşa, argued in favor of the adoption of the printing press, claiming that printing could be a means

²³ Di Vincenzo, *Avicenna, >The Healing, Logic: Isagoge<* lxxii-lxxiv.

²⁴ Bertolacci, *Avicenna's Kitāb Al-Shifā'* 273-4 and Bertolacci and Dadkhah, *The Metaphysics of the Shifā'* 21-2.

²⁵ See Bertolacci, *Avicenna's Kitāb Al-Shifā'* 273-4.

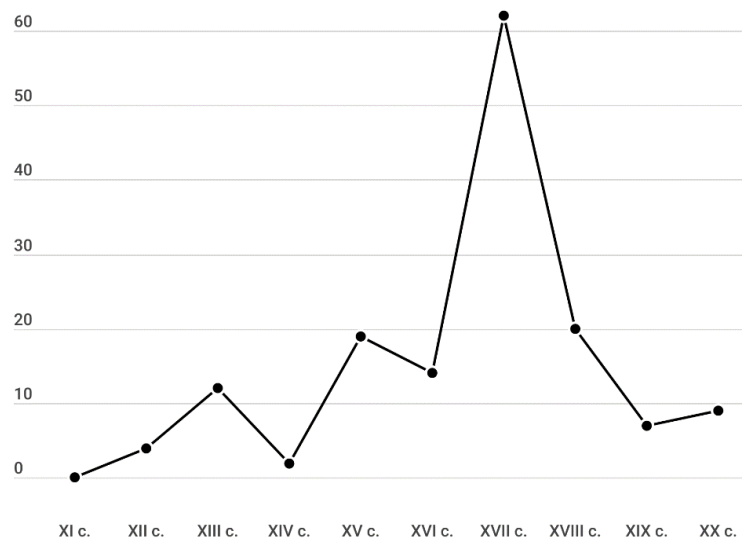


Figure 19.3: Chronological distribution of the manuscripts

of preventing the loss of rare texts due to the destruction or deterioration of manuscripts; here, he recalled the many titles that were destroyed in the course of the Mongol invasions during the VIIth/XIIIth century.²⁶

In addition to these plausible historical reasons, it may be hypothesized that the decline in the production of copies of the *Shifā'* recorded in the VIIIth/XIVth century might reflect a change in the study curricula of the time. It may be tentatively argued that the study of compendia and handbooks of logic and philosophy of Avicennian inspiration composed between the VIIth/XIIIth and the VIIIth/XIVth century—such as Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī's (d. 663/1265 CE) *Īsāghūjī fī l-mantiq*, al-Kātibī al-Qazwīnī's *al-Risāla l-shamsiyya*, Sirāj al-Dīn al-Urmawī's *Maṭāli' al-anwār*, and Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī's (d. 792H/1390) *Tahdhīb al-mantiq*—initially prevailed over the direct reading of Avicenna's text in the *madrassa* context, consequently leading to a reduction in the circulation of manuscript copies.²⁷ The neglect of the study of Avicenna's work in favor of the handbooks was not, however, definitive: according to the data displayed in Figure 19.4, as early as the IXth/XVth century we witness a gradual resumption of the circulation of manuscript copies of the *Shifā'*—a sign that the demand for copies of the text had again increased. This trend culminated in the XIth/XVIIth century, in the cultural setting of Safavid Iran, in which a rising number of intellectuals advocated a return to the study of the classical texts of philosophy, including Avicenna's *Shifā'*.²⁸ The manuscript circulation of the *Shifā'* appears to

²⁶ Erginbaş, *Enlightenment in the Ottoman Context* 67.

²⁷ See also El-Rouayheb, *The Development of Arabic Logic* 29-31.

²⁸ El-Rouayheb, *The Development of Arabic Logic* 145-6.

have suffered another setback in the XIIIth/XIXth century; it is difficult to give a straightforward explanation for this phenomenon, for which both cultural and technical factors may have combined to play a role. Among the cultural factors, the growing influence of Western philosophy in the areas of the Ottoman Empire and the rising impact of Western-style education may also have resulted, in some contexts, in a reduced dissemination of the traditional works of *falsafa*. An important technical factor that may have played an equally important role, however, is the gradual emergence of printing techniques in the Islamic world: it is no coincidence, we believe, that the decline in the circulation of the manuscript copies of the *Shifā'* follows the publication of the Tehran lithograph in 1303-5/1885-7. Since the latter only contained the sections on Natural Philosophy and Metaphysics of the *Shifā'*, the Logic section continued to be manually copied throughout the XIVth/XXth century, at least until the Cairo edition of the entire summa appeared.²⁹ At present, we know of at least four dated manuscripts of the Logic section of the *Shifā'* from the first half of the XIVth/XXth century, namely MSS Tehran, Kitābkhānah-i Millī Jumhūri-yi Islāmi-yi Iran, 20266 (dat. 1318/1900-1) (Appendix, n° 130); Cairo, Dār al-Kutub wa-l-Wathā'iq al-Qawmiyya, 262 *ḥikma wa-falsafa* (dat. Saturday 23 Muḥarram 1337/29 October 1918) (Appendix, n° 4); Mashhad, Jāmi'ī-i Gawharshād Library, 0000/1 (dat. Ṣafar 1337/November-December 1918) (Appendix, n° 49); and Tehran, Kitābkhānah-i Millī Jumhūri-yi Islāmi-yi Iran, 1801 (dat. 1343/1924-5) (Appendix, n° 127). In addition to these dated manuscripts, there are at least six others that do not present any date of copying but can be conjecturally dated to the XIVth/XXth century, that is, MSS Qum, Ma'ṣūmiyya, 655 (Appendix, n° 74); Tehran, Kitābkhānah-i Markazī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihirān, 593/1, 593/2 and 593/3 (Appendix, n° 108-10), a Logic in three volumes owned by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Fāḍil-i Ṭūnī (d. 1339 sh/1961), professor at the Faculty of Letters of Tehran University; Tehran, Kitābkhānah-i Markazī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihirān, 2288 (Appendix, n° 113); and Mashhad, Jāmi'ī-i Gawharshād Library, 2175 (Appendix, n° 50).

2.2. Centers of Copying and Intellectuals Involved

The colophons of the manuscripts we have inspected so far have provided a fair amount of data regarding the places where the text was copied—both in terms

²⁹ The nine volumes composing the Logic section were published in Cairo between 1952 and 1970; in chronological order: Ibn Sīnā, *Madkhal* (1952); Ibn Sīnā, *Khīṭāba* (1954); Ibn Sīnā, *Burhān* (1956); Ibn Sīnā, *Safsaṭa* (1958); Ibn Sīnā, *Maqūlāt* (1959); Ibn Sīnā, *Qiyās* (1964); Ibn Sīnā, *Jadal* (1965); Ibn Sīnā, *Shi'r* (1966); Ibn Sīnā, *Tbāra* (1970).



Figure 19.4: Places of copying mentioned in the colophons © ArcGIS

of geographic locations and the institutions involved—and the individuals responsible for the production of the copies—namely, copyists and patrons. So far, we are aware of at least 19 mentions of cities and regions as well as 6 mentions of schools in which copies of the *Shifā'* were produced and studied over nine centuries. The locations that we have been able to identify of where copies were made are marked with black dots in the map in Figure 19.5.

As evidenced by the distribution of the places of copying on the map, the production of copies of the *Shifā'* was particularly common throughout territories under Islamic influence, from present-day Turkey to the territories of the Mughal Empire and the Deccan sultanates, in present-day India.

In addition to geographical indications regarding regions and cities, it is not uncommon to also obtain, from some of the manuscripts, information on the schools in which the *Shifā'* was copied and studied. So far, we have collected information on at least six schools mentioned in the colophons of the manuscripts of the Logic section.

1. **Tabrīz, Madrasat Ūrkhān** (where MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Damad İbrahim Paşa 823—a complete copy of the *Shifā'*—was copied in 697/1297-8 by Shihāb al-Karmīnī).

This *madrasa* is mentioned by the medieval librarian and historian Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Razzāq Ibn Aḥmad Ibn al-Fuwaṭī (d. 723/1323).³⁰ The copyist who worked in this *madrasa*, named Shihāb al-Karmīnī, may be

³⁰ *Majma' al-Ādāb* iii, 433.

identified with the Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad known as (*al-mulaqqab*) Shihāb al-Karminī who penned in 699/1299-1300 a work of Ḥanafī jurisprudence preserved in MS Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, 1653. In all likelihood, the study of philosophical texts proceeded in parallel with that of legal works in the *madrasa*.

2. **Shīrāz, Madrasat Dār al-Aytām** (where MS Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, 2709—a complete copy of the *Shifāʾ*—was copied by several scribes between 886/1481 and 897/1491-2).

As the colophon states, the Logic section, at least, was copied in this *madrasa*, also known as Madrasa-yi Begum, where Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 908/1502-3) took up the post of *mudarris* after moving to Shīrāz.³¹ The Logic section was copied by Ibn Muḥammad Zāhid al-Ḥijāzī al-Ḥanafī on 17 Jumādā al-Thānī 886/13 August 1481.

3. **Işfahān, Madrasat Mīrzā Riḍā** (where MS Işfahān, Mahdavī, Muşlih al-Dīn 85 was copied in Ramaḍān 1008/March-April 1600 by Muḥammad Riḍā Qumī; the manuscript contains the fifth *fann* of the Logic section and part of Natural Philosophy).

4. **Işfahān, Madrasa of Masjid Sulṭānī** (where MS Qum, Kitābkhānah-i Marʿashī, 8145 was copied between 1081 and 8 Shaʿbān 1095/1670-21 July 1684 by Muḥammad ʿAlī and Muḥammad Şufī Ardabīlī).

This *madrasa* must have been associated with the present-day Imam Mosque of Işfahān (historically known also as Shah Mosque and Soltani Mosque), originally built by Shah ʿAbbās I. Allegedly, the copy of MS Qum, Kitābkhānah-i Marʿashī, 8145 was requested by Ismaʿīl Ḥusaynī, who was at the time *mudarris* (‘professor’) in the *madrasa*.

5. **Istanbul, Madrasat Abū Ayyūb al-Anşārī** (where MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ragıp Paşa 909—a copy of the Logic section of the *Shifāʾ*—was produced on 29 Jumādā II 1134/16 April 1722).

The *madrasa* was arguably part of the mosque complex (*küllīye*) originally built by the Ottoman Turks in 1458, which corresponds to the present-day Eyüp Sultan Mosque, in the Eyüp district of Istanbul. MS Ragıp Paşa 909 was copied within the *madrasa* by Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Uskūbī, as requested by his professor, Asʿad b. ʿAlī b. ʿUthmān al-Yanyawī (Yanyalı Esad Efendi, d. 1144/1732).³² Another manuscript of the Logic

³¹ Newman, Davānī; Aminrazavi and Nasr, *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia* v, 36-38; Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran* 9.

³² On his life and work, see Aslan, Asʿad Afandi of Yanya; Şahin, *Türk Mantıkçıları* 349-50; Kaya, *Some Findings*; Özervarlı, *Yanyalı Esad Efendi’s Works*; Küçük, *Natural Philosophy*; Genequand and Morel, *Al-*

section that may tentatively be traced back to the same school context is MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Atıf Efendi 1565 (copied before 29 Şafar 1135/9 December 1722 by several anonymous copyists, in all likelihood As‘ad al-Yānyawī’s students). Both manuscript witnesses preserve numerous school annotations in the margins that give us a glimpse into the intellectual life of the *madrassa* and the reception of Avicenna’s work in that environment.³³

6. **Tehrān, Madrasa Nāşiriyya** (where MS Tehran, Kitābkhānah-i Millī Jumhūri-yi Islāmi-yi Iran, 1801 was copied in 1343/1924-5 by Yad Allāh Kajūrī).

The copyist of this volume, which contains the Logic section of the *Shifā’*, is very likely Mīrzā Yad Allāh Kajūrī Naẓar Pāk active in the Madrasa Nāşiriyya, who also copied several other works of philosophical interest, including Naşīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī’s Persian treatise on logic *Asās al-iqtibās* in Rajab 1348/1929-30;³⁴ Avicenna’s *Aqsām al-nufūs wa-aḥwālūhā* and *Aḍḥawiyya* in 1349/1930-1;³⁵ Avicenna’s *Asbāb ḥudūth al-ḥurūf* in 1352/1933-4;³⁶ Averroes’ *Talkhīş al-Manṭiq* (up to the *Burhān* section) in 1353/1934-5.³⁷ The presence of a number of works on logic in the list would seem to denote a fervent interest in this subject within the *madrassa* in the first half of the XIVth/XXth century CE.

This type of information can be fruitfully combined with the names of at least 67 different copyists and 8 patrons who commissioned and sponsored the production of copies. As the research proceeds, we will be hopefully able to identify other clusters of philosophical activity in which Avicenna’s philosophical works have been studied, taught, and transmitted.

Looking at the data we derive from the manuscript tradition, it is possible to examine the early stages of circulation—the first three centuries before the first drastic decline in the production of handwritten copies of the *Shifā’*, from the Vth/XIth to the VIIIth/XIVth century. Table 19.1 lists the earliest dated manuscripts of the Logic section (manuscripts whose dating is conjecturally

Yānyawī’s Account of Porphyry; Di Vincenzo, Reading Avicenna’s *Kitāb Al-Shifā’* in the Ottoman World; Morel, As‘ad al-Yānyawī et la tradition philosophique arabo-islamique.

³³ On both manuscripts and the annotations preserved therein, see Di Vincenzo, Reading Avicenna’s *Kitāb Al-Shifā’* in the Ottoman World.

³⁴ DINA i, 708.

³⁵ DINA ii, 86 and i, 1138.

³⁶ DINA i, 716.

³⁷ DINA iii, 293.

reconstructed are not listed here). Part of the information reproduced in the table relates to manuscripts no longer available of which only later copies remain, which also reproduce the colophons and the data on the copy of their exemplars. This is the case with instances 1 to 4 and 16 in Table 19.1.

Table 19.1: Early (Vth/XIth to VIIth/XIIIth century) dated manuscripts of the Logic section (either preserved or attested)

	Dating	Copyist	Location	Patrons	Manuscript
1.	6 Dhū l-Ḥijja 468/17 July 1076 (date of copying of <i>Madkhal</i> , treatise I)	---	(Nīshāpūr?)	---	<i>Exemplar of MS Rampur, Raza Library 3477 'ayn</i>
2.	23 Rabī' I 469/31 October 1076 (date of copying of the Logic section)	---	(Nīshāpūr?)	---	<i>Exemplar of MS Kolkata, Asiatic Society of Bengal Library, Ar. 102</i>
3.	Dhū l-Ḥijja 468- 23 Rabī' I 469 /July 1076-31 October 1076 (dates of copying of the Logic section)	---	Nīshāpūr	---	<i>Exemplar of MS Kabul, Arshif-i Millī Afghānistān, 2295 (olim Private Library of King Zaher Shah, 4926)</i>
4.	Jumādā II 503 / January 1110	---	Baghdād	---	<i>Exemplar of MS Najaf, Maktabat al-Imām Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 1096</i>
5.	The first decade of Dhū l-Ḥijja 536/4-13 July 1142	Aḥmad ibn Hibat Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Kazzāya	(Baghdād?)	---	Tehran, Kitābkhānah-i Millī Malik, 4276
6.	576/1180-1	---	---	---	London, British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, Or. 113
7.	Early Rabī' II 599/December- January 1202	'Abdu l-Raḥīm ibn 'Alī b. Ḥāmid al-Ṭabīb (al- Dimashqī, <i>a.k.a.</i> al- Dakhwār)	(Damascus?)	For personal use	Damascus, Maktabat al- Asad al-Waṭaniyya, 3508
8.	10-20 Ramaḍān 601 -10-20 Rabī' II 603/8-18 May 1205-21 November- 1 December 1206	Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan	Ḥalab	---	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pococke, MSS 109-124 and Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih 3211 (the Logic section covers MSS from 119 to

9.	End of Sha'ban 628/June-July 1231	(āakhir)	---	(Baghdād?)	---	Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yeni Câmi 772
10.	25 Rabī I - 25 Shawwāl 666/21 December 1267- 15 July 1268	'Abd al-Kāfi ibn 'Abd al-Majīd ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Tabrīzī	---	(Marāgha, school of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī) ³⁸	---	Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, 2710
11.	671-4/1272-6	Amīn al-Dīn Māniyūl	---	Marāgha and Kharbart (<i>i.e.</i> Kharbūt, present-day Elazığ)	---	Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 2442
12.	10 Rabī I 677/ 8 August 1278	'Abd al-Raḥman, nicknamed (<i>al-mulaqqab</i>) Sayf al-Īshikhī (?)	---	Baghdād (Madīnat al-Salām)	---	Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Ahmed III 3261
13.	26 Rajab 678/ 9 December 1279	Yūsuf b. Ismā'īl ibn Abi l-Qāsim	---	---	---	Jerusalem, The National Library of Israel, Yahuda's Collection Ar. 288
14.	678/1279-80	---	---	---	---	Mosul, Maktabat al-Awqāf, 16
15.	680/1281-2	Muḥammad ibn 'Alī b. Ja'far al-Mālikī al-Baghdādī	---	---	---	Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Aşir Efendi 207
16.	21 Jumādā I 693/ 26 April 1294	---	---	---	---	<i>Exemplar of MS Varanasi, Jāmi'a Jawādiyya, 95</i>
17.	693/1293-4	Abū Bakr 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Nassākh al-Tabrīzī	---	(Marāgha or Tabrīz?)	---	Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah 1424
18.	697/1297-8	Shihāb al-Karmīnī (= Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad <i>a.k.a.</i> Shihāb al-Karmīnī)	---	Tabrīz, Madrasat Ūrkhān	---	Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Damad İbrahim Paşa 823

As can be inferred from Table 19.1, at least six centers involved in the circulation and study of the Logic of *Shifā'* in the early stages of the tradition stand out, namely Nīshāpūr, Marāgha, Tabrīz, Baghdād, Aleppo, and Damascus. In what follows, we will discuss more closely the evidence provided by the manuscript

³⁸ See Di Vincenzo, Early Exegetical Practice on Avicenna's *Shifā'*.

tradition about these places as contexts in which copies of the Logic were produced and studied.

2.2.1. Nīshāpūr (North-Eastern Iran, Khūrāsān)

The earliest attested manuscript of the Logic section of the *Shifā'* (Table 19.1, n° 1) might be a copy produced in Nīshāpūr (or Nīshābūr)—in present-day north-eastern Iran—in 468-9/1076-7, around 40 years after Avicenna's death. At the time, the city was one of the—if not *the*—most important political and intellectual centers in Khūrāsān. Ṭughrul Beg (d. 455/1063), the first ruler of the Seljuk dynasty, had made it his residence and capital of the Seljuk Empire in 429/1037.³⁹

Manuscripts n° 1-3 in Table 19.1 are all later copies that preserve the colophons of their models. The data that can be drawn from the colophons of their sections appear to be compatible with the hypothesis of their common derivation from a single copy produced in a period which, for the Logic section, ranges from Dhū l-Ḥijja 468/July 1076 to 23 Rabī' I 469/31 October 1076.⁴⁰ In more detail, MS Kabul, Arshīf-i Millī Afghānistān, 2295 (Table 19.1, n° 3) was apparently copied in the Xth/XVIth or XIth/XVIIth century and contains part of the Logic section (starting from the fourth treatise of the *Maqūlāt*), Natural Philosophy, and part of Mathematics (it lacks the final part of Music); this manuscript preserves the most complete information concerning the date and location of copying of its exemplar. At the end of almost every single treatise of every work of the Logic section, we find the precise date of copying, occasionally accompanied by additional information concerning the location where it was copied. The other two manuscripts, on the other hand, do not preserve all dates of copying of their exemplar: MS Kolkata, Asiatic Society of Bengal Library, Ar. 102 (Table 19.1, n° 2), a copy of the entire *Shifā'* which dates from the XIIth/XVIIIth century, preserves the final date of copying of the Logic section of its exemplar, *i.e.* 23 Rabī' I 469, as well as another date of copying within the section on Natural Philosophy reported according to the Persian calendar, *i.e.* 18 Dey māh; MS Rampur, Raza Library, 3477 'ayn (Table 19.1, n° 1) —which was apparently copied in the XIth/XVIIth century and contains the entire *Shifā'*—preserves the date of copying at the end of the first treatise of the *Madkhal*, *i.e.* 6 Dhū l-Ḥijja 468/17 July 1076, as well as four other dates of copying within the section on Natural Philosophy. Since the initial folia of MS Kabul 2295 are now lost, it is impossible

³⁹ On the relevance of Nīshāpūr in Khūrāsān, see also Griffel, *The Formation of Post-Classical Philosophy* 34-7.

⁴⁰ See Bertolacci, Avicenna's *Kitāb Al-Shifā'* 271.

to verify if the date of copying at the end of *Madkhal* I was the same as that preserved in MS Rampur 3477 ‘*ayn*; it should be observed, however, that the date is compatible with the date of copying preserved in MS Kabul 2295 in the colophon placed at the end of *Maqūlāt* IV, *i.e.* 17 Dhū l-Ḥijja 468/28 July 1076. Moreover, two of the four colophons that are found in the Rampur manuscript at the end of the treatises of the *Samā’ Ṭabī’ī* are identical with those preserved in the Kabul manuscript (see Table 19.2). As for MS Kolkata, Asiatic Society of Bengal Library, Ar. 102, the dates of copying preserved at the end of the Logic section and at the end of *al-Samā’ wa-l-‘ālam* within the Natural Philosophy section coincide with those preserved in the Kabul manuscript (see Table 19.2).

The Kabul manuscript is the only copy to preserve the mention of Nīshāpūr as a location where it was copied from its exemplar. This mention occurs in at least two colophons of the Logic section, namely the one at the end of the fourth treatise of the *Maqūlāt* (T1) and the one at the end of the fifth treatise of the *Qiyās* (T2). The first of these two colophons can be subdivided into three sections: (1) the colophon in the proper sense, (2) a note stating that the first quire (*daftar*) of the codex ends at this point, and (3) a note stating that what is reported in notes 1-2 was found in the exemplar (*aṣl*) of the Kabul manuscript.

T1. MS Kabul, Arshif-i Millī Afghānistān, 2295, colophon at the end of *Maqūlāt* IV, f. 8^v:

(1) تمت المقالة الرابعة من الفن الثاني من جملة المنطق بحمد الله وحسن توفيقه غداة يوم الخميس السابع عشر من ذي الحجة سنة ثمان وستين وأربعمائة وصلى الله على محمد وآله أجمعين في كورة نيسابور في دار ملقبة بدار الفرس سراي پارسيان
(2) وهاهنا آخر الدفتر الأول من هذا الكتاب
(3) وكذا كان في الأصل

- (1) The fourth treatise of the second *fann* of the Logic section came to an end—in praise of God and with a happy outcome—in the morning of Thursday, 17 Dhū l-Ḥijja of the year 468 [= 28 July 1076]—May God’s peace and blessings be upon Muḥammad and all his family! — in the village of Nīshāpūr, in a house nicknamed ‘the House of the Persians’, Sarāy-i Pārsiyan.
- (2) Here comes the end of the first quire of this book.
- (3) Thus was [found written] in the exemplar.

Table 19.2: The 'Nishāpūr exemplar' of the *Shifā'* – Reconstruction of the date of copying

Section of the <i>Shifā'</i>	Kolkata, Asiatic Society of Bengal Library, Ar. 102 ⁴¹	Rampur, Raza Library 3477 'ayn	Kabul, Arshif-I Milli Afghānistān, 2295
LOGIC			
<i>Madkhal</i> I		6 Dhū l-Ḥijja 468	---
<i>Maqūlāt</i> IV		---	17 Dhū l-Ḥijja 468 (see T ₁)
<i>Maqūlāt</i> V		---	[1]9 Dhū l-Ḥijja 468
<i>Maqūlāt</i> VII		---	22 Dhū l-Ḥijja 468
<i>Tbāra</i> I		---	25 Dhū l-Ḥijja 468
<i>Tbāra</i> II		---	End of Dhū l-Ḥijja 468
<i>Qiyās</i> IV		---	6 Muḥarram [468]
<i>Qiyās</i> V		---	9 (<i>tāsū'ā'</i>) Muḥarram 469 (see T ₂)
<i>Qiyās</i> VII		---	12 Muḥarram 469
<i>Qiyās</i> VIII		---	14 Muḥarram 469
<i>Qiyās</i> IX		---	24 Muḥarram 469
<i>Burhān</i> I		---	End of Muḥarram 469
<i>Burhān</i> IV		---	13 Ṣafar 469
<i>Jadal</i> I		---	17 Ṣafar 469
<i>Jadal</i> II		---	20 Ṣafar 469
<i>Jadal</i> III		---	22 Ṣafar [469]
<i>Jadal</i> IV		---	24 Ṣafar [469]
<i>Jadal</i> V		---	26 Ṣafar [469]
<i>Jadal</i> VII		---	End of Ṣafar 469
<i>Safsāṭa</i> I		---	1 Rabī' I [469]
<i>Safsāṭa</i> II		---	3 Rabī' I 469
<i>Khiṭāba</i> I		---	7 Rabī' I [469]
<i>Khiṭāba</i> II		---	10 Rabī' I [469]
<i>Khiṭāba</i> III		---	15 Rabī' I 469
<i>Khiṭāba</i> IV		---	18 Rabī' I 469
End of Logic	23 Rabī' I 469	---	23 Rabī' I 469 (see T ₃)
NATURAL PHILOSOPHY			
<i>Samā' Ṭabī'ī</i> I		14 Rabī' II 469	14 Rabī' II 469
<i>Samā' Ṭabī'ī</i> II		26 Rabī' II 469	26 Rabī' II 469
<i>Samā' Ṭabī'ī</i> III		4 Jumādā I [469]	---
<i>Samā' Ṭabī'ī</i> IV		11 Jumādā I [469]	
End of <i>al-Samā' wa-l-'ālam</i>	A Monday of Jumādā I, 18 Dey māh 469 ⁴²	---	A Monday of Jumādā I, 18 Dey māh 469
<i>Al-Af'āl wa-l-Infī'ālāt</i>		---	28 Jumādā I [469], 16 Bahman māh

⁴¹ We have not had the chance to personally inspect this manuscript; information concerning the date of copying is drawn from Bertolacci, Avicenna's *Kitāb Al-Shifā'* 271, n. 18.

⁴² This date of copying is drawn from Bertolacci, Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Shifā'* 271, n. 18. See also Ashraf Ali, *A catalogue of the Arabic books* 82, where the date of copying reported is 469H, presumably on the basis of the colophon at the end of *al-Samā' wa-l-'ālam*.

End of <i>al-Afāl wa-l-Infī'ālāt</i>	---	29 Jumādā I [469]
<i>Al-Athār al-Uwīyya</i> I		1 Jumādā II 469
End of <i>Al-Athār al-Uwīyya</i>		5 Jumādā II [469], 8 Bahman mäh

It is clear from note (3) that the information concerning the date and location of copying (1) as well as that concerning the codicological structure of the codex (2) do not apply to the Kabul manuscript, but to its exemplar. From notes 1-2, then, we can infer that the exemplar was articulated in several quires, the end of the first corresponding with the end of *Maqūlāt* IV and which was copied in Nīshāpūr, in the so-called 'House of the Persians' (*Dār al-Furs* in Arabic, *Sarāy-i Pārsiyyān* in Persian). The precise identification of this building is doubtful; the use of the term *sarāy* leaves open the possibility that the building mentioned in the colophon was a hostel or a caravanserai. A caravanserai with a similar name (*Khān al-Furs*) is known to have served as a commercial and social center for merchants and their families coming to Nīshāpūr from Fārs.⁴³ This hypothesis is also corroborated by the mention of another building in Nīshāpūr in the colophon at the end of *Qiyās* V, qualified by the Persian term *khān* (see T2).

T2. MS Kabul, Arshīf-i Millī Afghānistān, 2295, colophon at the end of *Qiyās* V, f. 56^v:

تمت المقالة الخامسة بحمد الله وحسن توفيقه هاجرة يوم الجمعة التاسوعا من المحرم سنة تسع وستين
وأرعماية بنيسابور في سكة حرمة في خان يدعى باسم الرئيس محمود.

The fifth treatise came to an end – in praise of God and with a happy outcome! – at midday, on Friday, 9 (*tāsū'ā'*) Muḥarram of the year 469 [= 19 August 1076] in Nīshābūr in Ḥurma Street,⁴⁴ in a house (or hostel/caravanserai) called by the name of al-Ra'īs Maḥmūd.

⁴³ Cf. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur* 165-6.

⁴⁴ Two different interpretations of this clause are possible: either it is a generic reference to a safe street (*sikka ḥarima*), or it is a reference to a specific street. We would be inclined to believe that the colophon refers here to a specific street in Nīshāpūr; this would not be the only case with regard to this city, where the use of naming streets is evidenced in the literature as early as the IVth/Xth century; see, for instance, the mention of a *sikka ḥarb*, "War Street", in Ibn Bābawayh, *Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* i, 312.

It would seem legitimate to hypothesize that the copying of the Nīshāpūr exemplar was carried out by wealthy intellectuals of the city, whose families were very likely involved in commercial activity; it is also possible that they came from the Fārs region in present-day southern Iran, as their presence in the *Dār al-Furs* suggests.

The Kabul manuscript also offers additional information concerning the history of the circulation and study of the Nīshāpūr exemplar and/or of its subsequent copy, with a stratification of historical information of remarkable interest. Several collation notes preserved in the Kabul manuscript refer to a manuscript other than the Kabul manuscript itself, which was produced much later than the dates of collation reported in the notes. It can be thus inferred that either the Nīshāpūr exemplar itself, or one of its descendants from which the Kabul manuscripts derives, underwent nearly systematic collation between the Vth/XIth and the VIth/XIIth centuries. At least one collation note can be reasonably expected to refer to the Nīshāpūr exemplar itself: in fact, only a few months separate the copying of the Nīshāpūr exemplar from the earliest collation and revision, which—according to a note preserved in the Kabul manuscript, f. 278^v—dates from 5 Dhū l-Ḥijja 469/6 July 1077. This note also mentions an Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Mujāhidī of uncertain identity.

The Logic section was then collated in 563/1168 with a manuscript referenced as the ‘Baghdād manuscript’ (*nuskhat Baghdād*). This note (T3)—placed at the end of the Logic section—may either attest to a revision of the Nīshāpūr exemplar itself, or that of one of its later copies. The note also mentions a collation with a manuscript that belonged to Zayn al-Dīn ‘Umar b. Sahlān Qāḍī al-Sāwī (d. ca. 540/1145); although it is not entirely clear whether the object of this additional collation was the Baghdād manuscript or the Nīshāpūr exemplar (or one of its copies), the latter would seem to fit better with the wording of the note.

T3. Collation notes in MS Kabul, Arshif-i Millī Afghānistān, 2295

F. 278 ^v , note of collation dating from 5 Dhū l-Ḥijja 469/6 July 1077 (almost surely referring to the Nishāpūr exemplar)	F. 214 ^v , note of collation dating from Shawwāl 563H/July-August 1168 (referring either to the Nishāpūr exemplar or to one of its descendants)
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تمت المعارضة مع الشيخ الأديب أبي نصر محمد بن علي المجاهدي يوم الخميس الخامس من ذي الحجة سنة تسع وستين وأربعماية.	قوبل وصح بقدر الوسع بنسخة بغداد بعد المقابلة بنسخة القاضي الساوي يرحمه الله وذلك في شوال سنة ثلث وستين وخمسماية هجرية.
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The collation was completed along with the Shaykh Adīb Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Mujāhidī on Thursday, 5 Dhū l-Ḥijja 469.

[The text] was collated and corrected as far as possible with a manuscript from Baghdād, after collating it with the manuscript of Qāḍī al-Sāwī —may God have mercy on him! —in Shawwāl 563 AH.

Al-Sāwī is one of the key-figures of the philosophical tradition in twelfth-century Khorasan. He is reported to have moved to Nishāpūr, and to have studied under the direction of As‘ad al-Mayhanī (d. 523/1130 or 527/1132-3)⁴⁵ and Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Īlāqī (d. 536/1141?),⁴⁶ who were, in turn, both students of Abū al-‘Abbās al-Lawkarī (active between the Vth-VIth /XIth-XIIth centuries).⁴⁷ He was a scholar with a strong interest in logical matters; among his main logical works can be counted a textbook of Aristotelian logic with title *al-Baṣā’ir al-Naṣīriyya*, and two logical treatises in Persian, *i.e.* the *Mukhtaṣar dar bayān-e ‘ulūm-e ḥaqīqī* and the *Tabṣera*.⁴⁸ Ibn Funduq reports a curious biographical anecdote, according to which al-Sāwī earned money by copying manuscripts of Avicenna’s *Shifā’* and selling them for no less than a hundred dīnārs each.⁴⁹ It does not seem implausible that the manuscript that is cursorily mentioned in the collation note on f. 214^v of the Kabul manuscript was one of the copies penned by al-Sāwī when he was a student in Nishāpūr.

⁴⁵ Cf. Al-Rahim, *The Creation of Philosophical Tradition* 63, n. 151.

⁴⁶ A third-generation follower of Avicenna; see Al-Rahim, *The Creation of Philosophical Tradition* 65-7.

⁴⁷ For a reconstruction of al-Lawkarī’s biography, see Marcotte, Preliminary Notes 134-8.

⁴⁸ On al-Sāwī’s life and works, see Al-Rahim, *The Creation of Philosophical Tradition* 81-8.

⁴⁹ Meyerhof, ‘Alī al-Bayhaqī’s *Tatimmat Ṣiwān al-Ḥikma* 180; see also Al-Rahim, *The Creation of Philosophical Tradition* 81.

2.2.2. Marāgha and Tabrīz (north-western Iran)

It has been argued that Marāgha, located in Iranian Azerbaijan, and the intellectuals who gravitated around its astronomical observatory installed by the Īlkhānid ruler Hūlagū in 657/1259 played a fundamental role in the circulation and study of the Logic of the *Shifā*.⁵⁰ MS Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, 2710 (Table 19.1, n° 10), for example, is a copy of the *Shifā* penned by ‘Abd al-Kāfi b. ‘Abd al-Majīd b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Tabrīzī, a student of al-Kātibī al-Qazwīnī (d. 675/1276), during the latter’s stay at the Marāgha observatory; the manuscript also contains the copy of an *ijāza* issued by al-Kātibī al-Qazwīnī for his student. Moreover, the manuscript also preserves several notes that reveal a collation with a manuscript copy that belonged to Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) (a note from the section on Geometry, f. 261^r, in Figure 19.6).⁵¹

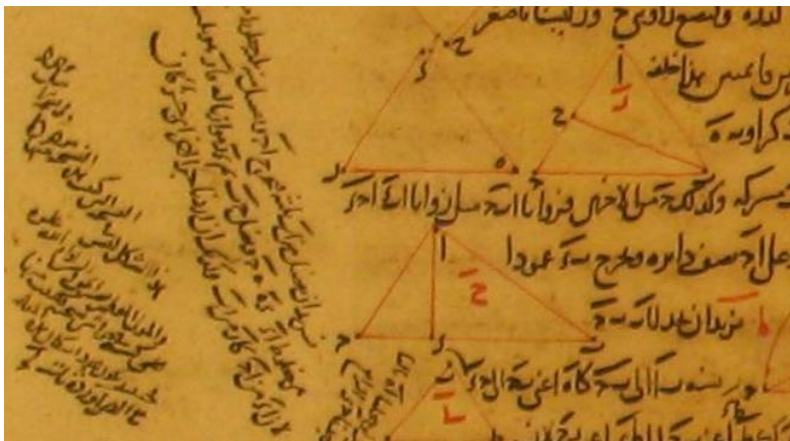


Figure 19.5: MS Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, 2710, f. 261^r, marginal note on the left

هذا الشكل ليس في النسخة التي كتبت هذه
النسخة منها موجودا وفي نسخة الأصل موجود
والمولى المعظم نصير الحق والدين أدام الله علوه
[علو] كتبه في حواشي نسخته فكتبت منها.
فحينئذ يكون عدد أشكال هذه المقالة مع الذي
أورده ثابت لح (= 38).

This figure is not preserved in the manuscript from which this manuscript was copied, but it is in the manuscript of the model (*nuskhat al-aṣl*). The great master Naṣīr al-Ḥaqq wa-l-Dīn—may God prolong his glory [glory]!—wrote it in the margins of his manuscript, so I copied it from there. Therefore, the number of theorems in this treatise, including the one introduced by Ṭābit [ibn Qurra], amounts to 38.

⁵⁰ Di Vincenzo, *Early Exegetical Practice on Avicenna’s Shifā*.

⁵¹ Di Vincenzo, *Early Exegetical Practice on Avicenna’s Shifā* 40-5.

MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah 1424 (Table 19.1, n° 17) may also be related to the same intellectual context. This claim can be demonstrated based on the fact that the manuscript is genealogically related to MS Nuruosmaniye 2710 (Table 19.1, n° 10), to which it is also chronologically very close, as well as the fact that it is a copy made for the personal library of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311), a former student of both al-Kātibī al-Qazwīnī and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī.⁵² Another copy produced in Marāgha around the same years is MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 2442 (Table 19.1, n° 11); in this case, however, the manuscript was likely produced in Bar Hebraeus' (d. 685/1286) intellectual circle. The copyist of this manuscript was one of the sons of Shim'un from Qal'at al-Rūm (actual Rumkale), physician at the Īlkhānid court in Marāgha from 658/1260 to 687/1289. He was a member of an influential ecclesiastical family, which appears to have supported Bar Hebraeus in gaining his position as Maphrian of the Syriac Orthodox Church, and had close relations with the Mar Barṣawm monastery in Kharbūt.⁵³ This unique manuscript bears evidence of the intellectual milieu in which it was produced and read: the text is surrounded by several bilingual annotations in Syriac and Arabic, and the presence of brief annotations in Greek characters also demonstrates at least a basic knowledge of Greek philosophical vocabulary.

Another active center in the circulation and study of the Logic of Avicenna's *Shifā'* in the earliest phases of its tradition is the nearby city of Tabrīz. MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Damad İbrahim Paşa 823 (Table 19.1, n° 18) also preserves in the colophon the mention of the Madrasat Ūrkhān in which this complete copy of the *Shifā'* was copied. The manuscript shows several explanatory marginal and interlinear annotations; this copy might have been the object of study or teaching within the madrasa in which it was copied. The annotations are of various kinds: one can find notes that engage with the philosophical content of Avicenna's text, as well as lexical notes intended to explain the meaning of complex terms. Notes of the latter type refer in most cases to al-Jawharī's (d. ca. 393/1003) lexicographic work *Kitāb Ṣiḥāḥ al-Lughā* (cited as *Ṣiḥāḥ*).

⁵² Di Vincenzo, Early Exegetical Practice on Avicenna's *Shifā'* 42.

⁵³ Celli, The Manuscript Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 2442; Brentjes, *Teaching and Learning* 103-5.

2.2.3. Baghdād (Iraq)

Until the conquest by the Mongols, Baghdād played a leading role in book production in the Arabic-speaking world. Moreover, Avicennian philosophy seems to have played a dominant role in the local intellectual milieu starting from the second half of the VIth/XIIth century.⁵⁴ These facts are also reflected in the manuscript tradition of the Logic section of the *Shifā'*, which attests to the existence of copies produced in Baghdād from the earliest stages of the transmission of the text. As stated above, MS Kabul, Arshif-i Millī Afghānistān, 2295 preserves several collation notes in the Logic section attesting to a collation as early as 563/1168 of either the 'Nishāpūr exemplar' or of one of its copies with a manuscript from Baghdād. The identity of the manuscript in question is obscure, but it certainly must have been earlier than the date of collation; if extant, it would be among the earliest manuscripts of the Logic of the *Shifā'*. Today traces remain of at least one copy produced in Baghdād prior to that date, MS Najaf, Maktabat al-Imām Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 1096 (Table 19.1, n°4), dating from Rajab 1091/July-August 1680, penned by 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ibn 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Raḍawī,⁵⁵ is allegedly a copy of an exemplar produced in Jumādā II 503/January 1110 in Baghdād, that is, 60 years earlier than the collation attested by MS Kabul 2295.⁵⁶

Another relatively early copy of the Logic section was produced in Baghdād in 10 Rabī' I 677/8 August 1278, namely MS Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Ahmed III 3261 (Table 19.1, n° 12). This manuscript is the first volume of a complete copy of the *Shifā'* that must have been articulated in several volumes, and it contains the entire Logic section and part of the Natural Philosophy section (up to the end of *al-Samā' al-Ṭabī'ī*); the other volumes that must have completed the *Shifā'* collection are now lost, to our knowledge.

In addition to the two aforementioned manuscripts—whose colophons provide explicit evidence of their provenance from Baghdād—it is possible to tentatively link at least two other manuscripts to the same environment. The earlier of the two is MS Tehran, Kitābkhānah-i Millī Malik, 4276 (Table 19.1, n° 5). According to the colophon of this manuscript, this partial copy of the Logic

⁵⁴ El-Rouayheb, *The Development of Arabic Logic* 26.

⁵⁵ This copyist may be identified with one of the owners of MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Petermann I 674 (a copy of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī's *Nihāyat al-idrāk fī dirāyat al-aflāk*).

⁵⁶ The 'Baghdād exemplar' whose existence is attested by MS Najaf, Maktabat al-Imām Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 1096 corresponds to the second medieval 'edition' of the *Shifā'* mentioned in Bertolacci, Avicenna's *Kitāb Al-Shifā'* 271-2.

section⁵⁷ was completed in the first decade of Dhū l-Ḥijja 536/4-13 July 1142 by a certain Aḥmad b. Hibat Allāh b. Aḥmad b. al-Kazzāya; in Ibn al-Jazarī's *Ġāyat al-nihāya fī ṭabaqāt al-qurrā'*,⁵⁸ a man with this very name is reported to have moved to study in Baghdād in 507/1113-4. Assuming this tentative identification of the copyist with the man mentioned by Ibn al-Jazarī, the manuscript in question may have been copied in Baghdād. This hypothesis would seem to find confirmation in the ownership statements preserved on the first folio of the manuscript: less than 30 years after the manuscript was copied (in 563/1167-8), an Abū al-Ġanā'im b. Abī l-Futūḥ b. Sa'īd Ḥarranī declares having purchased this very manuscript in Baghdād (*fī Madīnat al-salām Baghdād*).

The other manuscript that might be tentatively linked to Baghdād is MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yeni Câmi 772 (Table 19.1, n^o 9), a copy which only contains the Logic section of the *Shifā'*. The copy dates from the end of Sha'bān 628/June-July 1231, and no explicit information concerning the location of copying is available. The several ownership statements that are found in the manuscript are, however, quite informative in this connection. The earliest ownership statement that is found in the first folio of the manuscript is penned by an 'Abd al-Mu'min b. Fākhir who may be identified with al-Urmawī al-Baghdādī (d. 693/1294), who was active in Baghdād a few years after the manuscript was copied (Figure 19.7, text 1). The second alleged owner of this manuscript is another major intellectual figure related to Baghdād, namely Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, who spent part of his life in the city, where he moved in 672/1274 CE⁵⁹ (texts 2a and 2b next to Figure 19.7). Assuming this hypothetical reconstruction, the manuscript must have then reached Istanbul—where it is preserved today—no later than the IXth/XVth century: as evidenced by a third ownership statement, the manuscript became part of the library of Mu'ayyadzāde 'Abd al-Raḥmān Efendi (d. 922/1516) on Friday, 8 Sha'bān 901/1 May 1496 in Constantinople⁶⁰ (Figure 19.7, text 3).

⁵⁷ The manuscript contains the *Madkhal* and part of the *Maqūlāt*, up to the third treatise.

⁵⁸ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ġāyat al-nihāya*, i, 133. In the edition, the name is spelt with a minor punctuation difference: أحمد بن هبة الله بن أحمد بن الكرابية.

⁵⁹ Al-Ṭūsī's biography reports that he moved, together with many of his students, from Marāgha to Baghdād shortly before his death; see Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt* iii, 251.

⁶⁰ On Mu'ayyadzāde and the role he played in the circulation of a huge number of manuscripts, see Pourjavady, Muṣliḥ al-Dīn al-Lārī 293; Pourjavady and Schmidtke, *An Eastern Renaissance?* 255; Pfeiffer, *Teaching the Learned*.

- (1) عبد المؤمن بن فاخر
يفوّض أمره إلى الله تعالى.
- (2.a) انتقل منه إلى كاتبه
محمد بن محمد بن الحسن الطوسي.
- (2.b) هذا خط المحقق نصير
الحق والدين الطوسي.
- (3) تملكه أحوج خلق الله إليه عبد الرحمن بن
علي بن مؤيد غفر لهم في يوم الجمعة ثامن
شعبان سنة إحدى وتسعمائة هجرية
بقسطنطينية الحمية.
- (1) 'Abd al-Mu'min b. Fākhir resigns himself to the will of God.
- (2.a) [The manuscript] passed from him to the author of [this note], Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī.
- (2.b) This is the handwriting of the Certifier Naṣīr al-Ḥaqq wa-l-Dīn al-Ṭūsī.
- (3) The creature that is most in need of God 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Alī b. Mu'ayyad—may God forgive them!—came in possession of [this manuscript] on Friday, 8 Sha'bān 901 AH in the protected Constantinople.



Figure 19. 6: Detail of the ownership notes in MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yeni Câmî 772

2.2.4. Aleppo and Damascus (Syria)

Another context in which the work appears to have circulated relatively early is present-day Syria. A majestic copy of the entire *Shifā'* in 25 volumes was produced in Aleppo between 601-603/1205-1206 and signed by a Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan (Table 19.1, n° 8). Eight of the volumes that formed this segmented copy of the work are now lost, while most of the extant items are now part of the Pococke collection of the Bodleian Library in Oxford; only one volume—number 19 of the series—is now preserved in Turkey (MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih 3211).

A few years before (in early Rabī' II 599/December-January 1202), another manuscript copy containing part of the Logic section of the summa—from the *Burhān*, corresponding to Avicenna's reworking of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, up to the end of the second treatise of the *Jadal*, Avicenna's reworking of the *Topics*—was produced by 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. 'Alī b. Ḥāmid al-Ṭabīb al-Dimashqī, also known as *al-Dakhwār* (d. 628/1230), for personal use. Al-Dakhwār was a renowned author of medical treatises and a notable physician, responsible for medicine in Cairo and Damascus under the Ayyubid dynasty; he is best known for having educated and influenced a generation of prominent thirteenth-century physicians in Egypt and Syria, including Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (d. 668/1270) and Ibn al-Nafīs (d. 687/1288). According to sources, al-Dakhwār had been trained in medicine by studying Avicenna's *Canon*.⁶¹ Reportedly, he also worked as a copyist: according to Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, he penned the copy of more than one hundred books in his life.⁶² According to a note penned by al-Dakhwār himself at the beginning of the codex (Table 19.1, n° 7), the volume in question was the third part (*al-juz' al-thālith*) of a copy presumably containing the entire summa. The very fact that a renowned physician like al-Dakhwār engaged with Avicenna's major summa on theoretical philosophy does not come as a surprise. In fact, a non-negligible number of physicians appear to have engaged with copying and studying Avicenna's *Shifā'*, as evidenced by the number of copyists that referred to themselves as *ṭabīb* or *mutaṭabbib* found in the earliest manuscripts of the work.⁶³ In more general terms, this demonstrates how

⁶¹ Brentjes, *Teaching and Learning* 151; Endress, Reading Avicenna in the Madrasa 388-90. Avicenna's *Canon* was also one of the primary texts on which al-Dakhwār relied when teaching medicine to his students, as also evidenced by some reading notes preserved in MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 2913. The author is grateful to Dr Jawdath Jabbour and the team of the PHIC-PHASIF project for this information.

⁶² Behrens-Abouseif, *The Book in Mamluk Egypt and Syria* 92; Endress, Reading Avicenna in the Madrasa 389.

⁶³ Bertolacci, *Metaphysics, Elemental Transformation, Medicine* 397-8.

medicine and the set of theoretical philosophical disciplines were conceived as forming a single and coherent system since the earliest phases of the Avicennian tradition.

3. Concluding Remarks

The Logic section of Avicenna's *Shifā'* has come to us after a long-lasting journey of about nine centuries, crossing the Arabic-speaking world and—in the case of some specific works of the Logic section—the Latin West. Although it is an arduous task to describe this multifaceted cross-cultural journey in all its detail, we believe that the analysis of its manuscript tradition can at least partially fill the gaps left by biographical and historiographical sources. It is worth noting that the manuscript traditions of some major works of Arabic philosophy are currently explored haphazardly and unsystematically or worse—completely neglected. Here, the importance of endeavours systematic investigating library collections, such as the one undertaken by Maroun Aouad and his collaborators within the PHIC-PHASIF project, cannot be stressed enough.

What we have attempted to show here is precisely how the study of the manuscript copies of the Logic section of the *Shifā'* can provide us with a wealth of information about the circulation and reception of Avicennian logic in the Islamicate world by drawing on the methods of material philology. This type of inquiry can help to deepen our understanding of the philosophical, confessional, linguistic, and institutional contexts in which Avicenna's philosophy has been taught and studied from his time to long into the last century and to better understand how teaching practices shaped its reception. Furthermore, the study of the manuscript tradition of the work may be expected to increase our knowledge of the exegetical and teaching practices surrounding the Logic section of the *Shifā'* through the analysis of the *marginalia* preserved in the manuscripts of the work. In this regard, the next challenge that we intend to face in our ongoing research is that of more systematic recognition of marginal commentary notes, which are found in abundance in manuscripts of the most diverse provenances.

The preliminary—however necessarily partial and provisional—analysis presented in this chapter has hopefully succeeded in providing a general introductory picture of the textual tradition of the Logic of the *Shifā'*, especially of its earliest stages. It is also our hope that the catalogue of manuscript witnesses offered in the appendix will serve as a starting point for scholars intending to produce critical editions of one or more works from the Logic section.

Acknowledgments

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Council Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them. This work is supported by ERC grant *UnMaP*, Grant agreement id: 101164324, doi: 10.3030/101164324.

Appendix: The Manuscript Witnesses of the Logic Section of Avicenna's *Shifā'*

Legend:

◦ = Manuscript (or digital reproduction thereof) examined

Sections of Logic (Mantiq):

1. *Kitāb al-Madkhal* (corresponding to Porphyry's *Isagoge*)
2. *Kitāb al-Maqūlāt* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Categories*)
3. *Kitāb al-'Ibāra* (corresponding to Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*)
4. *Kitāb al-Qiyās* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*)
5. *Kitāb al-Burhān* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*)
6. *Kitāb al-Jadal* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Topics*)
7. *Kitāb al-Safsāṭa* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations*)
8. *Kitāb al-Khiṭāba* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*)
9. *Kitāb al-Shi'r* (corresponding to Aristotle's *Poetics*)



White square: not preserved in the manuscript



Light grey square: partially extant in the manuscript



Dark grey square: entirely preserved in the manuscript

? Uncertain content

