As a continuation of previous studies about the reception of Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' in al-Andalus, this paper argues that it was common among Andalusī scholars of the Middle Ages to credit the astronomer Maslama al-Majrīṭī (d. 395/1004 or shortly thereafter) not only with the authorship of Rutbat al-ḥakīm and Ghāyat al-ḥakīm – now both correctly ascribed to Maslama Ibn Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (d. 353/964) – but also with the entire encyclopaedic corpus of the Rasā'il. The first part of this article seeks to explain the series of transitions that have taken place in the attribution of these works. The second part of the study aims to identify the specific manuscripts that provide the evidence for this change in attribution.

Again on Maslama Ibn Qāsim al-Qurṭubī, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ and Ibn Khaldūn: New Evidence from Two Manuscripts of Rutbat al-ḥakīm

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successive confusions by which these three works came to be identified as forming three steps of a philosophical ladder and how this trilogy then came to be attributed to the scientist al-Majrīṭī. The second part focuses on two biographical notes found on the title pages of two manuscripts of the as-yet-unedited Rutbat al-ḥakīm. In addition to providing supplementary evidence for the spread of this misconception among medieval scholars, these documents also offer valuable and sometimes unique information about the two Maslamas, their respective writings and entourages, as well as the widespread circulation of the Rasā'il across the Peninsula. The edition, translation and commentary of these two biographical notes are here provided for the first time.

Key words: Alchemy; Magic; Manuscripts; Maslama Ibn Qāsim al-Qurṭubī; Maslama al-Majrīṭī; Ibn Khaldūn; Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'; Rutbat al-ḥakīm; Ghāyat al-ḥakīm; Picatrix.

To credit the famous Andalusī mathematician and astronomer Maslama al-Majrīṭī (d. 395/1004 or shortly thereafter) with works he did not write is an error with a long history. It is well known that Ibn Khaldūn considered Maslama al-Majrīṭī to be the author of two treatises about the occult sciences: namely, Rutbat al-ḥakīm (“The Scale of the Sage”) and Ghāyat al-ḥakīm (“The Aim of the Sage”). Although Ibn Khaldūn was not the first to make this misattribution, the authority of the Muqaddima seems to have done much to spread it amongst later generations of scholars so that it appears even in recent modern scholarship.

From Maslama al-Majrīṭī to Pseudo-Maslama to Maslama al-Qurṭubī

That Maslama al-Majrīṭī could not have been the author of these two esoteric treatises was demonstrated long ago. Yet for reasons discussed in detail elsewhere, modern scholarship replaced this error with
another in ascribing the Rutba and the Ghāya to an otherwise unidentified “Pseudo-Majrīṭī” supposed to have been active around the middle of the 5th/11th century. It is under this appellation and with this chronology in mind that the texts of the Ghāya and those of its Latin and Spanish adaptations have repeatedly been edited, translated and discussed up to the end of the 20th century. Challenging a long and prestigious tradition of ‘Warburgian’ scholars, all of whom had taken these suppositions for granted, Maribel Fierro demonstrated in a study published in 1996 that the genuine author of the two treatises was in fact another “Maslama al-Andalusī”, who had been active not fifty years after al-Majrīṭī’s time but rather fifty years before him.

This Abū l-Qāsim Maslama Ibn Qāsim al-Qurṭubī was a traditionist with bāṭinī aspirations whose life and activities from the time of his extended riḥla through the Middle East in the early 930s to his death in 353/964 are relatively well documented in Andalusī historiography. A number of indications found in the manuscripts themselves as well as in later sources allow us to confirm that the confusion of names must have occurred at an early stage. It was facilitated by the fact that the respective names of these two scholars share all of the following components: the kunya Abū l-Qāsim, the ism Maslama and the two nisbas al-Qurṭubī and al-Andalusī. This similarity of name is evidently one of the main causes of the general and enduring misattribution of both Rutbat al-ḥakīm and Ghāyat al-ḥakīm to the scientist Maslama al-Majrīṭī.

1 Pseudo-Majrīṭī, Ghāyat al-ḥakīm; translated as Pseudo-Majrīṭī, “Picatrix”. See also: Pingree, “Between the Ghāya and Picatrix, I”; Burnett and Pingree, “Between the Ghāya and the Picatrix, II.”

2 Fierro, “Bāṭinism in al-Andalus”. See also Rius, “al-Maŷrīṭī, Maslama”, where Fierro’s proposal is endorsed.

3 In addition to Fierro, “Bāṭinism in al-Andalus” and other more recent studies by Maribel Fierro, see Rius, “Ibn al-Qāsim, Maslama”, where in accordance with Fierro’s proposal of identification, the Ghāya and the Rutba are both included in the list of this scholar’s works. Note that Fierro’s conjecture has also been endorsed by Julio Samsó and Miquel Forcada in the revised version of Samsó, Las Ciencias de los Antiguos en al-Andalus, published in 2011. See also Callataŷ and Moureau, “A Milestone in the History of Andalusī Bāṭinism”.

4 See de Callataŷ, “Magia en al-Andalus”, pp. 313-315. See also Kacimi, “Nuevos datos”, pp. 243-244, where some examination is made of the way the amalgamation of names also circulated in later periods, as for example with Ibn Ḥajar al-Ḥaytamī (d. 974/1567) in his al-Fatāwā al-ḥadīthīya and up to the time of modern Arab biographers, such as Muḥibbī, Ziriklī and Kaḥḥāla.

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In addition to the *Rutba* and the *Ghāya*, al-Majrīṭī was also credited at times with other esoteric writings. This is notoriously the case, for instance, with *Risālat al-Jāmiʿa* ("The Comprehensive Epistle"), which purports to be the summary of *Rasāʾīl Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ* and which presents itself as the "crown" (tāj) of this important and very influential corpus of epistles. In his *Kashf al-zunūn*, under the heading "Rasāʾīl Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ", the 11th/17th century encyclopaedist Ḥājjī Khalīfā (Katip Çelebi) unambiguously credits "the sage al-Majrīṭī al-Qurṭubī, who died in 395 [1005]," with the authorship of the *Jāmiʿa* by reproducing there the incipit of that compendium. Much has been made of the fact that the same attribution is also found in some of the manuscripts of the *Jāmiʿa*, which prompted Jamīl Šalībā to edit the work as "The Comprehensive Epistle ascribed to the Sage al-Majrīṭī* (*al-Risāla al-Jāmiʿa al-manṣūba li-l-ḥakīm al-Majrīṭī*). It must be recalled here that Šalībāʾs edition was based on merely five manuscripts, only two of which feature indications that the compendium was al-Majrīṭīʾs work, and that Šalībā himself ruled out the attribution to Maslama al-Majrīṭī in the introduction to his edition. In fact, more recent investigation tends to minimise considerably the significance of these indications. Morad Kacimi, who is currently preparing a new edition of the *Jāmiʿa* for a doctoral dissertation at the University of Alicante, kindly informed us that out of the numerous manuscripts he has consulted for his edition only these two include the reference to Maslama al-Majrīṭī. Furthermore, it would appear that in both cases the reference to al-Majrīṭī was made by an annotation in a later hand and that in at least one of the two manuscripts the author of the annotation derives his information from Ḥājjī Khalīfāʾs *Kashf al-zunūn*.

On the other hand, there is evidence to support the assumption that not only *Risālat al-Jāmiʿa* but the entire corpus of *Rasāʾīl Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ* was believed by some to be the work of al-Majrīṭī. This is what can be inferred, for instance, from two manuscripts of the *Rasāʾīl* kept in the library of El Escorial. Not surprisingly, the manuscripts featur-
ing a connection with Maslama al-Majritti appear to have circulated mainly in the western part of the Islamic world.

No doubt Maslama al-Majritti’s unequalled celebrity as a scientist in al-Andalus did much to earn him the reputation of a prolific author who was capable of writing various works about the occult sciences as well as astronomical treatises in the footsteps of Ptolemy and al-Khwārizmī. In the case of the Jāmi’a and the Rasā’il, one must consider the misattribution as yet another outcome of the above-mentioned confusion between Maslama al-Majritti al-Qurtubi and his homonymous predecessor, Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurtubi. The date of the misattribution of these two additional works, Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ and the Jāmi’a, to “Maslama” cannot be ascertained with precision. Contrary to the prevailing impression in modern scholarship, it is now becoming increasingly clear that only the attribution of the Rasā’il to “Maslama” can be dated with certainty to medieval times.

How is it then that al-Qurtubi’s name became associated with that of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ in the first place? And more generally, how can we explain how a work whose oriental provenance appears to us so evident could have been believed by some to have been composed on the soil of al-Andalus? The answer to these questions lies in al-Qurtubi’s own works.

Although it does not make explicit reference either to the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ or to the Rasā’il, Ghāyat al-ḥakīm is greatly indebted to the encyclopaedic corpus of the Ikhwān. In the footnotes to their translation of the Ghāyat into German, Hellmut Ritter and Martin Plessner pointed out about 60 passages more or less closely related to the Rasā’il, some of them appearing to be taken literally from them and extending over several pages. It has recently been asserted that the corpus of the Rasā’il

lāma al-Majrittī). The Derenbourg 928 (= Casiri 923), dated to 862/1458, includes the first 22 epistles of the corpus and is ascribed by a later hand to Maslama ibn amir al-ʿarab min ḥukamā’ al-islām, kāna bi-Qurṭuba fī zaman Khālid ibn al-Yazīd [sic] ibn Muʿāwiya. Carusi, “Alchimia Islamica e Religione”, pp. 494-495, observes that in addition to the two manuscripts from El Escorial one also finds indications of the same kind in MSS 904 and 989 in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Carusi also points out a similar indication in the manuscript Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, 3231. This manuscript, dated 907/1501-1502, described by Ullmann, Katalog, pp. 4-34, here pp. 13-14, includes, on fol. 110r, an extract from another alchemical treatise ascribed to al-Majritti entitled Rawdat al-ḥadā’iq (on this, see also n. 132). The excerpt begins with the words: qāla l-ḥakīm Maslama ibn Waḍḍāḥ al-Qurṭubi al-Majritti wa-huwa muṣannif kitāb Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ wa-khullān al-wafā’ fi kitāb Rawdat al-ḥadā’iq wa-riyāḍ al-khalā’iq.

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was one of the three major sources of the Ghāya, together with the Jābirian corpus and the Nabatean Agriculture.10 However, the most interesting evidence is found in the as-yet-unedited Rutba, where the collection of “51 epistles” – or “50 epistles”, depending on the manuscript – is mentioned in several places, and reference is also made to individual epistles as well. The prologue of the Rutba also includes a crucial passage in which the “philosophical epistles” are considered to embody a sort of ideal introduction to philosophy. What is more, Maslama al-Qurṭubī explains in this passage that his own work is nothing but a summary of those numerous epistles [...]. We have thoroughly discussed in it what we had treated separately there. To each one of the philosophical disciplines we had, indeed, dedicated one individual epistle.11

Subsequently, in the concluding lines of the same prologue, al-Qurṭubī explains:

This book of ours, which we have entitled the ‘Rank of the Sage’, we have conceived as a summary of those numerous epistles [...]. We have thoroughly discussed in it what we had treated separately there. To each one of the philosophical disciplines we had, indeed, dedicated one individual epistle.12

10 See Bakhouche et al., Picatis, p. 32.
11 MS Beşir Ağa 505 (= Ṣ), fol. 2v, ll. 11-13, MS Ragıp Paşa 965 (= Ṣ), fols. 49r, l. 2 ab imo-49v, l. 1: وقد قمنا في التواليف في العلوم الفيزيائية والأسرار الفلسفية رسالة [رسالة] يا: رسائلها [رسائلها] استعينا فيها هذه العلوم استعينا بها هذه العلوم استعينا لها هذه العلوم استعينا بها هذه العلوم استعينا في هذا هذا. The orthography of Arabic quotations taken from manuscripts has been normalised throughout the present contribution. The Beşir Ağa manuscript, dated to 756/1355, is one of the oldest extant manuscripts of the Rutba. On MS Ragıp Paşa 965, cf. below. For an updated list of the manuscripts at our disposal for the edition of the work, see de Callataÿ and Moureau, “Towards a Critical Edition”.
12 MS Beşir Ağa 505, fols. 3r, l. 16-3v, l. 1, MS Ragıp Paşa 965, fol. 50v, ll. 7-12: وكتابنا هذا الذي سمى رتبة الحكماء في فیلمهم هم من تلك الرسائل الكثيرة [...]. استعينا فيه (بسط من ر) جميع ما قرنا هذا [و هنا ذلك] لا أعرفنا في كل فی فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن فن F.
Similarly one reads in section 3 of the third maqāla:

I have already dealt with minerals and their division, something which no philosopher has ventured to do. Out of the collection of philosophical epistles, I have presented the epistle on minerals, since I have written this book in lieu of the 50 epistles, I mean, of those epistles. You shall see that, in order to deal with minerals, I have not failed to have recourse to the way I have dealt with them there, since I repeat – I have written this book in lieu of all these epistles.\(^{15}\)

How are these statements to be interpreted? There is, to be sure, a certain level of ambiguity in these lines. Judging from al-Qurṭubī’s habitual use of enigmatic expressions in both the Rutba and the Ghāya, we may reasonably suspect that this ambiguity was intentional. Whatever the case, it would be a serious mistake to assume that al-Qurṭubī is claiming here to be the ‘author’ of the Rasā’il in the modern sense of the word, for this is in obvious contradiction to what he writes about the ‘genuine author’ of the corpus in the very same work. Referring in the prologue to otherwise unidentified readers of bygone days, he explains:

They did not know who had compiled them [the Rasā’il] nor from where they had been compiled. However, when they scrutinised them in order to appreciate the value of their formulation, the intelligent people presumed that they were part of a work pertaining to the same epoch as that in which they were living, although they did not know who had compiled them.\(^{14}\)

As observed by Ḥusain al-Hamdānī, what is meant by these assertions seems to be that al-Qurṭubī was the first scholar ever to make the Epistles known to the people of al-Andalus, and the most probable explanation is that he achieved this by copying an exemplar of the encyclopaedia on the occasion of the long journey he made across the Middle East in the early 930s.\(^{15}\) This is a far cry from claiming that he

\(^{11}\) MS Beşir Ağâ 505, fols. 13v, l. 24-14r, l. 3, MS Ragıp Paşa 965, fol. 67v, ll. 6 ab imo-2 ab imo: وقد كتب (ب: وقد كتب) (ب: ADHD) كل من خبر (رب:Intl) المعاني واترقتها ما ثم يجاوز عليه أحد من الفلسفة وقد قدمت في جملة الرسائل الفلسفية رفعته هما وهذا الكتاب مما خصص رسالة أخرى تلك الرسائل (ب: رسالة أخرى تلك الرسائل؛ B: كتاب) رأيت الأغلبية من ذكر المعاني على نحو ما تكون هناك كلمات هذا الكتاب موفق ذلك الرسائل بجمعها.

\(^{14}\) MS Beşir Ağâ 505, fol. 2v, ll. 14-16, MS Ragıp Paşa 965, fol. 49v, ll. 2-4: ولم: وعلموا (ب: وعلم) من الهوا ولا من مسطرة من (ب: وعلم) عبر أن الحقائق (ب: وعلم) هما لا معنًى (ب: وعلم) على متناقضاتها لاستيعابها أياً واستيعابهم لأيضاً هم، كما لا متعارف عليها (ب: وعلم) والغوا لعله وما يعلمون (ب: وعلم) من الهوا.

\(^{15}\) al-Hamdānī, “Rasā’il Ikhwān as-Ṣafā’”, p. 282.

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is himself the author of the work. At the same time, what al-Qurṭubī says in the prologue of the *Rutba* allows us to deduce the reason some later writers credited him – identifying him, of course, as Maslama al-Majrīṭī – with the authorship of the *Rasā’il* as well as the *Rutba* and the *Ghāya*. In all likelihood the attribution of the *Risālat al-Ĵāmi’a* to “the sage Maslama al-Majrīṭī al-Qurṭubī” was prompted by the same circumstances, although in this latter case the reason for the confusion is perhaps even easier to grasp. As recorded above, the *Jāmi’a* was meant to be the summary of the *Rasā’il*, and this is exactly what al-Qurṭubī also says about his *Rutba*.

In short, the confusing situation faced by modern scholars regarding the authorship of the *Rutba*, the *Ghāya*, the *Rasā’il* and the *Jāmi’a* is a result of successive misattributions of works and confusions of names, in a sequence which we may tentatively put forward as follows: 1) Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī introduces *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* to al-Andalus on his return from the East shortly after 325/936 and writes *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* between 339-342/950-953 and *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* between 343-348/954-959. 2) Facilitated by the resemblance of names, the famous scientist Maslama al-Majrīṭī al-Qurṭubī (d. after 395/1004) is soon credited with the works of Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī in addition to his own works on astronomy and other theoretical sciences. 3) At about the same time, ambiguous statements in the *Rutba* itself prompt readers to credit its author with the *Rasā’il*. 4) It becomes usual among medieval Andalusī scholars to consider ‘Maslama’ the author of a trilogy of works: the *Rutba*, the *Ghāya* and the *Rasā’il*. 5) At a much later stage (and plausibly in post-medieval times), the *Jāmi’a* is also ascribed to ‘Maslama’, again on the basis of the ambiguity of certain passages from the *Rutba*.

Back to the Muqaddima

As has just been remarked, the *Rutba*, the *Ghāya* and the *Rasā’il* must all three have been considered the work of a single writer by the vast majority of the intellectuals from the western part of the Islamic world. One such example is the Andalusī mystic Ibn Sab’īn (d. c. 668/1269), the author of the *Sicilian Questions* and of the *Budd al-‘ārif*. While describing in his *Fatḥ al-mushtarak* what he presents as the five
different sorts of “letter magic” (sīmiyā’), Ibn Sab‘īn reports that “the first one is specious: it is the one which was mentioned by Maslama al-Majrīṭī, the author of the Rasā‘il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’.” Ibn Sab‘īn does not mention either the Rutba or the Ghāya, but we may reasonably surmise that he shared the common view that they were also by al-Majrīṭī.

The tendency to credit a single author with these three works is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than by Ibn Khaldūn in the Muqaddima. Browsing through his exceptionally detailed report on magic and related sciences,17 we observe that “Maslama b. Aḥmad al-Majrīṭī” is regularly depicted principally as a sort of Andalusī counterpart to Jābir b. Ḥayyān and, in more general terms, as the successor in al-Andalus of a long tradition of magic and alchemy inherited from the East. Ibn Khaldūn defines Maslama as “the imam of Andalusī scholars in the propedeutical and magical sciences” (imām ahl al-Andalus fī ta‘ālīm wa-siḥrīyāt). In the same section he regards the Ghāya as the best and most complete treatise about magic, observing that “nobody has written on this science ever since” (wa-lam yaktub aḥad fī hādhā l-‘ilm ba’dahu). As for the Rutba, the “alchemical companion” of the Ghāya in Ibn Khaldūn’s own words, it is described as a work in which hard-to-decipher expressions abound for the uninitiated. In obvious reference to the longer forms of the titles of the Rutba and the Ghāya – namely, Rutbat al-ḥakīm wa-madkhal al-ta‘līm and Ghāyat al-ḥakīm wa-ḥaqiq al-natijatayn – Ibn Khaldūn also notes that Maslama regarded magic and alchemy as “the two conclusions of philosophy” (natijatān li-l-ḥikma) and “the two fruits of sciences” (wa-thamaratān li-l-‘ulūm). He also mentions Maslama’s opinion that “whoever does not take interest in them entirely misses the fruit of science and philosophy” (wa-man lam yaqif ‘alayhimā fa-huwa fāqid thamarat al-‘ilm wa-l-ḥikma ajma’).

There is no explicit reference to the Ikhwān or to their writings in the Muqaddima, nor in any other work by Ibn Khaldūn. However it is

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16 Ibn Sab‘īn, al-Fath al-mushtarak, in Ibn Sab‘īn, Rasā‘il, p. 253.
17 Chapter 6, sections 27-29 (Ibn Khaldūn, Prolégomènes, vol. 3, pp. 124-209; Ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddimah, vol. 3, pp. 156-246). For a thorough survey of Ibn Khaldūn’s view of the occult sciences, see Asatrian, “Ibn Khaldūn on Magic”; Lakhsassi, “Magic”.
18 Ibn Khaldūn, Prolégomènes, vol. 3, p. 125.
19 Ibn Khaldūn, Prolégomènes, vol. 3, p. 125.
20 Ibn Khaldūn, Prolégomènes, vol. 3, pp. 192-193.
21 Ibn Khaldūn, Prolégomènes, vol. 3, p. 193.
most unlikely that the corpus of *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ* was unknown to the historian; on the contrary, he must have been very familiar with it, as has been repeatedly noted since the re-discovery of Ibn Khaldūn by modern European scholarship. To take but one example,22 it is commonly acknowledged today that Ibn Khaldūn was inspired by the Ikhwān’s doctrine when, in a chapter of the *Muqaddima* devoted to “the sciences of the prophets”, he speaks of the “uninterrupted continuum” (*ittiṣāl lā yankharim*) meant to exist between each stage of the world and the one immediately adjacent to it in a highly hierarchic conception of the universe.23 This passage, which further highlights the preparedness (*isti’dād*) for transformation between the highest representatives of one stage (such as palms and vines in plants) and the lowest representatives of the one above it (such as shellfish and snails in animals) and which on this occasion also deals with what could be defined as a qualitative step “from ape to man” (*al-qirda [...] ma’a l-insān*), has been viewed by many as anticipating Darwin’s theory of evolution. It is generally agreed that this reading vastly over-interprets Ibn Khaldūn’s text, and Rosenthal was thus certainly right to observe that this passage “at one time provoked an overenthusiastic comparison with Darwinism”.24

The modern over-interpretation of this passage should not detract from the fact that Ibn Khaldūn most probably borrowed the basis of his argumentation from *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*.25 As specified by Ibn Khaldūn himself, the above-cited passage about the “uninterrupted continuum” is the reformulation, in very much the same terms, of ideas already expressed in a previous chapter of the *Muqaddima* also dedicated

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22 Various other examples could also be given, although caution is certainly advised in this field. It has recently been suggested with much naivety and a regrettable bias towards oversimplified explanations that Ibn Khaldūn derived from the *Rasāʾil* the greatest part of his ideas on history, geography, economics ethics, etc.; see Ismāʿīl, *Nihāya*, pp. 59-162.

23 Ibn Khaldūn, *Prologomenènes*, vol. 2, p. 373. See also Rosenthal’s translation in Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, vol. 2, pp. 422-423: “the whole of existence in (all) its simple and composite worlds is arranged in a natural order of ascent and descent, so that everything constitutes an uninterrupted continuum.”

24 Rosenthal in Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, vol. 2, p. 423, n. 27a.

25 See Rosenthal in Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, vol. 2, p. 423, n. 27a. On the issue of evolutionism and the Ikhwān, see Dieterici, *Der Darwinismus*, pp. 29-33; Vernet, “Las obras biológicas”, p. 190. For a more critical approach, see Nasr, *An Introduction*, pp. 72-74. For a lucid warning against the dangers of over-interpreting a medieval author by projecting modern theories back in time, see also: Kruk, “Ibn Tufayl.”

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to prophecy and to “the various types of human beings who have supernatural perception” (chapter 1, *muqaddima* 6).26 The section opens with the following lines:

\[\text{We shall now give an explanation of the real meaning of prophecy as interpreted by many thorough scholars (‘alā mā sharaḥahu kathīr min al-muḥaqqiqīn).}\]

We shall then mention the real meaning of soothsaying, dream vision, divination, and other supernatural ways of perception. We say: It should be known that we – May God guide you and us (fa-naqūlu i’lam arshadanā Llāh wa-īyāka) – notice that this world with all the created things in it has a certain order and a solid construction. It shows nexuses between causes and things caused, combinations of some parts of creation with others, and transformations of some existent things into others, in a pattern that is both remarkable and endless.28

It is quite revealing that the formula “Know – May God guide you and us” (i’lam arshadanā Llāh wa-īyāka) is used here, since this formula – or a close variant of it – is undoubtedly the most characteristic expression of the Ikhwān’s style, as it appears in innumerable paragraphs of the *Rasā’il* and may therefore truly qualify as a shibboleth. In a recent publication devoted to the ways of referring to the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ as found in the literature of al-Andalus, we have already shown that the use of these typically Ikhwānian formulae became a common practice among authors from the Peninsula as a means of subtly alluding to the corpus of the Brethren, and moreover they are generally found in strategic places in the text.29 The presence of the words “we say” (fa-naqūlu) immediately before the shibboleth reinforces the assumption that we are dealing here with an Ikhwānian shibboleth in its own right, and also that this method of referencing was intentional on Ibn Khaldūn’s part. In a footnote on this passage Rosenthal commented: “For the use of such formulas to introduce the communication of esoteric knowledge, cf. n. 925 to Ch. VI.”30 The reference is to another example of the same formula where the encyclopaedic corpus of the Brethren is duly conjured by Rosenthal, as shall subsequently be seen.

26 Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, vol. 1, pp. 184-245.
27 In our view, the present context suggests that one should translate *muḥaqqiqīn* instead as “those who have achieved true knowledge”.
28 Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, vol. 1, p. 194; for the Arabic, see Ibn Khaldūn, *Prolegomenes*, vol. 1, p. 173.
29 See de Callataj, “From Ibn Masarra to Ibn ‘Arabī”.
30 Rosenthal in Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, vol. 1, p. 194.

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Significantly, the only other place in the *Muqaddima* where the same kind of formula is to be found is in Chapter VI; specifically, section 28 (on the *sīmiyā‘*, namely the secret “science of letters”), where it appears on three occasions. The first is found at the very beginning of the subsection entitled “On learning hidden secrets from letter connections” and reads: *i‘lam arshadanā Llāh wa-īyāka*, which is precisely the same formulation as above. The variant *wa-Llāh yurshidunā wa-īyāka* (“God guide us and you”) appears a few pages later and is closely followed by *i‘lam ayyadanā Llāh wa-īyāka bi-rūḥ minhu* (“Know – God strengthen us and you with a spirit coming from Him”). In view of what has just been discussed above, the presence of these three variants of the shibboleth in the peculiar context of letter magic could hardly be coincidental, and this is clearly what prompted Rosenthal to write in a footnote to the first of these references: “This formula, and even more so the one used below, is characteristic of esoteric literature. Cf., for instance, the *Rasā’il Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā‘* and Ibn ‘Arabi’s *Futūḥāt*. Cf. also 1:194, above [with reference to the passage in Chapter I. 6 already discussed].” The formula which Rosenthal sees as “even more characteristic of esoteric literature” is yet another occurrence of the shibboleth in the same section. It follows shortly after the previous two examples in a passage which deserves quoting at some length:

A competent (practitioner of letter magic) said (*qāla ba‘ḍ al-muḥaqqiqīn*):

Let it be known to you – God strengthen us and you with a spirit coming from Him – (*i‘lam ayyadanā Llāh wa-īyāka bi-rūḥ minhu*) that the science of letters is an important science. The scholar who knows it comes to know things that he would not be able to know with the help of any other science in the world. The practice of the science of (letter magic) requires certain conditions. With its help, the scholar may discover the secrets of creation and the inner works of nature (*asrār al-khalīqa wa-sarā‘ir al-ṭabī‘a*). Thus, he learns the two results of philosophy, which are letter magic and its sister (alchemy) (*natijatay al-falsafa a’nī al-sīmiyā‘ wa-ukhtahā*). The veil of the unknown is lifted for him. He thus learns the

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31 Ibn Khaldūn, *Prolégomènes*, vol. 3, p. 179; Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, vol. 3, p. 214.
32 Ibn Khaldūn, *Prolégomènes*, vol. 3, pp. 182-183; Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, vol. 3, p. 218.
33 Rosenthal in Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, vol. 3, p. 214, n. 925.
34 See note 28 above.
contents of the secret recesses of the heart (yurfa’u lahu ḥijāb al-majhūlāt wa-yuṭalli’u bi-dhālika ‘alā maknūn khafāyā l-qulūb).\textsuperscript{35}

One may assert that the variant under which the shibboleth is given here is even more characteristic of the Ikhwān than the others, for it includes the Qur’ānic bi-rūḥ minhu (‘with a spirit coming from Him’, Q 58:22), which the Brethren associate with one variant or another of their beloved formula more than 200 times. At the same time, what gives weight to the comparison with the passage from Chapter I. 6 discussed above, and which also includes the shibboleth i’lam ayyadanā Llāh wa-īyāka, is that the two passages are introduced by almost identical expressions. They both include the reference to the muḥaqqiqīn (literally, “those who have achieved true knowledge”) as above, and they read: fa-min ṭarā’iqihim fī stikhrāj al-ajwiba mā yanquluhu qāla ba’d al-muḥaqqiqīn minhum (“as to what we have reported about their methods to find answers, some of those having achieved true knowledge have said”) in the first case, and wa-min ṭarīqihim ayḍan fī stikhrāj al-jawāb qāla ba’d al-muḥaqqiqīn (“regarding another of their methods to find answers, some of those having achieved true knowledge have said”).\textsuperscript{36}

Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ include at least one extensive section on letter speculation. It is found at the beginning of Epistle 40 (“On causes and effects”).\textsuperscript{37} What the Brethren have to say there about the sīmiyā‘ (or ‘ilm al-ḥurūf) is not especially original, but the fame of the Rasā’il in whatever appertains to the occult may perhaps explain why Ibn Khaldūn decided to allude subtly to that work in this particular place of his Muqaddima, as was suggested by Rosenthal. For our discussion, however, the most remarkable element lies elsewhere in the passage, where the Rutba and the Ghāya are clearly referred to as to “the two conclusions (natījatān) of philosophy, which are letter magic and its sister (alchemy)”. It was common among medieval Muslim scholars to link together sīmiyā‘ (“letter magic”, later simply “magic”) and

\textsuperscript{35} Ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddimah, vol. 3, p. 218; for the Arabic, see Ibn Khaldūn, Pro-légomènes, vol. 3, p. 183.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibn Khaldūn, Pro-légomènes, vol. 3, pp. 179 and 183; Ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddimah, vol. 3, pp. 214 and 218.

\textsuperscript{37} Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, Rasā’il, vol. 3, pp. 377-383. For an Italian translation of the relevant section, see Baffioni, Appunti, pp. 205-210.

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kīmiyāʾ (“alchemy”) – two words distinguished from one another by only one letter –, as for instance in the famous corpus of alchemical texts attributed to Jābir b. Ḥayyān. The distinction between the two sister-sciences is made by al-Qurṭubī himself, who in the prologue of the *Rutba* gives the following explanation:

They are two conclusions. The Ancients called one of them kīmiyāʾ and they called the other one sīmiyāʾ. These are the two sciences of the ancients from which one can profit. Whoever has not achieved them is no sage until he masters them, and he who masters [only] one of them is [only] half a sage. Both share [the quality of] being subtle. For kīmiyāʾ is the knowledge of earthly spirits and the advantageous extraction of their subtleties. The other is called sīmiyāʾ, and is the tarjīḥ (literally, “the fact of giving the preponderance to something”), the [art of] talisman and of syllogisms, and this is the science of the superior spirits and of how to call down their powers advantageously.

Returning to Ibn Khaldūn’s statement as noted above, the combination of the Ikhwānian shibboleth with this allusion to two famous esoteric works of the past suggests that, in the view of Ibn Khaldūn, the Rasāʾil, the *Rutba* and the *Ghāya* were all three the works of a single author, and it is most probably for this reason that the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ are never explicitly mentioned in his writings. In attributing these three texts to one author, the great historian appears to have done nothing more than adopt the same position as Ibn Sabīn one century and a half before him, a view which was presumably shared by the vast majority of Andalusī thinkers during the Middle Ages.

38 Cf. Kraus, Jābir, vol. 2, pp. 187-303; Lory, La science, pp. 37-41. See also Moureau, “Alchemy and Medicine”.

39 MS Beşir Ağā 505, fols. 4r, l. 25-4v, l. 4 and MS Ragg Pasa 965, fols. 52r, l. 6 ab imoto-52v, l. 1. یو هي تجلان احدهما نسبها الأولاء كيمياء وإثنين نسبها (ست من ب) كيمياء وهم ما عمان

الابناء منطقته بهما ومن لا يعمل إليه اليدين يحكم حتى يحكمهما فإن حكمتان واحدة منها فهي تصف حكم وهم

يشتركن في القلبية لأن كيمياء هي معرفة الأرواح الأصليه وأخراج طبقاتها ابتدائية والثانية تسمى كيمياء

من الفرقات لأن كيمياء هي معرفة الأرواح الأصليه واعدة لطالعاتها والثانية تسمى كيمياء

وهي corroboración de los viejos y los nuevos, y esta es la razón de que Ibn al-Sabīn en el siglo 400 n. y uno y medio siglo despues de él, adopte la misma posición que los antiguos árabes en su obra *Rutba*, aunque con una mayor conciencia de la distinción entre los dos tipos de sabiduría.
Complementary evidence from two manuscripts of the *Rutba*

The rest of the present article is devoted to providing supporting evidence for this discussion from two biographical notes found on the title pages of two of the earliest known manuscripts of *Rutbat al-ḥakīm*. They are MSS Ragıp Paşa 965 and 963, both kept in the Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi in Istanbul. Together with a brief presentation, we provide here the edition of each note, along with a translation and an extensive commentary. The spelling of hamzas has been normalised, and missing dots have been restituted. The vocalisation is that of the manuscripts.

**MS Ragıp Paşa 965, title page (fol. 47r)**

1 Presentation

Dated by Sezgin to the 8th/14th century, MS Ragıp Paşa 965 is considered the older of these two paper manuscripts. The text of the *Rutba* is found on fols. 47r-150v and includes the usual misattribution to Maslama al-Majrīṭī. The body of the text is carefully written in naskh and vocalised throughout. On the title page (fol. 47r), the copyist gives the title of the work as *Kitāb Rutbat al-ḥakīm wa-madkhal al-ta’līm* ta’līf al-shaykh al-imām al-fāḍil al-faylasūf Abī Muḥammad Maslama al-Qurṭubī al-Majrīṭī ṭālīf al-shaykh al-imām al-fāḍil al-faylasūf Abī Muḥammad Maslama al-Qurṭubī al-Majrīṭī ṭālīf al-shaykh al-imām al-fāḍil al-faylasūf Abī Muḥammad Maslama al-Qurṭubī al-Majrīṭī – May God have mercy on him! He is also the author the *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity* – may God sanctify his spirit and the light of his mausoleum”). There is no doubt that this information is given in the same hand as the rest of the work (and evidently also the other works included in this manuscript).

The rest of the title page consists of a lengthy biographical note, written 90° counter-clockwise from the title by another hand. This other

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40 Sezgin, *Geschichte*, p. 297. See also the description in Plessner, “Beiträge”, pp. 550-551.

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hand may be from a later period, but the possibility that it is roughly contemporary cannot be ruled out, nor can the possibility that it is the same as the one who copied the main text. This second hand is less polished than the first, though reasonably elegant for a note of this genre. The text is vocalised only in part, and diacritical points are frequently omitted, which at times makes the reading difficult. The greatest part of this note is taken almost literally from Ṣā‘īd’s Ṭabaqāt al-umam, as is acknowledged by the copyist himself. Yet the last five lines of the note appear to be an original addition by the author of the note, who reports various theories about the way the Rasūl Ilkhwān al-Ṣafā’ came to be associated with ‘Maslama’.

In addition to this biographical note, the page also includes two ownership marks. The first in red ink is located in the upper right corner of the page. It is clearly by the same hand as that of the note and reads: li-Llāh ta’ālā fī yad ‘abdihi ‘Alī ibn Sa’d al-Anṣārī al-Awsī ‘afā Llāh ‘anhu (“To God Most High, in the hand of His servant ‘Alī b. Sa’d al-Anṣārī al-Awsī – May God excuse him”).

Illustration nr. 1

First ownership mark

This indication is valuable since the same owner’s name also appears on MS 19/219 of the Budeiri Library in East Jerusalem, a manuscript which is dated to the 9th/15th century. In the description of this manuscript, the date “3 Ṣaffār 822” [= 1 March 1419] is mentioned, but it is unclear whether it refers to ‘Alī b. Sa’d al-Anṣārī al-Awsī or to another owner. If it could be proven that this indication concerns ‘Alī b. Sa’d al-Anṣārī al-Awsī, this would be an excellent confirmation that our note was written early in the 9th/15th century.

41 Judging from the description available on e-corpus (http://www.e-corpus.org/fre/ref/117435/19_219/, consulted on 25/03/2015).

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The other ownership mark is found in the upper left corner of the page. It is written in black ink and is in another hand which is much less easy to decipher in places. We tentatively propose that it reads: **li-Llāh ta‘ālā fī yad ‘abdihi Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb ibn ‘Umar ibn Sulaymān ibn ..... ... al-Ṣimnānī (?) al-‘Āmirī (?) al-Shāfi‘ī ‘afā Llāh ta‘ālā ‘anhum.** The identity of this owner cannot be determined with greater precision, and we are unable to date this second mark.

Illustration nr. 2

Second ownership mark

Illustration nr. 3

Ragıp Paşa 965, fol. 47r

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2 Text

The major part of this biographical note is taken from Şa‘id al-Andalusī’s Tabaqāt al-umam (hereafter S). In the present edition and translation, quotations from the Tabaqāt are indicated by { }. The variants from the Tabaqāt al-umam are indicated in the apparatus with S for Cheikho’s edition (1935),42 S′ for Bū ‘Alwān’s edition (1985)43 and S° for the Tehran edition (1997).44 This section of Şa‘id’s Tabaqāt is reproduced in part in the Ikhbār al-‘ulumā’ bi-akhbār al-hukamā’ (= Ta’rikh al-hukamā’) by Ibn al-Qifṭī (d. 646/1248)45 and is also taken up verbatim by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a (d. 668/1270) in Chapter 13 (Tabaqāt al-āṭibbā’ alladhīn zaharū fi bilād al-Maghrib wa-aqāmū bihā) of his ‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fi tābaqāt al-āṭibbā’.46 The variants of these two texts have been inserted in the apparatus only for proper names as well as for a few other words. They are respectively marked with Q and U.

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لتقديم كتاب [بطنطيوس] المعروف بالمحسن والفاعل فكتابًا حسنًا في تمام العدد والمعنى المعروف عندنا بالمعامات وللأعمال وال끔وب أختصر فيه تعديل الكواكب من زيج البيناني. وعلى زيج محمد بن موسى الخوارزمي وضعت تاربكة الفارسية إلى التاريخ.

قال القاضي صاعد: (على أنه اتبعه على خطبة، وأنه لم يرد على موضوعه) فيهم.

وهذا النص من كتابي [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف، وعلى ذلك في كتابي [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.

وقد جاء في نص مدون [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وقد جاء في نص مدون [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وقد جاء في نص مدون [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.

وأما الناس فيهم [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.

لterraform، وكيديه [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وكيديه [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.

55 [بطنطيوس] Sb Sb Sb Sb Sb Sb Sb Sb Sb
56 ولكني حسن [إملاء كتابي حسنًا]
57 [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وكيديه [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.
58 و[الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وكيديه [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.
59 [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وكيديه [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.
60 أصلح [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وكيديه [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.
61 [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وكيديه [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.
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73 [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وكيديه [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.
74 [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وكيديه [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.
75 [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وكيديه [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.
76 [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وكيديه [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.
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79 [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وكيديه [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.
80 [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف. وكيديه [الإملاء] الموقف في إصلاح حرث الكواكب والعربي في بعض الحروف.

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3 Translation

Praised be God! The author of this book is the shaykh, the master, the venerable teacher {Abū l-Qasim [sic] Maslama Ibn Aḥmad, referred to as al-Marḫīṭī [sic]}. He was the imam of the mathematicians of his time in al-Andalus, and he knew more than anyone before him of the science of the spheres and of the movements of the stars. He was concerned with the observations of planets, and he was eager to understand the book by Ptolemy known as the Almagest. He wrote a good book on commercial arithmetic, a discipline known to us as *muʿāmalāt*. He was also the author of a book on the calculation of the true position of the planets, which is a summary of al-Battānī’s *Zīj*. He also studied the *Zīj* of Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Khwārizmī and replaced the Persian era

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[^83]: ديار الشرق
[^81]: وإنها منها إلى حران من بلاد الجزيرة
[^84]: وعلى ذلك بطلب: وُصِلَتْ S^h^ S^h^ Q U
[^85]: على ذلك بطلب: وُصِلَتْ S^h^ S^h^ Q U
[^86]: بلاد الأندلس
[^87]: سنة مديدة مسافة S^h^ S^h^ S^h^
[^88]: *من تزاحم*; translated by Blachère as “dans l’Ouest de la Péninsule”, in patent contradiction with the location of Zaragoza with respect to the Iberian Peninsula. The manuscript has *‘Uyūn al-anbā’* (from its border), which makes much better sense. This reading is further confirmed by Ibn al-Qiftī’s *Ikhbār* as well as both editions of Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a’s
[as found there] with the Arab era; he determined the mean position of the planets as counted from the beginning of the *hijra*, and he supplied good tables.} The qadi Šā‘id said: {He has nevertheless reproduced his mistakes and has not indicated the passages which were erroneous. I have pointed this out in the book which I have written on the correction of the movements of the planets, revealing the errors made by the specialists of observation. Abū l-Qasim Maslama b. Aḥmad died shortly before the beginning of the *fitna* in the year 398 [1007]. He educated excellent students, unsurpassed in al-Andalus for their science. Among the most famous are Ibn al-Samḥ, Ibn al-Ṣaffār, al-Zahrāwī, al-Kirmānī and Ibn Khaldūn.

Ibn al-Samḥ is Abū l-Qasim [sic] Aṣbagh b. Muḥammad b. al-Samḥ al-Mahrī.}

{Al-Zahrāwī is Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Sulaymān.}

{Al-Kirmānī is Abū l-Ḥakam ‘Amr b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Kirmānī, from Cordoba.}

The qadi Šā‘id b. Aḥmad b. Šā‘id said: {He [= al-Kirmānī] travelled to the East, settled in Ḥarrān, and he devoted his attention to the study of geometry and medicine, then he went back to al-Andalus and settled in Zaragoza, [reaching it] from its border. He brought with him the epistles known as the “Epistles of the Brethren of Purity”}. There is no learning in al-Andalus without reference to it, [something] on which the people of the Peninsula agree. {He died in Zaragoza in the year 458 [= 1066].}

And there remains the statement of those who link them [the epistles] with the master Maslama. It is very likely that he [= Maslama] has mentioned in some of his writings that they are his [own] composition, [as for instance] when he says in *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* or in other books about the ‘art’: “I have already mentioned this in my book ‘so and so’”. Some have said that he took them with him and that he then introduced them into al-Andalus. Some have said that they were originally dispatched in Baṣra, and that they then became famous, [spreading] from Baṣra over the land of the East, and [that] al-Kirmānī became acquainted with them from these countries, but since he was a follower of al-Majrīṭī (?) ... they have ascribed them all to his teacher. And it is said that all the books are not by him [= Maslama], and that they are only said [to be so] from his own mouth, and other things of this kind are said, but God knows best.
4 Commentary

Leaving aside the part taken from Sā‘īd in this commentary and turning immediately to the last lines of the text, we note that the first original addition to the Ṭabaqāt al-umam is to be found just before the phrase “He died in Zaragoza in the year 458”, with which Sā‘īd concludes his report about al-Kirmānī. The insertion is worth noting; by commenting that “there is no learning in al-Andalus without reference to it”, the author of the note provides new and particularly striking evidence of the success enjoyed by the Ikhwānian corpus in the western part of the Islamic world. Not only does the copyist remark that the corpus has acquired the status of a key work in the transmission of scientific knowledge through al-Andalus, he also insists that this fact is unanimously agreed upon in the Peninsula.

Having briefly returned to Sā‘īd’s account in order to mention al-Kirmānī’s year of death, the copyist recounts several theories about the attribution of the Ikhwānian corpus to Maslama al-Majrīṭī. This is clearly the most interesting part of the note. The introductory phrase (wa-baqiya qawl man yansibuhā ilā l-ra‘īs Maslama) suggests that the copyist is no longer quoting from anyone here but is instead providing an updated synthesis of the issue in his own words, just as he did previously in commenting on the diffusion of the Rasā‘il. He starts by pointing out the origin of the problem: namely, certain affirmations found in Rutbat al-ḥakīm. This naturally calls attention to the ambiguous attitude of the Rutbah’s author as discussed above. When the copyist refers to phrases such as “I have already mentioned this in my book so and so”, what else could this be except a reference to the multiple passages in which the author uses expressions such as qad qaddamtu or qad qaddānū (“I/We have already presented”) in reference to the Rasā‘il? In emphasising how evident these self-ascriptions are, the copyist is implicitly acknowledging the position of those who take this for granted, thereby affirming that Maslama is the genuine author of the encyclopaedia.

The copyist then moves on to alternative theories as put forward by some of his predecessors whom he does not mention by name. The first theory which “some have put forward” is that Maslama al-Majrīṭī brought the Rasā‘il back to al-Andalus himself. This represents the position of those who, although they do not believe in Maslama’s authorship, nevertheless admit that he played an important role in the transmission of the Ikhwānian corpus to al-Andalus.
This argument has simplicity in its favour, and it is understandable that this theory may have appealed to some scholars, ancient and modern alike, but it also raises a major difficulty; it has become habitual for modern biographers to stress that Maslama al-Majrīṭī’s life is poorly documented, but the deafening silence of medieval sources about the possibility of such a sojourn in the East makes it rather doubtful that Maslama ever set foot on Oriental soil. In fact, the only references found in literature to such a trip are precisely those which connect al-Majrīṭī with the story of the introduction of the Rasā’īl into al-Andalus. But if we take a closer look at this material we soon arrive at the conclusion that this connection is merely a modern legend.

The origin of the myth is a note made by the nineteenth-century Spanish scholar Pascual de Gayangos in his English translation of the Nafḥ al-ṭīb by al-Maqqarī (d. 1041/1632). Addressing the passage in which al-Maqqarī narrates the story about al-Kirmānī and Rasā’īl Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’—evidently following Ṣā’id or one of his numerous followers—, de Gayangos asserts: “I believe the author to be wrong in his statement that this individual was the first who introduced into Spain the collection of philosophical treatises known by the title of Rasāyīl arbāb-s-safā[sic].”94 To justify his own position, de Gayangos appeals to a passage from Ibn Khayr’s Fahrasa, which he had apparently found in the manuscript Ar. 1667 from El Escorial Library and which claims that “Abū-l-kásim Moslemah Ibn Ahmad Al-majerittī[sic] was the first who brought them [the Rasā’īl] to Spain from the East.”95 That de Gayangos, who nowhere gives a precise reference to this passage, may have been “the victim of some error”96 is suspected by Samuel Stern in his article “New Information about the Authors of the ‘Epistles of the Sincere Brethren’”. Stern rightly notes that no information of this kind can be found in the edition of the Fahrasa by Codera and Ribera and that the names of Maslama al-Majrīṭī and Rasā’īl Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ do not even appear in the index of the edition.97 In addition to Stern’s argument one may also observe that de Gayangos commits another serious error just a few notes before, and that this other inaccuracy may also have been instrumental in the propagation

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94 de Gayangos, The History, vol. 1, p. 429, n. 47.
95 de Gayangos, The History, vol. 1, p. 429, n. 47.
96 Stern, “New Information”, p. 427, n. 42.
97 Stern, “New Information”, pp. 427-428.
of our legend in modern scholarship. Thus while commenting on the passage about “Abú ὴObeydah Moslem Ibn Ahmed”, better known as the “master of the Qibla” (al-maʿrūf bi-ṣāḥib al-qibla) — in fact the Cordoban mathematician and astronomer Abū ὴUbayda Muslim b. Ahmad al-Laythī (d. 295/908) —, de Gayangos believes he can identify this scholar with “a certain Moslem or Moslemah Ibn Ahmed Al-majrīṭī (from Madrid)” as mentioned by Casiri in his description of the manuscripts of El Escorial. De Gayangos himself seems aware that his proposition has its share of weakness, but since Maqqarī's text in that place indicates that this scholar made a journey in the Orient, with stays in Mecca and Cairo, this must have been perceived as confirmation of the theory that Maslama al-Majrīṭī accomplished a riḥla to the East and took advantage of his sojourn there to acquire a copy of the Rasāʾil and bring it back to al-Andalus. More than fifty years after the publication of Stern’s article, it remains curious that so many later scholars took this most improbable story for granted and never sought to check the sources.

98 De Gayangos, The History, vol. 1, p. 149.
99 See Rius, “Al-Laythī, Abū ὴUbayda”.
100 De Gayangos, The History, vol. 1, p. 427, n. 37.
101 De Gayangos, The History, vol. 1, p. 427, n. 37: “His surname was Abú-l-kásim, not ὴObeydah. However, as the Arabs not infrequently denominate themselves after one or more of their sons, he may have had both appellatives, Abú-l-kásim and Abú ὴObeydah, and therefore be the individual here intended, especially as the account of his life given by Casiri (vol. i. p. 378, c. 2), as translated from the Arabica Philosophorum Bibliotheca, agrees with the present.” In fact, the notice in that place (Casiri, Bibliotheca, vol. 1, p. 378) concerns a copy of the Ghāya and is for Casiri the occasion of providing a biographical account of “Moslemae Magritensis, sive Matritensis Vita et Scripta ex Arabia Philosophorum Bibliotheca, fol. 365”. This proves to be a mere summary of Ṣāʾîd’s account on Maslama al-Majrīṭī (where, of course, no connection with the Rasāʾil is established and no journey to the East is mentioned), the only supplementary information being a reference to “Ebn Pasqual” and to “Ebn Alharadi” for the alternative date of al-Majrīṭī’s death. Contrary to what de Gayangos writes, there is nothing in this account which agrees with Maqqarī’s statement about the “Master of the Qibla”.
102 For the edition of this passage, see Maqqarī, Kitāb Naṣī al-ṭib, vol. 2, p. 255.
103 See for instance, among recent statements: Sarton, Introduction to the History of Science, vol. 1, pp. 668-669, s. v. “Maslama Ibn Ahmad”, here p. 668: “He may have introduced into Spain the writings of the Brethren of Purity, or else this was done later, by one of his disciples, al-Kirmānī”; Sarton writes in a note: “Arabic sources contradict one another on this point”; Vernet, La cultura hispanoárabe en Oriente y Occidente, p. 32: “Buena parte de esos conocimientos quedaron recogidos en Las epístolas de los hermanos de la pureza o Rasāʾil iṣwān al-ṣafā’, compuestas en Oriente a fines del siglo X e introducidas en España por Maslama de Madrid. Su discípulo, al-Qarmānī (sic) (m. 458/1065),
Yet it also seems important to raise the following point: if one ascribes the *Rutba* and the *Ghāya* to Maslama al-Majrīṭī, and if, on the other hand, one takes into account what the author of the *Rutba* says about the *Rasā’il*, then it becomes perfectly conceivable to consider that al-Majrīṭī played a role in the introduction of the corpus into al-Andalus. The most obvious supposition in that case is that al-Majrīṭī himself travelled to the East to obtain a copy, even if his *riḥla* across the Orient is not documented in the sources. The author of the bibliographical note of the MS Ragıp Paşa 965 must have been following similar reasoning when he wrote: “Some have said that he [= Maslama al-Majrīṭī] took them with him and that he then introduced them into al-Andalus”. It is worth stressing this point since this is, to the best of our knowledge, the first time that one encounters this assumption in pre-modern literature. In the absence of any comparable affirmation in medieval sources, it is not possible to determine from where the copyist derived this information, so that various options remain open for consideration. In view of the fact that an extended sojourn in the East is well documented for Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī, as we have seen above, it could be suggested that our phrase is another consequence of the confusion between the two Maslamas. However this eventuality seems unlikely, because the rest of the note is entirely dedicated to Maslama al-Majrīṭī, and one might question whether its author was even aware of al-Qurṭubī’s existence. What can be definitively ruled out is the supposition that this text formed the basis for the modern legend regarding Maslama al-Majrīṭī as the importer of the *Rasā’il* since that legend seems to originate in a confusion made in the 19th century.

The copyist next addresses what has apparently become the standard interpretation over the centuries. Once again he only alludes to unidentified informants, but in this case his allusions are precise and transparent. The first part, in which the original dispatching of the *Rasā’il* in Baṣra is followed by its broader diffusion in the East, clearly echoes the tradition proceeding from al-Tawḥīdī’s famous statement in...
the Imtā’.

The second part, in which al-Kirmānī is mentioned as the scholar who brought the corpus into al-Andalus, is merely a recapitulation of what the copyist has just quoted from Ṣā‘īd’s Ṭabaqāt. What succeeds this is more noteworthy; in spite of one or two words which cannot be clearly read, the meaning of the remark is unambiguous: since al-Kirmānī was a follower of Maslama al-Majrītī, it is to al-Kirmānī’s master that the whole corpus of the Rasā’il was ascribed.

In view of this hotchpotch of theories, which even the copyist seems to have recorded with a certain degree of scepticism, it can be surmised that the note’s concluding words express its author’s conviction that “all the books” alleged to be by Maslama “are not his”, but that people have been misled by what the scholar affirms in his own writings. It is not entirely clear which works the copyist alludes to with “all the books”, but there can be no doubt that the Rasā’il are chief among them.

Ragıp Paşa 963, title page (fol. 90r)

1 Presentation

According to Sezgin, MS Ragıp Paşa 963 is from the 9th/15th century.105 The text of the Rutba is found on fols. 90r-115v. The text is fully vocalised, albeit somewhat erratically, and it is written in an extremely careful and elegant naskh script. On fol. 90r the title of the work is given in the same hand as:

Kitāb Rutbat al-ḥakīm wa-madkhal al-ta’lim ta’lif al-imām al-‘ālim al-faylasūf Abī Muḥammad Maslama ibn Aḥmad al-mulaqqab bi-l-Majrītī al-Andalusī raḥimahu Llāh wa-huwa arba’ maqālāt al-maqāla al-ūlā lā faṣl fīh fiḥ wa-l-maqāla al-thālihīha fiḥ thāliḥthāta ‘ashara faṣlā wa-l-maqāla al-rābi’a fiḥ wa-arba’ ata’ ‘ashara faṣl al-jumla aḥad [sic] wa-thāliḥthīn faṣl

Book of the Rank of the Sage and of the Introduction to Learning, written by the Imam, the Learned, the Philosopher Abū Muḥammad
Maslama ibn Ahmad surnamed al-Majrīṭī al-Andalusī – May God have mercy on him! It consists of four chapters. Chapter One has no sections. Chapter Two has four sections, Chapter Three has 13 and Chapter Four has 14. In all, it contains 31 sections.

The rest of the page consists entirely of a biographical note in the same hand. As opposed to the note of MS Ragıp Paşa 965, this one appears to be a compilation of several distinct sources. There are no ownership marks on this manuscript.

Illustration nr. 4

Ragıp Paşa 963, fol. 90r
2 Text

The readings quoted in the notes are the readings of the manuscript.

And in the same day of Dhul-Qa’dah of the year 395 \[20 August 1005\], that he had died under the mercy of God within the divisions of the third hour of the Kalends of the tribe of the Banū Umayya. But this is not true since he came from the Banū Umayya.

It is found in some history books that the aforementioned Maslama Ibn al-Shāmkh [sic] mentioned that he was from the Berber Maslama tribe, but this is not true since he came from the Banū Umayya. Ibn al-Shāmkh [sic] mentioned that he was from the Berber Maslama tribe, but this is not true since he came from the Banū Umayya.

3 Translation

It is found in some history books that the aforementioned Maslama died with God’s mercy within the divisions of the third hour of the 12th of Dhul-Qa’dah of the year 395 [20 August 1005], that he had numerous disciples in al-Andalus, among them Abū Bakr Ibn Bishrūn, Ibn al-Ṣaffār, al-Zahrāwī, al-Kirmānī and Ibn Khaldūn, and that ‘the Sage,’ the son of al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh, had much concern for him.

Ibn al-Shāmkh [sic] mentioned that he was from the Berber Maslama tribe, but this is not true since he came from the Banū Umayya.
There has been between Ibn al-Shamkh [sic] and Maslama a profound
dissension, because this one had treated him roughly, and he [= Ibn al-
Samh] had left him for Abū Muḥammad al-Sūsī. This is reliable infor-
mation as it was reported by Ibn Bishró̞n and others.

Maslama had an outstanding rank and distinguished himself in the
sciences. He is the author of various famous books on the religious sci-
ences dealing with the [legal] derivatives and principles. He is also the
author of excellent books in the mathematical sciences, among them
Rasāʿīl Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, Rutbat al-ḥakīm about the first conclusion,
and also this second [conclusion] which is Ghāyat al-ḥakīm. His is also
the wonderful history Taʿrīkh al-falāsifat al-ʿarab, in which he has
elaborated on what is known about them. His is also a small epistle on
derivation in which he has established the secret of the ‘art’ and of the
derivation of bodies from one another. Nobody more marvellous, more
astonishing, more intelligent and more pious than him has appeared in
the country of al-Andalus.

Consider his books and know that Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī owes to
the Rasāʿīl Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ the whole of his understanding and most
of his science, and that it is from these that he has obtained his under-
standing and his science.

It is said that the Epistles which are his [= Maslama’s] are different
from those which are in the people’s hands, and that his Epistles are
famous in the Maghrib. But God knows best!

4 Commentary

Sources disagree about Maslama al-Majrīṭī’s time of death. Ṣāʿīd
al-Andalusī, who provides the most detailed account of Maslama’s bi-
ography, reports that he died “shortly before the beginning of the fitna,
in the year 398 [1007]”. This date is also given by both Ibn al-Qiftī and
Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a. On the other hand, Ibn Bashkuwāl (d. 578/1183)
mentions “Dhū al-Qa’d of 395” and affirms, on the account of his
predecessor Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 469/1076), that Maslama was “ninety-
seven years old when the fitna broke out.”109 Subsequent authors tend

109 Ibn Bashkuwāl, Kitāb al-Ṣila, n° 1257.
to follow either of these traditions, with preference given to Ibn Bashkuwāl’s dating, which agrees with our manuscript. The horoscope-like precision of the present writer is most unusual and does not seem to have an equivalent in the other sources.

The writer next turns to Maslama’s disciples; five students are mentioned: Abū Bakr Ibn Bishrūn, Ibn al-Ṣaffār, al-Zahrāwī, al-Kirmānī and Ibn Khalḍūn. The last four are precisely the same four names and in the same order as those listed in Ṭabaqāt al-umam. The two lists are at variance about the first name. Whereas Šā’id mentions the famous geometer and astronomer Abū l-Qāsim Aṣbagh ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Samḥ al-Gharnāṭī (d. 426/1035), the copyist of the present manuscript mentions Abū Bakr Ibn Bishrūn, whose name is nowhere to be found in Ṭabaqāt al-umam.

The second scholar mentioned is the mathematician and astronomer Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Ṣaffār al-Andalusī, who was born in Cordoba and who died in Denia in 1035. The third one, al-Zahrāwī, is an arithmetician and geometrician referred to by Šā’id as Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Sulaymān. The fourth is Abū l-Ḥakam ‘Amr b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Kirmānī, who was born in Cordoba and died in 458/1066, and whom Šā’id credits with the introduction of the Rasā’il to Zaragoza. Ibn Khalḍūn is Abū Muslim ‘Amr b. Aḥmad Ibn Khalḍūn al-Ḥaḍramī, who was born in Seville and died in 449/1057. He is mentioned by Šā’id as well as by his namesake, the historian Ibn Khalḍūn.

Abū Bakr Ibn Bishrūn, the first disciple named in this list, is a scholar whose biography is more obscure. A scientist by the same name is mentioned in the Muqaddima as a disciple of “Maslama al-Majrīṭī”, or rather as Ibn Khalḍūn believed, a disciple of the author of the Rutba and of the Ghāya. He is there presented as the author of an epistle on alchemy addressed to a certain “Ibn al-Samḥ”, the contents of which the historian

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110 See Pingree, “Ibn al-Samḥ”; Comes, “Ibn al-Samḥ”; Rius, “Ibn al-Samḥ”.
111 See Rius, “Ibn al-Ṣaffār”.
112 He is not to be confused with the famous physician and surgeon al-Zahrāwī, curiously not mentioned in the Ṭabaqāt al-umam, who was born in Madīnat al-Zahrā’ and who died in Cordoba after 400/1009. On the latter, see Llavero Ruiz, “Zahrāwī”.
113 Ibn Khalḍūn, Prologomènes, vol. 3, p. 99; Ibn Khalḍūn, The Muqaddimah, vol. 3, pp. 126-127.
reproduces in their entirety. Ibn Khaldūn and the copyist of the biographical note clearly consider Abū Bakr Ibn Bishrūn to be one of al-Majrīṭī’s pupils: an assumption evidently resulting from the fact that the addressee of the epistle is identified with Abū l-Qāsim Aṣbagh b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Samḥ al-Gharnāṭī, the first of Maslama al-Majrīṭī’s students in Sā’id’s list. But this is highly conjectural, if only for the fact that Abū l-Qāsim Aṣbagh Ibn al-Samḥ is nowhere mentioned in connection with alchemy. In her article on the bāṭinī traditionist Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurtubī, Maribel Fierro suggests with greater plausibility that the addressee of Ibn Bishrūn’s treatise should be identified with another “Ibn al-Samḥ”, who was born in 303/915 and whose death must have taken place in Maḏīnat al-Zahrā’ in either 370/980 or 387/997. A Shāfi’ī grammarian and ascetic, this other Ibn al-Samḥ (the complete form of his name is Abū Sulaymān ‘Abd al-Salām Ibn al-Samḥ b. Nābil b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Yahyūn b. Ḥārith b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-’Azīz al-Hawwārī al-Shāfi’ī) travelled widely across the Near East and in particular to Mecca, where he studied with the mystic Abū Sa’īd Ibn al-A’rābī (d. 341/952). This last fact is noteworthy, for Ibn al-A’rābī remains famous for having been the teacher of an impressive number of students from al-Andalus, beginning with Maslama al-Qurtubī himself. If we accept Fierro’s proposal, as other scholars have done in recent years, then it would mean that Abū Bakr Ibn Bishrūn was a disciple not of Maslama al-Majrīṭī but of Maslama al-Qurtubī. This
would also mean that, in addition to the general confusion between the two Maslamas (and most probably as a direct consequence of that first amalgamation), medieval authors confused their respective entourages as well.

Having mentioned what he regards as five of Majrīṭī’s students, the author of the note turns to the scholar’s privileged position with respect to the political authority of his time. The “son of al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh” is the caliph al-Ḥakam II (r. 350-366/961-976), son and successor of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, whose surname was indeed “al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh”. He is here referred to as al-ḥakīm (“the Sage”). Is this a simple scribal error for “al-Ḥakam”, or is it a reference to the caliph’s peerless reputation as a patron of the arts and sciences?

“Ibn al-Shāmkh”, spelled “Ibn al-Shamkh” in the subsequent line, must be Abū l-Qāsim Aṣbagh b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Samḥ, the famous Andalusī geometrician whose name for some unknown reason had not previously appeared in the copyist’s list of al-Majrīṭī’s disciples. The “profound dissension” supposed to have taken place between Ibn al-Samḥ and his master al-Majrīṭī is not otherwise recorded in ancient literature, but an echo of Ibn al-Samḥ’s separation from his teacher is still perceptible in the Takmila li-Kitāb al-Ṣila by Ibn al-‘Abbār (d. 658/1260), where the following statement about the disciple appears:

Asbāgh b. Muḥammad b. Asbāgh Ibn al-Samḥ al-Mahrī from Cordoba, sur-named Abū l-Qāsim. He was famed for his mastery of mathematics and geometry and for his experience in medicine and astronomy. He studied under Maslama b. Aḥmad al-Marḥīṭī [sic], and he was one of his greater disciples. Having adopted the doctrine of Abū Muḥammad al-Sūsī, he followed his trail and left his homeland of Cordoba during the fitna to establish himself in Granada under the protection of Ḥabbūs b. Māksan al-Ṣanhājī, the son of Bādīs.\footnote{Ibn al-Abbār, Takmila, pp. 246-247, § 549. For Abū Muhammad al-Sūsī, see Kad-douri, “al-Sūsî.” Ibn al-Samḥ’s stay in Granada under Ḥabbūs’s patronage is also mentioned in the Ṭabaqāt (Ṣā’id al-Andalusī, Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-umam, p. 70), but Ṣā’id does not specify the reason why Ibn al-Samḥ left Cordoba for Granada.}

The author’s informant in this case is a certain “Ibn Bishrūn”. It cannot be determined who he is, but he could hardly be the same as the above-mentioned “Abū Bakr Ibn Bishrūn”, since the latter must have died well before the separation between al-Majrīṭī and his disciple.
Ibn al-Samḥ.\textsuperscript{119} Whoever “Ibn Bishrūn the informant” may have been, it is interesting to observe that our biographer considers him a much more reliable source than “Ibn al-Samḥ”, at least with respect to the question of al-Majrīṭī’s tribe. To the best of our knowledge, this controversy regarding Majrīṭī’s origin does not appear in any of the extant medieval sources.

In his enumeration of Maslama’s books, the author of the note first writes of “various famous books” in the religious sciences; he does not mention these by name, but we might perhaps hypothesise that he is alluding to Maslama’s recognised authority in the field of inheritance legislation. Al-Majrīṭī specialised in the laws of descent and distribution, technically known as *ilm al-farā‘īd*, and he owed to this specialisation his *nisba* of “al-Faraḍī.”\textsuperscript{120}

The copyist notes Maslama’s production in the “mathematical sciences” (*fī l-riyāḍīyāt*) – a common designation in Arabic literature for rational thinking. First and foremost, he explicitly expresses his belief that Maslama al-Majrīṭī was not only the author of the *Rutba* and the *Ghāya* but also of the *Rasā‘il*. This confirms our view that the attribution of the three works to a single scholar was the rule rather than the exception among Western Arab authors of the Middle Ages. The three works are listed in the correct chronological order of their redaction, and we may reasonably suppose that this is due to internal evidence: the *Ghāya* refers to the *Rutba*, and the *Rutba* refers to the *Rasā‘il*. The formulation of the note also suggests that the chronological sequence of the works was understood as reflecting the progression of the “Sage” as he scales the philosophical ladder. In the *Rutba*, the *Rasā‘il* are considered the best compendium of philosophy and the ideal prerequisite to alchemy. In turn, alchemy is an absolute prerequisite to magic, which is the ultimate goal of the sage, as affirmed in the *Ghāya*.

\textsuperscript{119} The identification between “Abū Bakr Ibn Bishrūn” and “Ibn Bishrūn” has been suggested by Rosenthal, who, having been able to consult the manuscript under discussion here, brought the note of its title page in line with Ibn Khaldūn’s report about the letter from “Abū Bakr Ibn Bishrūn” to “Ibn al-Samḥ”. See Rosenthal in Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, vol. 3, p. 230, n. 969.

\textsuperscript{120} Rius, “al-Maŷrīṭī, Maslama”, also notes (here p. 535): “Maestro de Maslama al-Majrīṭī fue Abū Ayyūb ‘Abd al-Gāfir b. Muḥammad al-Faraḍī, jurista (discípulo de Ahmad b. Jālid y de su escuela) especializado en *farā‘īd* (reparto de herencias) y de quien aprendería, precisamente, la ciencia de los repartos sucesorios.”
After this trilogy of works, a book called \textit{al-Taʾrīkh al-ʾajīb} (“the wonderful history”) is mentioned, immediately followed by \textit{Taʾrīkh falāṣifat al-ʾarab} (“The History of Arab Philosophers”). The assertion that Maslama wrote a “History of Arab Philosophers” unquestionably comes from the \textit{Ghāya} and the \textit{Rutba} themselves. In the second \textit{maqāla} of the \textit{Ghāya}, one of Maslama’s books entitled “The History of Arab Philosophers” (\textit{Taʾrīkh falāṣifat al-ʾarab}) is mentioned. Al-Qurtūbī’s purpose here is to point out that he had mentioned in that earlier book a treatise on the fabrication of talismans by Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Zakarīyāʾ al-Rāzī.\textsuperscript{121} In the prologue of the \textit{Rutba}, in response to a virulent diatribe against the pseudo-philosophers and the pseudo-scientists of the author’s time, one finds mentioned a work entitled “The Book of the Categories of Arab Philosophers” (\textit{Kitāb Taḥaqāţ falāṣifat al-ʾarab}), which is most probably this treatise.\textsuperscript{122} A book with another variant of this title is also referred to in the last \textit{maqāla} of the \textit{Rutba}. This mention in a passage about Jābir b. Hayyān reads: “I provide a report about him [= Jābir], his lineage and the titles of his books in my book known as the ‘History of Arab Philosophers and of Those to Whom Wisdom is Ascribed’.”\textsuperscript{123} The same book is then simply referred to as \textit{Taʾrīkh} a few pages further down in a passage where al-Qurtūbī discusses once again Jābir and his works. The passage states: “The mentioned man has written many writings of this kind. They are more numerous than the writings on the (alchemical) work. Among them are the Book of Demonstrative Rarities, [the Book of] Mercy, [the Book of] the Treasured Science, [the Book of] Elements. And we have mentioned the titles of all his books in ‘The History’.”\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{121} Pseudo-Majrītī [in reality Maslama ibn Qāsim al-Qurtūbī], \textit{Ghāyat al-ḥakīm}, p. 144, ll. 12-13. Curiously, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī is there presented as “the philosopher of the Arabs”, an appellation traditionally used in Arabic literature for al-Kindī; see n. 126.

\textsuperscript{122} See MS Beşir Ağা 505, fol. 2v, l. 4, MS Ragıp Paşa 965, fol. 49r, l. 11.\textsuperscript{122} MS Beşir Ağा 505, fol. 48v, l. 3-4, MS Ragıp Paşa 965, fol. 116r, ll. 13-14: \textit{wa-}\textit{na-}\textit{na-nā} أَكَّرُ خَيْرَهُ وَتَلَمَّشَ كَتَابُهُ فِي كَتَابِ الْمَعْرُوف تَقَلِيدًا فِي الْقَارِئِ فِي الْعَرَبِ وَمَنْتَلَّى الْمَكْثَة}

\textsuperscript{123} MS Beşir Ağа 505, fol. 51r, l. 15-18, MS Ragıp Paşa 965, fol. 120r, l. 8-10:

ولله هذا الرجل المعروف من هذه التواليف تواليف (مقطع عن ب) كثيرة هي أكثر من التواليف العملية منها كتاب المواد البهائية والرحمة والعلم المخزون والاركان وكتبه كثيرة قد نذكرنا نسبيها في التاريخ.

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The same could be said of yet another reference made by al-Qurṭubī in the same part of the work relating to the history of alchemy: “In the aforementioned book, which I have entitled ‘The History,’ we have already mentioned these people, their situations, their names, their countries and how they received wisdom one after the other.”125 For the sake of completeness, it may be added that the same tendency to refer to an unspecified Taʾrīkh is also observable in Ghāyat al-ḥakīm. In the third maqāla, for instance, al-Qurṭubī mentions his earlier Kitāb al-Taʾrīkh while discussing astrological prognostications and refers to the philosopher al-Kindī and his treatise Fī Mulk al-ʿarab wa-kammiyatihi (“On the Rule of the Arabs and its Duration”).126 It thus seems natural to assume that this “Book of History” is the same work as “The History of Arab Philosophers”. Ritter and Plessner arrive at same conclusion in a note to their translation of that passage.127 It is unfortunate that this historical work by al-Qurṭubī is no longer extant.128

But how are we to interpret the mention of al-Taʾrīkh al-ʿajīb (“the wonderful history”) which immediately precedes this reference in the biographical note of our manuscript? No book by this name has so far

125 MS Beşir Ağa 505, fol. 48v, l. 10-11, MS Ragıp Paşa 965, fols. 116r, l. 2 ab imo-116v, l. 2: وقد دكرنا هؤلاء القوم وحولاتهم وأخبارهم واسماهم (ز: واسماهم) وبلادهم وكيف أخذوا الحكمة واحد بعد واحد في الكتاب الذي سميته التاريخ المتقدم.

126 See Pseudo-Majrīfī [in reality Maslama ibn Qāsim al-Qurṭubī], Ghāyat al-ḥakīm, p. 175, ll. 15-16: وهو المعنى في بقية الخلق وقد ذكرت مكانته من العلم في الكتب في التاريخ. Note that in this extract, the “faylasūf al-ʿarab” is al-Kindī (and not Rāzī as above). Al-Kindī’s text is edited in Burnett and Yamamoto, “Appendix III (Fī mulk al-ʿarab wa-kammiyatihi)”.

127 Ritter and Plessner in: Pseudo-Majrīfī, Picatrix, p. 184, n. 2: “Gemeint ist offenbar das vom Verfasser schon oben S. 151 erwähnte Werk über die Geschichte der arabischen Philosophen.”

128 In her recent contribution for the Biblioteca de al-Andalus (Rius, “Ibn al-Qāsim”), Mónica Rius lists five works by Maslama other than the Rūṭba and the Ghāyata: namely: 1) al-Hilya (“The Ornament”); 2) Kitāb fi-l-Khatt fi l-turāb (“The Book of the Scriptures on the Earth”), apparently concerned with the casting of lots (darb al-quʿa); 3) Kitāb al-Nisāʾ (“The Book of Women”); 4) Mā Rawā al-kibār ‘an al-sīghār (“What the Great People Transmit from the Small Ones”); 5) al-Ṣīla li-l-taʾrīkh al-kabīr li-l-Bukhari (“Continuation to the Great History by al-Bukhari”). None of them is extant and all are known through indications made by later writers, such as Ibn Khayr (d. 575/1179) or Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449), (see also Fierro, “Bātinism”, p. 89). As can be seen, most of these writings must have been primarily concerned with hadith or other forms of religious thinking. It seems to us that the “History of Arab Philosophers” could have been mentioned with equal justification.
Having discovered in a Cairo manuscript of the *Rutba* some of the passages discussed above about the *Taʾrīkh*, Paul Kraus wondered whether this could not have been a reference to a previous work by "Pseudo-Majrīṭī" on the history of alchemy, but this appears to be a conjecture on his part (Kraus, *Jābir*, vol. 1, p. 135, n. 9). Even if we were to accept Kraus’s conjecture, this would hardly allow us to identify that other "History" by al-Qurṭubī with the "wonderful history" found here.

See, for instance, Sviri, "Understanding". We are grateful to Sarah Stroumsa for providing us with an English summary of this article.

The last work ascribed to Maslama by the copyist is a short epistle (*risāla saghīra*) on “derivation” (*istinbāṭ*) in which he is claimed to have exposed the secret of the alchemical art (*ṣirr al-ṣanʿa*) and the process by which bodies are derived from one another. Although *istinbāṭ* is a term susceptible of various interpretations,130 the present context makes it likely that it is used here in the specific context of alchemy. Apart from *Rutbat al-ḥakīm*, the only alchemical work ascribed to “Maslama al-Majrīṭī” is *Rawdat al-hadāʾiq wa-riyāḍ al-khalāʾiq*, which Ziriklī regards as a “short epistle” (*risāla ṣaghīra*).131 The attribution of the *Rawda* to “Pseudo-Majrīṭī” is not just a modern speculation as it was also made by Häjjī Khalīfa in the 11th/17th century. His statement in the *Kashf al-ẓunūn* is worth citing here as it provides further evidence for the attribution of *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ* to “al-Majrīṭī”: “*Rawdat al-hadāʾiq wa-riyāḍ al-khalāʾiq*, by the sage Maslama ibn al-Waḍḍāḥ al-Qurṭubī al-Majrīṭī, who is the author of the book of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ”132. In the third *maqāla* of the *Rutba* we

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130 See, for instance, Sviri, “Understanding”. We are grateful to Sarah Stroumsa for providing us with an English summary of this article.

131 Ziriklī, *Al-ʾālam*, vol. 7, p. 224 (s. v. Abū l-Qāsim al-Majrīṭī).

132 Häjjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, vol. 5, p. 500, n° 6643. See also Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, p. 107, n. 2 (with reference to MS Chester Beatty 3231, see n. 10) and pp. 122-123. See also Brockelmann, *Geschichte*, vol. 1, p. 432. Sezgin, *Geschichte*, p. 298, n° 3, mentions a *Rawda fi y-ṣanʿa al-ilāḥiyah al-ḥarīmah al-mukhitima*, which is found in MS Beşir Ağa 505, fols. 60r-85v, and which includes several treatises.
find an indication that its author has previously written an “epistle” (risāla) entirely devoted to symbols (rumūz) and the way they are used in the sciences. The context of the passage suggests that al-Qurtubi’s objective in writing that epistle had been to explain that every science is necessarily symbolic (marmūza), but that alchemy has usually been considered the “symbolic science” (al-‘ilm al-marmūz) par excellence as a result of the people’s prejudice and disregard for it (tahāmulan ʿalayhi wa-dhamman lahu). Could that epistle be the one alluded to by the copyist of the manuscript? And could it eventually be identified with the Rawḍa? Given the present state of knowledge, and pending a close examination of the manuscripts of the Rawḍa, it is probably better not to press the case too hard.

The note ends with a polemic against Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. As must have been the case for various champions of Islamic orthodoxy in the Middle Ages, al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) adopted a resolutely hy-
Rasāʿil the author was “for both terminology and conceptions” when he wrote his own Risāla. Later on she adds:

Although Ghazālī refers with great contempt to the Rasāʿil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ and its teaching as being “flimsy” and “shallow”, yet he seems to have made considerable use of it, for ideas and actual phrases included there are found not only in this Risāla, but elsewhere in his writings [...]. The Rasāʿil includes also a section on Revelation (وحى) and Inspiration (الهام) with which Ghazālī deals so fully in this treatise [...], and it shows how souls can be fitted to receive revealed knowledge, only by purification [...].

Ghazālī’s unacknowledged debt to the Ikhwānīan corpus is evidenced by medieval statements as well. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) – whose ambivalent attitude towards the Brethren has also been demonstrated in recent times – once mentioned that al-Ghazālī “was addicted (ʿukūf ʿalā) to reading Rasāʿil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ” and that “al-Ghazālī relied on Ibn Sinā and the authors of Rasāʿil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ for philosophy.” He took this assertion from ʿAbd Allāh al-Māzarī (d. 1141), a 6th/12th century Mālikī scholar of Sicilian descent known as al-imām and the author of a critical treatise about Iḥyāʿ ʿulūm al-dīn. We would be well advised not to give too much weight to these statements, coming as they do from works which are polemical in nature, yet they should not be completely dismissed either; the example of Risālat al-Laduniyya invites us to at least consider whether there may have been some active influence.

It is impossible to determine where the copyist of MS Ragıp Paşa 963 found the sources for his statement on al-Ghazālī, but his strident tone suggests that he used one of the refutations which circulated so
widely in the Islamic Middle Ages.139 This final remark about the notoriety of “Maslama’s Rasā’il” in the Maghrib suggests that its author was a Middle-Eastern scholar. As for the Epistles “which are in the people’s hands”, there is no doubt that they refer to those which formed the genuine corpus of Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, which by then must have circulated widely all over the Dār al-Islām.

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139 It is interesting to observe that, in addition to the text of the Rutba (fols. 90r-115v), MS Ragip Paşa 963 also includes, according to Ullmann and Plessner (Ullmann, Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften, p. 227, and Plessner, “Beiträge”, p. 548), one of the rare alchemical treatises attributed to al-Ghazālī, namely the Maqālaṭ al-fawz (item 3 of the manuscript, fols. 39v-42r).
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