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**AL-BIRR WA L-ITHM, PIETY AND SIN:
POSSIBLE FARABIAN INFLUENCES
ON THE YOUNG IBN SĪNĀ**

Abstract

Al-Birr wa l-Ithm, Piety and Sin, is a work by the young Ibn Sīnā, of which only a few fragments have been preserved. Some of them have been quoted in his later works. More importantly, others have a direct correspondence with two texts generally attributed to al-Fārābī, i.e., *Risāla fī l-Tanbīh ‘alā Sabīl al-Sa‘āda* and *Fuṣūl Muntaza‘a*. In both cases, the systematic correspondences are indicated. It is also observed that Ibn Sīnā’s version is most of the time shorter than the version present in the “Farabian” works and is limited to sections that deal with morals proper. Finally, it is emphasized that if the *Risāla fī l-Tanbīh* and the *Fuṣūl* are indeed authentic Farabian works, one must distinguish between two periods in al-Fārābī’s thought and that, if this is indeed the case, Ibn Sīnā has been influenced by what in all likelihood is the thought of the younger al-Fārābī.

The young Ibn Sīnā, most likely at the age of twenty-two or twenty-three, wrote according to his testimony in his *Autobiography* a book on Ethics called *Piety and Sin* (together with a twenty-volume major encyclopaedia entitled *al-Ḥāṣil wa l-Maḥṣūl, The Available and the Valid*).¹ Unfortunately, only a few fragments have survived. They have been edited by Shams al-Dīn.² In his edition, they are presented in three parts covering what appear to be in all likelihood three chapters (*fuṣūl*), although the first one is not explicitly designated as such.

Before dealing with the issue of possible Farabian influences proper, I first want to draw the reader’s attention to a few noticeable facts:

(1) The very first part (P. 353–356,9) is identical with a large section of the final part of Ibn Sīnā’s treatise *al-‘Ahd, The Pact*, according to its (ethical) ver-

¹ For more details, see *Gutas D. Avicenna and the Aristotelian tradition* (IPTS, 4). Leiden: Brill, 1988. P. 94–98.

² *‘Abd al-Amīr Shams al-Dīn. Al-Madhhab al-Tarbawī ‘ind Ibn Sīnā min Khilāl Falsafatihī al-‘Amaliyya*. Beirut: al-Sharka al-‘ālamiyya lil-kitāb, 1988. P. 353–368.

sion as published in *Tis' Rasā'il* at Cairo, 1908.³ It therefore seems probable that this part is in fact an extract from *Piety and Sin*. As I will show later, the opening of this “last part” of the *Pact* also has a correspondence to the very same (Farabian) work that figures as a source of most of the first part of *Piety and Sin*. Hence, it also may have been part of this latter work. It has to be noted that the very title of “Pact” does not really cover the contents of the Cairo version. In fact, the first part of the treatise (P. 142–145,16) clearly continues the exposé of the treatise *al-Akhlaq, Ethics* (although in *Tis' Rasā'il* the *Pact* has been published before the latter);

(2) A fragment of the first part (P. 354,15–355,11) is almost *verbatim* present also in the fourteenth chapter, “On Human Happiness in the Afterlife,” in the third part of *Kitāb al-Mabda' wa l-Ma'ād, The Provenance and Destination*.⁴ This work has been written some ten years later than *Piety and Sin*, namely when Ibn Sīnā was staying in Jurjān. Let me note that it is not unusual for Ibn Sīnā to copy himself in later works, the most typical case being undoubtedly that of the *Najāt, Salvation*.⁵ In the fragment, Ibn Sīnā points out that the human soul, due to its link with the body, is in need of a perfection other than the purely intellectual one. In fact, it needs “justice,” the middle between all kinds of opposite extremes. Therefore, the soul has to dominate the body, in other words it must not submit itself in any way whatsoever to the bodily inclinations. Hereafter, Ibn Sīnā insists that the perfection of the soul is to free it from the body, but he words it in quite different ways in both works;⁶

(3) Fragments of the second part (P. 356,10–360,8) are once more reproduced in later works by the Shaykh al-ra'īs: (a) the first passage (P. 356,11–357,15), which deals with the acquisition of good moral habits and the utility of having knowledge of the revealed Law, is reproduced in *Shifā, Ilāhiyyāt, X, 3*;⁷ (b) the second fragment (P. 357,20–358,3) compares supplication to the relation of cogitation to the summoning of clarification. The same idea, although in a somewhat modified wording is also present in *Shifā, Ilāhiyyāt, X, 1*;⁸ (c) the third one (P. 358,3–15), indicating that our voluntary actions ultimately are imbedded in the divine Decree, is almost *verbatim* repeated in a later passage of the very same

³ *Ibn Sīnā. Al-'Ahd // Tis' Rasā'il fī l-Ḥikma wa l-Ṭabī'iyāt*. Cairo, 1908. Risāla 8. P. 147,4–151,2.

⁴ *Ibn Sīnā. Kitāb al-Mabda' wa l-Ma'ād*. Ed. 'Abd Allāh Nūrānī. Tehran: Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Tehran Branch, 1984. PP. 109,15–110,8 and 110,13–15.

⁵ See *Gutas. Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*. P. 112–114.

⁶ Unless I am mistaken, the wording of *Piety and Sin* is not present elsewhere in Ibn Sīnā's works.

⁷ *Ibn Sīnā. Al-Shifā, Ilāhiyyāt*. Ed. G.C. Anawati et al. Cairo: al-Hay'a al-'amma li-shu'ūn al-maṭābi al-amīriyya, 1960. Book X, c. 3. P. 445,12–446,13 // English translation in *Marmura M.* (transl.). Avicenna; The Metaphysics of the *Healing*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2005. P. 369–370,5.

⁸ *Ibid.* P. 438,8–11 // *Ibid.* P. 361,25–31.

chapter.⁹ It has to be noted that Ibn Sīnā, in the lines that immediately precede the passage in the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Shifā*, explicitly refers to the book *Piety and Sin*; (d) finally, at the end (P. 359,17–360,8), one finds remarks on the extraordinary power that souls can have over their bodies as well as bodies of other beings, which have been incorporated into the *al-Ishārāt wa l-Tanbīhāt*, *Pointers and Reminders*.¹⁰ This shows not only that at least some fragments of the latter work had in fact already been expressed by the very young Ibn Sīnā, but also that one can no longer speak of an evolution in Avicennan thought toward a mystical way of thinking.¹¹

Let us now turn to the first part, whose first half (P. 353–354,15) corresponds to fragments of the work *Risāla fī l-Tanbīh ‘alā Sabīl al-Sa’āda*, the attribution of which to al-Fārābī has been generally accepted. Ibn Sīnā starts (P. 353–354,3) his exposé by insisting in a genuine Aristotelian spirit that only by respecting the “mean” in our actions can we arrive at a good moral disposition. In order to clarify this issue, he makes a comparison with bodily health, both with respect to its preservation (when present) as its restoration (when lost). The same ideas are also present in a large fragment (P. 194–198,8) of the *Tanbīh*.¹² But there is more than a doctrinal similarity. Some elements of the wording are almost exactly the same. Let me offer by way of example three illustrations:

– in both cases the text starts with an almost identical affirmation: “(As to know) which actions, they are the actions in the mean (*mutawassiṭa*),” according to the version of *Piety and Sin*, “... beautiful (*jamīla*) actions,” according to that of the *Tanbīh*. However, it is obvious that, in the given context, the beautiful is identical with the mean;

⁹ Ibid. P. 439,9–440,4 // Ibid. P. 362,25–363,9.

¹⁰ *Ibn Sīnā*. Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa l-Tanbīhāt. Ed. J. Forget. Leyden: Brill, 1892. P. 220,1–221,4. It has to be noted that the passage on pages 220,15–221,2 offers a serious rewording in a summary form of *Piety and Sin*. P. 360,5–7. Otherwise, the wording of both works is very similar. The fragment that immediately precedes this passage (P. 358,16–359,17) is presented as an additional commentary (*sharḥ*) on the noble soul (*al-naḥs al-sharīfa*), a notion that is well attested in the Neoplatonica Arabica. As to Ibn Sīnā, he uses the notion only once in his major psychological work, i.e., *Al-Shifā*, Kitāb al-Nafs. Ed. Fazlur Rahman. London: Oxford University Press, 1970. Book IV, c. 4, P. 200, in a similar context, namely of the noble soul’s extraordinary power over bodies other than the one to which it is linked. So far, I have looked in vain for a copy of the fragment in Ibn Sīnā’s other writings.

¹¹ For the absence of a real mysticism in Ibn Sīnā, more particularly in the final sections of the *Ishārāt*, see my “Ibn Sīnā: A Philosophical Mysticism or a Philosophy of Mysticism?”, to be published in the acts of the International Colloquium “Mysticism without Bounds.” Bangalore, January 2011. Note that even if I were to be proven incorrect in this respect, there would still be no room for a real evolution in Ibn Sīnā’s thought, since the “mystical” tendency would then have been present also in his very early writings.

¹² The pagination given here, and in what follows, always refers to the edition of the *Risāla fī l-Tanbīh ‘alā Sabīl al-Sa’āda* by Ṣaḥbān Khalīfāt. Amman: Jordan University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Philosophy, 1987.

- according to both texts, “When the actions are in the mean, they are praiseworthy (*maḥmūd*),” the *Tanbīh* using once more the designation “beautiful.” It has to be added that this is the second affirmation in *Piety and Sin*, whereas it is expressed somewhat later in the argumentation of the *Tanbīh* (P. 195,2);
- in both exposés, it is said that “When health has been realized, it is appropriate to preserve it, and when it has been lost, it is necessary to restore it” (*Piety and Sin*. P. 353,9–10= *Tanbīh*. P. 194,7–9).

It is worthwhile to add that both texts, once again in almost similar terms, stress that to obtain the mean, we have to know the circumstances that surround the action (its place, origin, etc.) (*Piety*. P. 354,2–3 ≈ *Tanbīh*. P. 198,5–8).

Afterwards, *Piety and Sin* (P. 354,3–9) insists that in case of excess in our actions we have to put them in equilibrium through using the opposite, just as a physician always corrects an excess of heat in the body by administering something cold. In almost similar terms, this affirmation is present in *Tanbīh* (P. 206,6–9). Then it states (P. 354,9–13), in close connection with *Tanbīh* (P. 207,5–8), that we have to habituate ourselves to actions that are contrary to the existence of excess or lack in our character, and do this during specific periods of time. It finally concludes (P. 354,13–15) that, thanks to this policy of opposition, we arrive at, or at least come near to, the real mean. An identical affirmation is present in *Tanbīh* (P. 208,7–9). There is undoubtedly a great logical coherence between these three affirmations. They seem to highlight in a summary fashion a longer exposé of the *Tanbīh*, where the mean is presented as the effect of an act of opposing excess and lack.

As I have already indicated, these passages of *Piety and Sin* are also present in *The Pact* (P. 147,4–148,16). However, there, immediately preceding them, one finds a fragment (P. 146,1–147,4) that is also very close to the exposé in the *Tanbīh* (P. 190,6–193,10). In both cases the emphasis is on the fact that moral habituation is always acquired, that it results from a frequent repetition of the same act, as is the case with the arts, such as that of the scribe. In this way the habits of their rulers always influence the characters of the citizens. Note, moreover, that large parts are *verbatim*, or almost *verbatim* the same. Certainly, the example of scribal art is less developed in *Piety* than in the *Tanbīh*, but this “summarizing tendency” was also present in the passages discussed above. Given, furthermore, the fact that this exposé clearly introduces the one that appeared as the first in *Piety and Sin*, I see little reason to doubt that (at least) this fragment of the *Pact* originally formed a part of *Piety and Sin*. If this is correct, one finds in the latter an important section largely corresponding to the first part of

what Dominique Mallet has labeled as the discussion on moral virtues in the *Tanbīh*.¹³

In the third part of *Piety and Sin*, one finds striking similarities with another work also attributed—although not without reserve by some scholars—to al-Fārābī, i.e., the *Fuṣūl muntaza‘a*, *Selected Aphorisms*.

The first paragraph in *Piety and Sin* (P 360,10–19) expresses in a summarized form the section of the *Fuṣūl* on the analogy between the soul and the body, as given in the edition of Dunlop, hence omitting entirely the third paragraph of the edition of Najjar.¹⁴ One finds the following correspondences:

<i>Piety and Sin</i>	<i>Fuṣūl muntaza‘a</i>
360,10–13	D 103,5–12; N 23,6–24,3
360,13–14	D 103,13–15; N 24,4–6
360,14–15	D 104,1–2 and 10; N 24,15–16 and 25,6
360,15–19	D 105,5–10; N 26,4–9.

It is immediately striking that the text of *Piety and Sin* is much shorter than the *Fuṣūl* version. Some sentences are completely absent, which is immediately evident in the third case. But even where there is a correspondence the wording is most of the time shorter. To illustrate this, I give here in parallel the English translation of both versions of the first aphorism, indicating *verbatim* repetitions in italics.

The soul has health and sickness just as the body has. Its health (consists in) the traits which let good things and noble actions proceed out of it. Its sickness (consists in) traits which let evil things and base actions proceed out of it. The health of the body (consists in) the trait by which the soul does its actions in the most complete way. Its sickness (consists in) the trait which is contrary to that.

The soul has health and sickness just as the body has health and sickness. The health of the soul is for its traits and the traits of its parts to be traits by

¹³ Mallet D. Le rappel de la voie à suivre pour parvenir au bonheur de Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī. Introduction, traduction et notes // Bulletin d'Études Orientales, 39–40 (1987–1988). P. 113–140. It is worthwhile to note that the author distinguishes three major parts in the work, i.e., happiness and human virtue, moral virtues, and intellectual virtues. He qualifies, moreover, the *Tanbīh* as presenting in its first two parts a summary of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, especially books I–III. As to the third part, it rather constitutes an introduction to logic. Finally, Mallet stresses that, contrary to what happens in al-Fārābī's major works, the political dimension of the moral science is only vaguely alluded to.

¹⁴ See *Al-Fārābī*. *Fuṣūl al-Madanī*. Aphorisms of the Statesman. Edited with an English Translation, Introduction and Notes by D.M. Dunlop. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961 (abbreviated **D**), respectively *Fauzi M. Najjar*. *Al-Fārābī's Fuṣūl Muntaza‘a*. Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1971 (abbreviated **N**). Note that an English translation is also available in *Butterworth C.E.* *Alfarabi. The Political Writings*. Ithaca–London: Cornell University Press, 2001. P. 1–67.

which it can always do *good things*, fine things *and noble actions*. *Its sickness* is for its traits and the traits of its parts to be *traits* by which it always does *evil things*, wicked things, *and base actions*. *The health of the body* is for its traits and the traits of its parts to be *traits by which the soul does its actions in the most complete and perfect way*, whether those actions that come about by means of the body or its parts are good ones or evil ones. *Its sickness* is for its traits and the traits of its parts to be *traits* by which the soul does not do its actions that come about by means of the body or its parts, or does them in a more diminished manner than it ought to, or not as was its wont to do them.¹⁵

It is obvious that the basic idea, i.e., the existence of an analogy between the soul and the body regarding health and sickness, is identical in both versions, but expressed in a much more sober way in *Piety and Sin*. The laconic formulation at the end, namely “is contrary to that,” is highly significant in this respect. However, what appears to be lacking is the idea that the health of the body has no repercussion on the moral qualification of the actions of the soul. This explains at once why in the third part only a few lines of the text of the *Fuṣūl* have a counterpart in *Piety and Sin*. Indeed, in the concerned aphorism (3 in D, 4 in N), it is maintained that the cure of the body has to be viewed as an improved strength regardless of whether this strength is used in fine things or in wicked ones. It presents, moreover, the political, i.e., kingly art as the end of all arts. This idea is also lacking in *Piety and Sin*, which gives one the impression that the focus is in a more outspoken way on the soul itself, the political simile being used only to express that it has to be governed. This fits well Ibn Sīnā’s general view, which pays a lot of attention to the individual soul and, regarding politics, adopts a rather pragmatic attitude.

In a second passage, *Piety and Sin* (P 360,20–361,14) largely corresponds to the aphorism of the *Fuṣūl* (D 6; N 7) that deals with the major parts and faculties of the soul. It has to be noted that the previous aphorism, which presents a distinction between natural and artificial bodies but hardly fits the context, is simply lacking in *Piety and Sin*. As to the present passage, once more one sees that it presents a very succinct version compared to the aphorism in the *Fuṣūl*. But it is immediately striking that all major divisions are given: nutritive, perceptive, imaginative, appetitive¹⁶ and rational (as well as their essential subdivisions). In

¹⁵ Translation of *Butterworth*. Alfarabi. The Political Writings. P. 11. The translation of the version of *Piety and Sin* is mine.

¹⁶ But instead of *nuzūʿī* in the *Fuṣūl*, *Piety and Sin* reads *rawʿī*, “fearing”; one wonders whether this is not due to a scribal error? Similarly, in the enumeration of the subdivision of the nutritive faculty, the reading *al-ḥāditha*, “originating,” is almost certainly a mistake for *al-jādhiba*, “attracting.” Also, in what follows a few such cases occur, but they are of no importance for the present study. Let me just note that the first mention of the practical intellect (P. 361,12–13) is obviously a corrupted version of the correct affirmation that follows, and hence has to be deleted.

fact, *Piety and Sin* corresponds to the following lines in the *Fuṣūl*: D 106,3–4 = N 27,5–6 (fivefold basic division); D 106,10–12 = N 27,12–15 (basic division of nutritive faculty); D 107,7 = N 28,11 (perceptive faculty); D 107,8–11 = N 28,12–15 (imaginative faculty); D 107,12–15 = N 28,15–29,2 (appetitive faculty) and D 107,18–108,4 and 108,7–8 = N 29,5–9 and 13–14 (rational faculty).

Then *Piety and Sin* (P 361,14–18) distinguishes between two kinds of virtues, i.e., the moral ones and the intellectual ones, and, moreover, insists that the repetition of acts is crucial in the acquisition of moral virtues (or vices). The wording is very close to *Fuṣūl*, D 108,13–109,2 = N 30,3–10, hence covering two aphorisms. The only significant omission is that of the comparison of acquisition of a moral habit with that of the act of writing. Besides, in the following passage (P 361,19–24), which states that nobody is naturally endowed with virtue or vice, the comparison with scribal art, which is once more present in the *Fuṣūl*, is again absent. The passage actually corresponds to *Fuṣūl* D 109,7–10; 109,13–110,2 and 110,5–6 = N 31,1–4, 7–11 and 32,3–4. In this case, one has to do with what one may qualify as a slight rewording. Note, however, that it does not imply any modification of the content. Then *Piety and Sin* (P 362,1–9), corresponding to *Fuṣūl* D 110,7–12 and 110,14–111,11 = N 32,5–10 and 32,12–33,13, stresses that most people possess some virtues as well as some vices, and that only exceptional beings possess all of them, and then are considered either divine or bestial. It has to be mentioned that, in this context, *Piety and Sin* refers to a comparison with the arts in a very general way.

Natural dispositions can be removed or changed (reading *yaghayyiru* instead of *ya'siru*) by custom, or they may be weakened, or resisted by endurance, and the same division applies to moral (qualified in the *Fuṣūl* as bad) custom: *Piety and Sin* (P 362,10–12) \approx *Fuṣūl* D 111,12–112,2 = N 33,14–34,5. It is immediately added that one has to distinguish clearly between the one who exercises self-restraint and the one who is virtuous, on the one hand, and the one who is moderate, on the other hand: *Piety and Sin* (P 362,12–16) \approx *Fuṣūl* D 112,3–9 and 13–14 = N 34,6–12 and 35,4–5 (but the order between the two first notions has been inversed). Moreover, it is possible to free cities from evil, either by virtue or by self-restraint; so people who have neither of the two have to be excluded from the city: *Piety and Sin* (P 362,16–18) \approx *Fuṣūl* D 112,15–18 = N 35,16–18.¹⁷ Finally, people are endowed with the capacity to do both good and evil deeds, although through custom the doing of some deeds can be facilitated: *Piety and Sin* (P 362,18–363,1) \approx *Fuṣūl* D 113,1–5 = N 35,19–36,4.

¹⁷ In Najjar's edition this affirmation is preceded by an aphorism stressing that it is an excellence for the citizen to exercise self-restraint in accordance with the law, but that the king, on the contrary, has to be naturally virtuous. Note, however, that as in *Piety and Sin*, it is also lacking in Dunlop's edition.

Hereafter follows a consideration of the mean (P 363,1–10). First, in terms almost identical with those of *Fuṣūl* D 113,8–114,1 = N 36,5–37,3, the virtues are presented in an outspoken Aristotelian way as the mean between two vices. Then (lines 6–7), as in *Fuṣūl* D 114,3–4 = N 37,4–5, it is said that the mean is either absolute or relative. When relative (lines 7–8), then it is with respect to different persons, cause and reason of action, place and time. This corresponds to *Fuṣūl* D 115,3–5 = N 38,7–8. It has to be observed that *Piety and Sin* strictly limits the discussion of the mean here to the mean in actions, whereas the *Fuṣūl* offers a more encompassing discussion. In a laconic way, *Piety and Sin* (line 8) adds that the same idea of relativity applies to the “governance” of the body, whereas *Fuṣūl* D 115,14–116,4 = N 39,4–10 illustrates this in a much more detailed way. It finally concludes that just as the physician infers the intermediate with respect to nutriments and medicaments, the king has to infer the intermediate with respect to action and moral habit: *Piety and Sin* (P 363,9–10) ≈ *Fuṣūl* D 116,5–8 = N 39,11–13.

Then the issue of intellectual virtues is dealt with.¹⁸ It is first noted (P. 363,10–12 = *Fuṣūl* D 124,13–16 = N 50,5–7) that both the theoretical and the practical intellect have their own virtue.

As to the theoretical intellect, it attains by nature the first principles, although it may be in potential as long as it has not attained these principles: *Piety and Sin* (P 363,12–15) = *Fuṣūl* D 125,1–2 and 6–8 = N 50,8–10 and 51,3–5. Its knowledge is to attain certainty about the existence of things from genuine demonstrations, however, with or without knowing the reason(s) for that existence: *Piety and Sin* (P 363,15–18) = *Fuṣūl* D 125,11–17 = N 51,8–52,2. As to real knowledge, it is true for all time: *Piety and Sin* (P 363,19–20) corresponds to the basic affirmation of *Fuṣūl* D 126,1–2 = N 52,3–4. In the latter work, a particular emphasis is put on the fact that one cannot have this kind of knowledge of changeable things, at least according to the Ancients—this is the reason why they did not call perception “knowledge.” As to wisdom (*ḥikma*), it involves the knowledge of proximate and remote reasons of things. It is insisted that the true First, who is not comparable with any other thing, is the ultimate cause of all things and that things are arranged to their rank—first, intermediary, or last. In all this, *Piety and Sin* (P 363,20–365,1) has the very same formulation as present in *Fuṣūl* D 126,12–128,5 = N 52,13–54,9.

With respect to the practical intellect, *Piety and Sin* (P 365,2–7) = *Fuṣūl* D 128,6–8 and 11–14 = N 54,10–13 and 55,3–5, it is observed that through much experience it may attain premises on the basis of which one can make the right

¹⁸ In the *Fuṣūl* one finds included between the previous discussion of the mean and the present analysis of the intellectual virtues more “politically” inspired aphorisms that deal with the topic of households, dwellings and cities, and with the king. They have been discerned by *Butterworth*. Alfarabi. *The Political Writings*. P. 8 as more politically oriented sections that interrupt the explanation of the soul and its faculties.

moral choice, but that it remains in potential as long as it is deprived of any experience. A further distinction is made between prudence (*ta'qqul*, corresponding to Greek *phronēsis*), cleverness, cunning¹⁹ and deceit (reading *al-khibb* instead of *al-habb*): *Piety and Sin* (P 365,8–14) = *Fuṣūl* D 128,15–129,7 = N 55,6–56,3. In the *Fuṣūl* it is added that these things lead to the goal, but are not the goal. Then it is pointed out that an evil person's experiencing bad deeds as good ones is like a sick person's experiencing sweet things as bitter ones: *Piety and Sin* (P 365,15–20) = *Fuṣūl* D 129,7–130,4 = N 56,14–57,6.²⁰ Regarding prudence, a further distinction is made between three basic types: in relation to a household, a city²¹ or one's own well-being, i.e., ethics. Furthermore, one's need for prudence differs from individual to individual. Finally, common opinion considers someone who has prudence to be intelligent. In all this, *Piety and Sin* (P 366,1–6) corresponds to *Fuṣūl* D 130,7–11 and 130,16–137,4 = N 57,10–58,2 and 58,6–10.

In the following part (P 366,7–13), *Piety and Sin* enumerates different modes of (practical) knowledge:

- correct presumption (*al-ẓann al-ṣawāb*),²² which finds the truth of a thing each time this thing is observed (= *Fuṣūl* D 131,5–7 = N 58,11–12);

- discernment (*al-dhihn*) as the ability to light upon the correct judgment with respect to recondite opinions that are disputed (= *Fuṣūl* D 131,8–10 = N 58,13–59,2);

- excellence of opinion (*jūdat al-ra'y*) as something proper to a virtuous individual so that his words and will are praiseworthy (≈ *Fuṣūl* D 131,11–15 and 132,2 = N 59,3–6 and 11).

Then (P 366,15–22) a distinction is made between different kinds of people according to their (practical) knowledge. Before presenting them, it is first (P 366,14–15 = *Fuṣūl* D 132,3–5 = N 59,12–60,1) observed that two roots lie at the basis of deliberation, i.e., generally accepted things from all or most people, and things attained by experience and observation. As to the categories distinguished, one has:

¹⁹ Although in the actual edition of *Piety and Sin* the notion of *dahā'* lacks, one may, based on a comparison with the *Fuṣūl*, suppose that it was in all likelihood present in the original version. In fact, one may suppose an omission by *homoioteuton* related to the notion of *aṣlah* (*Fuṣūl* D 129,3–4, N 54,10–11).

²⁰ In the version published by Najjar, one finds before this observation an aphorism which deals with the topic of pleasures and pains, both of the body and the soul. But this aphorism is lacking in Dunlop's edition.

²¹ In view of the text in *Fuṣūl*, I correct *al-manzil* (*Piety and Sin*, P. 366,2) to *al-madan*, since otherwise it simply repeats what has been said the line before.

²² In view of the text in *Fuṣūl*, I correct *al-thawāb* (*Piety and Sin*, P. 366,2) to *al-ṣawāb*, since the former reading makes no sense in the present context.

– the simple person (*al-ghumr*)²³ (lines 15–16), who has only an imaginary rather than experiential grasp of practical affairs (= *Fuṣūl* D 132,6–7 = N 60,2–3);²⁴

– the confused (or mad) person (line 16),²⁵ who always imagines the contrary of what is generally believed or is customary (= *Fuṣūl* D 132,10–11 = N 60,6–7);

– the stupid man (lines 17–22), whose deliberation always leads to the wrong result (= *Fuṣūl* D 132,14–133,4 = N 60,10–61,4).

Hereafter (P 367,1 = *Fuṣūl* D 133,5–6 = N 61,5–6), a short definition is given of quick-wittedness, *dhakā'*, followed by the remark that wisdom is the highest form of knowledge, and hence that prudence cannot be identified with wisdom: *Piety and Sin* P 367,1–3 ≈ *Fuṣūl* D 133,10–14, N 61,10–62,2.²⁶

In its final part (P 367,4–368,6) *Piety and Sin* deals with the issue of rhetoric and poetry. Having indicated that rhetoric is the art to persuade others, the book stresses that the virtuous person only uses it for good things: *Piety and Sin* P 367,4–6 = *Fuṣūl* D 134,11–14 = N 62,14–63,2. Hereafter (P 367,6–11), a sharp distinction is made between excellence in persuasion and excellence in imaginative evocation (*takhyīl*): the former intends the hearer to do something after his assenting to it, whereas the latter has no other goal than to inspire the hearer to seek or to flee the thing evoked by imagination, even if he has not assented to it, hence to the exclusion of any deliberation. All these ideas are also present in *Fuṣūl* D 134,15–135,3 and 135,8–11 = N 63,3–6 and 64,1–4, where it is additionally stressed that imaginative evocation is used with respect to different accidents of the soul, as e.g., satisfaction, fright, etc. Finally, six kinds of poems are distinguished: three praiseworthy ones and three blameworthy ones, the latter being the contraries of the former. They improve and, respectively, corrupt the rational faculty, the accidents of the soul related to power and the accidents of the soul related to softness. One finds here an almost *verbatim* correspondence between *Piety and Sin* 367,11–368,6 and *Fuṣūl* D 135,12–136,12 = N 64,5–65,8.²⁷

Based on the evidence offered above, it is clear that there exists a close connection between the third part of *Piety and Sin* and the sections of the *Fuṣūl*

²³ The reading '*amr*' in *Piety and Sin* is devoid of any sense and almost certainly results from a scribal (or printing?) error.

²⁴ Once again, there is a strong indication that a sentence has been omitted in *Piety and Sin*, since what is ascribed to the confused (or mad) person in the *Fuṣūl* is here presented as part of the simple person, although this makes no sense. Therefore, I have included in the enumeration the confused (or mad) person, even if this notion is missing in the edition.

²⁵ See the preceding note.

²⁶ In the *Fuṣūl* a section follows that concentrates anew on the notion of wisdom, but adds nothing new with regard to what has been said before on this topic.

²⁷ It has to be noted that the actual edition of *Piety and Sin* shows many corruptions in the present exposé, which can be easily corrected on the basis of the editions of the *Fuṣūl*. Given this evidence, I feel no need to give a detailed list.

muntaza'a that deal with the human soul. Of the political (and metaphysical) sections there is, on the contrary, no trace whatsoever. In sum, the coherence in *Piety and Sin* is greater than in the *Fuṣūl*. Of course, this does not mean that Ibn Sīnā must be the author of the text. One can easily imagine that he has made a “clever” selection based on a work of his great predecessor al-Fārābī. However, it has to be noted that this work contains many ideas that are somewhat foreign to the latter’s major works. Moreover, the attribution of the *Fuṣūl* to al-Fārābī may be mistaken, since it is, after all, only explicitly present in two out of four manuscripts, namely Bodleian, Hunt 307 and Chester Beatty 3714.²⁸ It is also noteworthy that for al-Lawkarī the *Fuṣūl* was sufficiently Avicennan in contents to be included in a kind of florilegium of Avicennan texts.²⁹ But all this is of course not enough to reject al-Fārābī’s authorship conclusively. On the contrary, the fact that *Piety and Sin* is a work of the very young Ibn Sīnā makes it plausible, not to say probable, that this last has put to use a work of his great predecessor. This probability only increases, as has been seen, with respect to the use of another Farabian work, i.e., the *Risāla fī l-Tanbīh ‘alā Sabīl al-Sa‘āda*. Certainly, in this case too one gets the impression that some of the ideas expressed better fit an Avicennan than a Farabian context, especially when one considers their major writings. Here, one is confronted with a major problem. Either one rejects al-Fārābī’s having ever adhered to such ideas—but then one has to deny, in my view, his authorship not only of the *Fuṣūl*, but also of the *Tanbīh* (and undoubtedly other works), or one admits that he, at least during a certain period of his life, has defended them—and then one can hardly deny that a major evolution has taken place in his thought so that one has to make mention of an al-Fārābī 1 and an al-Fārābī 2. If al-Fārābī 2 is the author of the major works, then it is obvious that the young Ibn Sīnā was only tempted by the thoughts of al-Fārābī 1.³⁰ This needs of course further investigation. Furthermore, if the young Ibn Sīnā was indeed influenced by al-Fārābī 1, the question arises to what extent he was accepting the ideas of his great predecessor in his early years, as well as later on. It may be hoped that further research will elucidate this complex problem. For the moment, I can only affirm that there is a close connection between parts of Ibn Sīnā’s early work *Piety and Sin* and sections of two works, i.e., *Risāla fī l-Tanbīh ‘alā Sabīl al-Sa‘āda* and *Fuṣūl Muntaza'a*, which have generally been considered “Farabian.”³¹

²⁸ Fauzi M. Najjar. Al-Fārābī’s *Fuṣūl Muntaza'a*. P. 23, note 2.

²⁹ See my “Al-Lawkarī’s reception of Ibn Sīnā’s *Ilāhiyyāt*” // Hasse D.H., Bertolacci A. (eds.). *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna’s Metaphysics*. Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 2012. P. 7–26.

³⁰ As to Ibn Rushd, he would then clearly have preferred al-Fārābī 2.

³¹ I most sincerely thank Richard Taylor who substantially improved the English style of the present paper.