
The Dânesh-Nâmeh of Ibn-Sînâ: A Text to Revisit? Le Dânesh-Nâmeh d'Ibn Sînâ: Un Texte à Revoir?

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Source: Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale (Louvain-la-Neuve), Vol. 28 (1986), pp. 163-177.

Some considerations regarding the discovery of a (partial) original (in the *Ta^clîqât*) and on a (interpretative?) arabic translation (the *Maqâsid* by al-Ghazzâlî).

The *Dânesh-Nâmeh* [1] by Ibn Sînâ unveils a written philosophy that is notable in many ways. It is characterized by the language it employs, in particular modern Persian – if not the first, at least one of the first written texts about philosophy written in this language; by its general divisions – a study of metaphysics and preceding it that of physics and mathematics; finally, by its highly abstract and synthetic character – that which unveils like a fundamentally philosophical encyclopedia. These characteristics don't make interpretation, edition, or translation of this work particularly easy. As a consequence, any indication that can contribute to a better understanding is worth a detailed examination.

We believe to have discovered two. It begins with what was probably the first draft of the metaphysical part of *Dânesh-Nâmeh*, made by Ibn Sînâ himself, or at least the fragments which have been preserved. This 'draft' was written by him in the Arabic language, and is found in *Ta^clîqât* [2] *Glossees* (concerning metaphysics and aristotlian psychology). Secondly, we believe we can affirm the *Maqâsid Al-falâsifa* [3], a text unquestionably attributed to Al-Ghazzâlî, does not contain anywhere a summary by him on the great philosophical topics developed before him - like the majority of the commentators believe up to today [4] – but simply a translation, even by hand, in Arabic of that same *Dânesh-Nâmeh* by Ibn-Sînâ. This one is not literal, but nonetheless respects the essence of the contents – hence the best qualification appears to be that of 'interpretative translation'.

Present demonstrations concretely point this double 'discovery'. Signals of the parallels exist between the *Ta^clîqât* and the *Ilm Ilâhî* of *Dânesh-Nâmeh*.

<i>Dânesh-Nâmeh</i>	<i>Ta^clîqât</i>
§ 9	174 1. 18-175 1.9
20	176 1. 12-177 1.5; 177 1. 19-178 1. 24; 179 1. 8-13
21	181 1. 5-12; 182 1. 9-16
22	182 1. 16 - 183 1.8
23	185 1. 22-23
24	184 1. 28 -185 1.7
25	186 1. 8 - 187 1. 12

26	187	1. 16 - 188	1.15
27	188	1. 16 - 189	1. 5
28	189	1. 6-21	
29	189	1. 24 - 190	1. 26; 192 1. 11-16
30	193	1. 5-15	
32	13-14	1. 2; 14 1. 27 – 15	1. 9
33	16	1. 10 - 17	1. 4; 18 1. 8-17; 18 1.23 - 19 1. 14
34	19	1, 15 - 20	1. 10
35	20	1. 23 - 21	1. 3; 21 1. 19 - 22. 12
36	22	1. 3-9.	

Let's conduct a careful examination of certain cases, for which it is better to paraphrase than to literally translate them, especially for the paragraphs 23, 24, 27, and 29, the beginning of paragraphs 20 and 32, the middle of paragraph 33, and the second half of paragraph 35.

But isn't it then premature, even unjustified, to label these few fragments of the *Ta^clîqât* as being part of an Arabic original?

We don't believe it. It is notable that there are already two sets – the paragraphs from 20 – 30, as well as 32 – 36 – which are copies of each other in the *Ta^clîqât*, p. 179-193 and 13-22, or, the end and the beginning of the most recent edition. Can't one logically deduce that there was a slip in the latter, or more probably a handwritten margin-note on which it is based? In this case, one part – the paragraph 31 and the entire beginning of paragraph 32 – would have been lost, its displacement accompanied by the loss of at least one leaf. In addition, the presence of an Arabic counterpart in paragraphs 9 – and since haven't had anything but a first quick analysis, it might be that we have overlooked certain parallels – which doesn't help to increase the probability of the existence of an Arabic original to the complete metaphysical section of *Ta^clîqât*.

Note that the latest edition by Badawi appears at first to be quite defective. In effect, a more detailed comparison between the Arabic and Persian texts, especially paragraphs 22 and 33, reveals textual errors, for example, p. 17, 1.1 *khayr^{ann}* in place of *wujûd^{ann}*; p. 19, 1.2 *na^ogalu* in place of *na^falu*; some omissions, for example, p. 175 1.6 the subject of possession (Arabic *malaka*, Persian *milk*) is clearly omitted; p. 183 1.4 is missing a complete sentence between *al-khâssa* and *fa-idhan*; there are also visible distortions, for example p. 17 1.3 where the current Arabic formulation is incomprehensible – an omission is probably the primary cause – , but one wonders if the current order of the words is even correct; p. 19 1.2 *wa-lâ* until 1.3 *na^fi* is, as it currently stands, a completely superfluous phrase – from a Persian one would expect something similar to *wa-in yakûn bi-shaw*.

It could be that some of these errors were introduced by ancient scribes. Since we don't have the time to consult manuscripts, we are unfortunately unable to determine the exact limits [5]. However, one cannot help himself from believing that Mr. Badawi put together his edition a little too hastily – which explains among other things the absence of critical commentary on the alternative meanings. That it remains on the whole is probably only because of its great reputation, rather than a finely detailed examination of all existing manuscripts. Hence, it is useful, but should be used with caution.

On the other hand, the Persian edition seems to be put together with much more care. Nevertheless, there are some errors, but most are to a secondary extent, although a more fundamental correction does appear from time to time, for example p. 75, 1. 9-10, where common

sense requires the following reading: *andar mâhiyya* (instead of *wujûb al-wujûd*), and *wâjib al-wujûd wa-în mâhiyya wujûb al-wujûd* (instead of *wâjib-al-wjûd ast*), which is confirmed by the Arabic original (*Ta^clîqât*, p. 183, l. 2-3 even though a literal counterpart isn't absolutely certain).

At any rate, the Persian text, as it is currently presented (and which has preserved the majority (or all?) of the manuscripts), interestingly accompanied by a lack of logic exhibited through its development of ideas. For example, in the metaphysical section, the return to God precedes the creation.

It is true that Ibn Sînâ consciously adopts a particular structure for this work, as we indicated from the start. But that does seem to justify for us the abnormal transpositions that we just mentioned. To our great astonishment, Ghazzâlî offers this natural order in *Maqâsid* while preserving the general divisions. That it was inspired from *Dânesht-Nâme* is 100% certain. The two writings demonstrate an extremely strong resemblance, in terms of their contents. The personal contribution of Ghazzâlî seems to be limited to the addition of several summaries and the concretization of certain highly abstract ideas (often by means of examples) at first sight. It is noteworthy that the more it evokes – without hesitation – some philosophical theses, that it qualifies everywhere the non-pious people, for example the eternity of the world, the resurrection of the heart alone, or that it evokes scrupulousness, such as the possibility of an 'imaginary' life in the hereafter [6]. All of that makes us inclined towards the hypothesis of an interpretative translation. But to what degree it is interpretive depends primarily on the explanation given to the magnitude of the differences in the two expositions. Are they due to a rehandling by Ghazzâlî himself, or, on the contrary, explained by a corruption in the handwritten transcription of *Dânesht-Nâme* at a certain point in history? The thing that favours the former alternative is the presence of other reworked fragments – some more modest than others. But one can find several arguments favouring the second alternative: 1. it is rather inconceivable that a spirit is as shining and systematic as that of Ibn Sînâ with his quite awkwardly structured text; 2. the order, preserved in the *Maqâsid*, recovers the grand works from the times of *Dânesht-Nâme*; 3. a corruption in the handwritten manuscripts is very conceivable, when one knows that Jusjânî, the famous disciple of Ibn Sînâ, reconstructed the mathematical section, because, in his own words, he couldn't find the original [7]. None of these elements plays a decisive role. Therefore, before pronouncing a final sentence, a comparative and thorough analysis is necessary. While waiting for that [8], we are inclined – but with reservations – to the latter alternative.

Now we will outline the general parallels which exist between *Maqâsid* and *Dânesht-Nâme*. To make the task easier for the reader, we will briefly indicate at the end of each chapter the most important slips between the two texts, and add a rough attempt towards an explanation.

(For the *Maqâsid*, we will refer to S. Dunyâ's edition).

I. Chapter of Logic

<i>Dânesht-Nâme</i>	<i>Maqâsid</i>
§ 1	p. 33-37, l. 13
2	40, l. 1-17
3	40, l. 18-41, l. 7
4	44-48, l. 3
5	48, l. 4-50, l. 20 and p. 52, l. 19-19
6	50, l. 21-52, l. 11
7	41, l. 8-42, l. 6

8	53-54, l. 7
9	54, l. 8-15
10	55, l. 16-17; 57, l. 22-60, l. 5 and 60, l. 19-61
11	55, l. 17-57, l. 21 and 60, l. 6-18.
12	62-64, l. 3
13	64, l. 4-65
14	66, l. 9-67, l. 18
15	67, l. 19-69
16	70-72, l. 12
17	77, l. 7-80, l. 6
18	80, l. 19-83
19	84-86, l. 8
20	86, l. 9-87
21	96-99, l. 3
22	88
23	89-90, l. 4
24	missing
25	90, l. 5-95
26	99, l. 4-101
27	102-109
28	110-112
29	122-123, l. 9
30	123, l. 10-125, l. 9
31	127, l. 12-128, l. 18
32	125, l. 10-end; 126, l. 15-127, l. 11 and 129, l. 4-end
33	120-121
34	118-119
35	113-117.

The most important displacements to note are: §7 (which continues quite naturally the discussion of the simple term, started in §3), §21 (about composed syllogisms, which arise here as adequate responses of analogical reasoning by the dialecticians); §33, 34, and 35 (whose order has been reversed, and which should be placed between §28 and §29 - §35, with its treatment against Sophism should logically follow after §28 on Dialectics and §33 also logically precedes §29, because it offers the only complement in commentary to the demonstrative syllogism that the first properly analyses). On top of that, there is a double mixture: the first between §10 and 11, and the second between §31 and §32 (we cannot go into a lot of detail here, but there it also often makes more logical sense), and thus the absence of the equivalent of one paragraph, 24, where it is a question of reasoning (weak!) by analogy (Ghazzâlî perhaps as a result of that, determined it to be unworthy as a treatment of logic).

II. Metaphysics

Dânesh-Nâme

§

1

Maqâsid
134 – 137

2

138 - 140, 1. 16

3

140, 1. 17 - 143, 1. 6

4

144 - 147, 1. 12

5

154, 1. 16 - 157, 1. 1

6

147, 1. 13 - 154, 1. 15

7

157, 1. 2-23

8

158 - 162

9

163 - 165

10

166 - 170, 1. 15

11

171 - 174, 1. 4

12

174, 1. 5 - 183, 1. 8

13

183, 1. 9 - 187, 1. 12

14

187, 1. 13 - 189, 1. 2

15

189, 1. 3 – 192

16

193 - 200, 1. 3

17

200, 1. 4 - 203, 1. 16

18

203, 1. 17 - 205, 1. 11

19

212, 1. 9 - 213, 1. 7

20

205, 1. 12 - 209

21

216, 1. 1 - 22

22

213, 1. 8 - 215, 1. 17

23

215, 1. 18 - end

24

211, 1. 13 - 212, 1. 8

25

216, 1. 23 -219. 1. 13

26

223 - 224, 1. 22

27

219, 1. 14 - 222, 1. 2

28

222, 1. 3 - 21

29

225, 1. 9 - 229, 1. 12

30

229, 1. 13 - 232, 1. 1

31

232, 1. 2 - 233, 1. 8

32

233, 1. 9 - 234

33

235 - 239, 1. 14

34

239, 1. 15 - 240. 1. 22

35	240, 1. 23 - 241, 1. 19
36	241, 1. 20 - 242, 1. 11
37	242, 1. 12 - 249
38	288 - 290, 1. 8
39	253 - 254, 1. 15
40	254, 1. 16 - 255, 1. 4
41	297, 1. 7 - 299, 1. 8
42	255, 1. 5 - 256, 1. 12
43	256, 1. 13 - 258, 1. 10
44	258, 1. 11 - 261, 1. 10
45	261, 1. 11 - 267, 1. 2
46	271, 1. 12 - 272, 1. 20
47	272, 1. 21 - 274, 1. 14
48	275, 1. 5-20 and <i>Fys.</i> , 318, 1. 11 - 319, 1. 4
49	267, 1. 3 - 268, 1. 3
50	268, 1. 4 - 270
51	274, 1. 15 - 275, 1. 4 and 275, 1. 21 - 279, 1. 8
52-53	279, 1. 9 - 283, 1. 16
54	283, 1. 17 - 287
55	290, 1. 10 - 291, 1. 14
56	291, 1. 15 - 293:D
57	294 - 297, 1. 6 and 299, 1. 9 - 300.

Let us comment on the following slips: §5 moved to after §6 – however that does not have any doctrinal implications; §24, which is the essential question of the necessity of existence (§20), tends towards §19 (the impossibility of the necessity of existence for having an essential union with something that exists) follows from these two §5; §26, which speaks in general terms about God's attributes, is found directly before a detailed analysis of each of them; §38, which presents the basics for determining the hierarchy of existence, is closely related to §55, which contains a concrete description on the emantic scheme; the same with §41 (good and evil in general); §46 and 47 is that of §57 (the cause of evil in corruptible beings); §46 and 47, establishing the necessity of a soul-driver based on the circular movement of the celestial spheres, comes after the establishment of the necessity of movement for renewable objects (§49-50). A mix of the two paragraphs (52-53) is also noticeable in this part of the work. Finally, one notices that paragraph 48, where it speaks on the difference between the primary body and the corruptible body, is found entirely in the physical chapter, which actually seems more logical although its presence in metaphysics can be defended.

III. Physics

Dânesh-Nâme

Maqâsid

§ 1

303 - 304, 1. 12

2	304, 1. 13 - 307, 1. 5
3	307, 1. 6 - 308, 1. 2
4	308, 1. 3 – end
5	309 - 311
6	312 - 313, 1. 4
7	313, 1. 5 - 315, 1. 2
8	315, 1. 3 - 16
9	315, 1. 17 - 316, 1. 24
10	316, 1. 25 - 317, 1. 14
11	317, 1. 15 - end
12	322, 1. 12 - 323, 1. 5
13	318 - 321, 1. 22
14-15	332, 1. 8 - 334
16	323, 1. 6 – 20
17	323, 1. 21 - 325, 1. 1
18	325, 1. 2 – 4
19	325, 1. 5 – 326
20	330, 1. 15 - 332, 1. 7
21	328, 1. 6 - 329, 1. 22
22	321, 1. 23 - 322, 1. 21 and 327 - 328, 1. 5
23	336 - 336, 1. 19
24	336, 1. 20 – 338
25	329, 1. 23 - 330, 1. 14
26	339 - 342, 1. 13
27	342, 1. 14 - 344. 1. 7
28	344, 1. 8 – 345
29	346 - 347. 1. 7
30	347, 1. 8 – 349
31	350 - 352, 1. 3
32	353, 1. 23 - 355, 1. 5
33	352, 1. 4 - 353, 1. 22
34	355, 1. 6 – end
35	356 - 357, 1. 24
36	357, 1. 25 – 358
37	359 - 360, 1. 7
38	360, 1. 8 - 362, 1. 5
39	362, 1. 6 – 22

40	362, 1. 23 - 364, 1. 17
41	364, 1. 18 - 367, 1. 21
42	367, 1. 22 - 368, 1. 22
43	368, 1. 23 - 370, 1. 9
44	371 – 375
45-46	376 - 378, 1. 19
47	378, 1. 20 - 379, 1. 18
48	379, 1. 19 - 380, 1. 17
49	380, 1. 18 -382, 1. 6
50	382, 1. 7 - 383, 1. 14
51	383, 1. 15 - 385.

The largest change about the order occurs after §11, which ends the discussion on the problem of place, in particular that of the definition. It follows here that a general introduction to the simple body (§13), and thus an introduction concerning the natural influence on an item in its natural place (first part of §12). So we begin to speak about coldness and heat (§12). A second is located after the collection of §16-19, in which three theories of heat are presented and refuted. Then the difference between form and elemental accident (§22, second half), the transformation of the four elements into each other (§21), and thus the influence of the luminous element (§25 – sun and moon, followed by §20 – a complementary discourse on this problem). Only after that, is the question of the (natural) place an element belongs in (mix of §14 and 14).

The displacement of §32 to after §33 and the mix of §45 and 46 should also be noted, but are not of any doctrinal significance.

It appears to us that after this parallelism, the following conclusions are imposed (but let us highlight once more that parallelism does NOT signify LITERAL translation):

1. The entire (or almost entire) *Dânesh-Nâme* can be found in the *Maqâsid*.
2. The latter does not clearly develop the themes which are found in the former.
3. The latter is better organized from a logical point of view, and one is naturally inclined to believe that this order was already established by Ibn Sînâ himself.

Moreover, a quick more detailed comparison between the two texts with respect to their treatment of §22 and 33 on metaphysics demonstrates sufficiently to us that Ghazzâlî remains close to the ideas from Ibn Sînâ. In particular, one notes the efforts throughout to make the highly abstract text of the *Dânesh-Nâme* more concrete, and hence at the same time more accessible. The omission of certain phrases (e.g. D.N. p. 95, l. 9-10 and l. 12-15), or the creation of a slightly different perspective (e.g. at the end of §22) can be understood in the same way (but suggest as well a fundamentally non-literal character), but they are all concrete examples in which Ghazzâlî clearly adds his own hand (e.g. p. 238, l. 26-238, l.14 to illustrate p. 95, l. 1 in the *Dânesh-Nâme*), which reveals this tendency beyond doubt (just as the multiple general summaries do).

That's why we believe – and this is our final conclusion – that the current text of *Dânesh-Nâme* should be revisited, and re-edited, in light of Ghazzâlî's *Maqâsid* and the *Ta'âlîqât* (at least for the part on metaphysics) [9].

Appendix

It is interesting to make a first evaluation of the two existing contemporary translations of the metaphysics chapter, considering the text of the *Ta^clîṭqât* and the translation of the *Maqâsid*. In a general manner, this is handled in the French translation by M. Achena and H. Massé, *Avicenne. The book of Science*. Vol. 2, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1955-1958, t. I, p. 89-216 is just as reliable, but often missing absolute precision. The English version, on the other hand, prepared by P. Morewedge, *The Metaphysica of Avicenna (Ibn Sînâ)*. London, Routledge a. Kegan, 1973 (accompanied by a broad commentary) does not satisfactorily contain many of the details as precisely as the French version. It appears to us that the latter was a victim of preconceived biases about the fundamental ideologies Ibn Sînâ's explanations in this work follow. Consequently, a revision of the two would be (more) desirable. To illustrate the necessity, consider a small excerpt from §33 about the divine will. Lines 7-9 of p. 93 (*va-har keh fa'lt...bi-dânesh âyad*) was translated by Morewedge, p. 66: « If someone knows that an action results from him and his agentness (i.e. his awareness of his rôle as a knower), then that action becomes known due to him (i.e. due to the activity of his knowledge) ». The highly interpretative character of this English version is immediately apparant through the parenthesized explanations. Achena and Massé, on the other hand, offer a more neutral reading: « Toute personne de qui procède un acte a conscience de cet acte et d'être cause de cet acte; c'est (alors) l'acte procédant d'elle par science » (p. I, 160). But the term « cause » does not appear anywhere in the Persian text. Our doctoral thesis, *Avicenna: tussen neoplatonisme en islam*, Vol. 2, Lauven, 1984, polyc., already provided these criticisms (p. II, 50, N. 106). We propose instead the following translation: « Each time an act precedes another, and that of it's consciousness, as well as itself and it's author, this act proceeds from science ». *Ta^clîṭqât*, p. 16, l. 12-13 confirm the essence of this translation (the exact equivalent of these lines is missing from the *Maqâsid*): *annahu fâ'ilahu!* (but it seems to be necessary to move *keh* after *fa'lt*: any act, preceding someone, and thus...).

This is by no means an isolated case. Later, in the same chapter, i.e. p. 94, l. 10, is *tamâm hastî*. Morewedge translates it as: « the complete realm of Being », while Achena and Massé translate it as: « toute existence ». In both cases, it invariably demonstrates the presence of strong pantheistic tendencies among Ibn Sînâ's thoughts. From the context, it becomes obvious that here, the (neoplatonic) thesis that God is perfect, implies more than perfect. As a consequence, it should read: the perfection of being (there isn't an equivalent to the Arabic *tâmm*). Moreover, Morewedge has badly understood the entire context, instead clearly following a more intellectualist train of thought than what was expressed (at least in this passage) by Ibn Sînâ.

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Note. M. Achena has just published a revised translation of *Dânesh-Nâmeḥ*. Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1986. Unfortunately, we have not had the time to review it.

Annotations:

- [1] Ed. Mo'in-Meshkat. Téhéran, 1953. Repr. Téhéran, Dekhoda B., 1975.
- [2] Ed. A. Badawi. Le Caire, 1973.
- [3] Ed. S. Dunya. Le Caire, 1961. The midieval Latin translation was published, on the section containing the metaphysical and physical parts, by J. Muckle, *Algazel's Metaphysics* (sic!). Toronto, 1933, and, on the section containing the part about logic, by Ch. H. Lohr, *Logica Algazalis. Introduction and critical text*, in *Traditio*, 21 (1965), p. 223-290. One can also consult the printed edition from Venice, 1506. Repr. Frankfurt/Main, Minerva, 1969.
- [4] Crossreference: In recent studies, in particular of M. Sherif, *Ghazâlî's Theory of Virtue*. New York, SUNY, 1975, p. 4-5 or that of E. Ormsby, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought. The dispute over al-Ghazâlî's „Best of all possible worlds“*. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton Univ. Press, 1984, p. 84, M. Steinschneider. *Die Hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher*. Berlin, 1893. Repr. Graz, Ak. Druck- u. Verlagsantalt, 1956, p. 311 had however already discovered a strong resemblance to the great encyclopedia (i.e. The *Shifâ*) of Ibn Sînâ, but more with the smaller one (probably a reference to the *Najât* instead of to *Dânesh-Nâme*). On the other hand, Lohr, *Logica Alganalis... Introd.*, describes it in a non-ambiguous way. - the *Dânesh-Nâme* is like a primary source, but it reports on the intellectual extensions from Ghazâlî. The same idea is found in the introduction to the Spanish translation of *Maqâsid*, cfr. M. Alonso, *Maqâsid al-falâsifa o Intenciones de los filosofos*. Barcelona, 1963, p. XLVLII. A close link to the Ign Sînâ's Persian encyclopedia has already been established before us. If we still want to speak of this 'discovery', it is only in the spirit of this saying: First translate, not interpret!
- [5] Mr. J. Michot, who could consult multiple manuscripts, confirmed for us the existance of important gaps in Badawi's edition (oral communication). We thank him for that.
- [6] The only important omission, is that of the first discussed reading, which is missing the concept of the holy intellect (*'aql al-qudsî*) in Physics (§52 of the Dan. Nam.).
- [7] Cross-reference: M. Achena and H. Massé, *Avicenne. Le livre de science. II. Physique, Mathématiques*. Paris, Beautiful Letters, 1958, Préf. p. 6.
- [8] We hope to be able to conduct this in the near future.
- [9] The reverse, of course, is also true!