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A quotation of an anonymous 'logician' in Avicenna's *Categories**

INTRODUCTION

Avicenna's activity as a commentator of Aristotle has already been shown to rely on the preceding exegetical traditions, both Greek and Arabic. The philosopher's reception of previous interpretations does not merely stand as an acceptance of the outline and the themes presented by the other commentaries, but first and foremost as an 'active' and critical attitude towards his predecessors' doctrines. Avicenna's works on the Aristotelian *corpus* are often dialectical, inasmuch as they build their doctrine in contrast with the opinions of previous exegetes, and the customary way of understanding Aristotle's text¹.

* This article is a result of the ongoing research for my doctoral dissertation on Avicenna's *Maqūlāt*. I presented a first draft of it in Pisa, at the workshop 'Filosofia islamica alle Scuole Normali' (co-organized by the Scuola Normale Superiore, the École Normale Supérieure de Paris and the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon), in May 2013 : I am indebted to Marwan Rashed and the other participants for the observations they made on that occasion. Rashed later discussed these issues with me privately, and publicly in a dedicated talk he held at the Scuola : the doctrinal sections of this paper, in particular, owe much to his advice. I also wish to thank Cristina D'Ancona, for her comments on a previous version of the text ; Rüdiger Arnzen, for his very careful reading of the final draft and his important suggestions ; Gabriele Galluzzo and Riccardo Chiaradonna, for their useful corrections ; Silvia Di Vincenzo, who let me read a draft of her article appearing in this volume, and gave me instructive indications on Avicenna's doctrine in the *Madḥal*. I am very grateful to my supervisor, Amos Bertolacci, not only for his precious observations on each version of this paper, but also for his constant attention and support. All remaining flaws are, of course, my responsibility.

¹ Avicenna's 'aporetic' method and 'dialectical' attitude is also well attested by other works which are not, strictly speaking, exegetical, such as the *Mubāḥaṭāt*. For Avicenna's rejection of customary practice in philosophy see D. GUTAS, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2014, pp. 252-255 ; Avicenna's dialectical attitude has also been discussed by A. BERTOLACCI, *The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics in Avicenna's Kitāb al-Šifā'*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2006, p. 403-406. As concerns logic, which will be the focus of this paper, examples of Avicenna's critical attitude with regard to the previous commentators have recently been illustrated, among others, by A. Bäck in the case of *Categories*, 1 (*Avicenna the commentator*, in L. P. NEWTON ed., *Medieval Commentaries on Aristotle's Categories*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2008, pp. 31-71) and by S. Di Vincenzo (*Avicenna against Porphyry's Definition of Differentia Specifica*, « Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale », 26, 2015, pp. 129-183) as regards Porphyry and the *Isagoge*.

As a matter of fact, many of the treatises forming Avicenna's most voluminous *summa*, the *Book of the Cure* (*Kitāb al-Šifā'*), contain several dialectical or aporetic sections. In these parts, along with hypothetic objections, apparently made up by Avicenna himself to test the soundness of his own statements (often introduced by formulae like *li-qā'ilin an yaqūla*, 'someone might say', and *in sa'ala sā'ilun*, 'if someone asked...'), one may find quotations of doctrines explicitly attributed to indeterminate speakers: most of them are ascribed to 'groups' of people (*qāla qawmun*, 'a group [of people] said'), 'philosophers' or 'commentators' (*mufassirūna*). Indications are very rarely given, however, on the identity of the mentioned philosophers, except for indefinite judgments and suggestions².

In this paper I will present and discuss extensively a peculiar case, found in the *Categories* (*Maqūlāt*) of the *Book of the Cure* (*Kitāb al-Šifā'*), where the opinion of a predecessor is presented in the form of a literal quotation. This is a rare event, as concerns Avicenna's works and commenting practice, and thus needs to be evaluated carefully; even the most explicit quotations of Aristotle, in Avicenna's works, are always reported in a more or less paraphrastic fashion³. I shall argue that this short quotation bears evidence of a circulation of Porphyry's *In Aristotelis Categorias expositio per interrogationem et responsionem* (henceforth: *In Arist. Cat.*), of which few direct traces have hitherto been found in the Arabic exegetical tradition; the Greek text of this commentary is instead preserved for the most part, and edited⁴. The quotation is followed by a long refutation, which I will examine in detail as a good example of Avicenna's dialectical practice; the refutation also provides evidence and information regarding the quoted text, its author, and its context. As I will argue, the whole passage witnesses both a criticism of Porphyry's exegesis of the *Categories*, and the Avicennan theory of

² Some of the quoted groups or personalities are qualified with epithets, which may sometimes ease their recognition: 'the validating philosophers' (*al-falāsifa al-muḥaṣṣilūna*, said of the trustworthy and authoritative interpreters of Aristotle, such as Alexander of Aphrodisias); 'sophists' or 'deceivers' (*mutakallifāna*); 'some of those pedantic commentators' (*ba'du hā'ulā'i l-mutaḥadliqīna min al-mufassirīna*) and many others. For a detailed list of similar references, as found in the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Šifā'*, see BERTOLACCI, *The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics* cit., Appendix B, pp. 559-580.

³ For a typology of Avicenna's quotations of Aristotle in the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Šifā'*, see BERTOLACCI, *The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics* cit., pp. 318-321. For other cases where the evidence of explicit or implicit Aristotelian passages gives information about the translations used by Avicenna see R. STROBINO, *Avicenna's Use of the Arabic Translations of the Posterior Analytics and the Ancient Commentary Tradition*, « Oriens », 40, 2012, pp. 355-389.

⁴ This commentary is currently available in two critical editions: the classic edition by A. BUSSE, Reimer, Berlin 1887 (C.A.G. IV.1), and the more recent edition by R. BODÉUS, *Porphyre. Commentaire sur les Catégories*, Vrin, Paris 2008.

the distinction between accident ('*araḍ*') and accidental ('*araḍī*')⁵. In the end, I will make a few suggestions concerning the main doctrinal implications of the analysed texts.

1. THE CONTEXT: AVICENNA'S DISCUSSION OF 'BEING SAID OF A SUBJECT' (ΚΑΘ' ΥΠΟΚΕΙΜΕΝΟΥ ΛΕΓΕΣΘΑΙ) AND 'BEING IN A SUBJECT' (ΕΝ ΥΠΟΚΕΙΜΕΝΩΙ ΕΙΝΑΙ) AND ITS GREEK AND ARABIC BACKGROUND

Before discussing the quotation, some considerations must be made regarding the context in which it appears. The Avicennan *Categories*, called *Māqūlat* ('[Book of the] Categories'), is a treatise belonging to the *Kitāb al-Šifā'* ('Book of the Cure'): it is placed in the first 'part' (*ḡumla*) of the *Šifā'*, devoted to the science of logic, right after a paraphrase of Porphyry's *Isagoge* (*Madḥal*, 'Introduction') and straight before a commentary on the *De interpretatione* ('*Tbāra*, 'Expression')⁶. Like these other works, and most of the sections of the *Šifā'*, the *Maqūlat* can be deemed neither a commentary nor a paraphrase in the strictest sense: it reworks Aristotle's *Categories* without quoting its text, and develops rather articulate discussions on the most relevant doctrinal points. What makes this work important is that it provides the lengthiest and most detailed account, in the Avicennan *corpus*, of the doctrine of the categories, whereas in other systematic works Avicenna's treatment of this theme is sensibly scaled down, if not totally neglected⁷.

⁵ On this distinction, see M. ALONSO ALONSO, *Accidente, accidental y número (según Avicena)*, « Al-Andalus », 28, 1963, pp. 117-154; S. DI VINCENZO, *Avicenna's reworking of Porphyry's 'common accident' in the light of Aristotle's Categories*, in the present volume, pp. 163-194.

⁶ The critical edition of *Maqūlat* was published in Cairo in 1959 (IBN SĪNĀ, *Al-Šifā'*, *al-Manṭiq, al-Maqūlat*, ed. Ġ. Š. QANAWĀTĪ, M. AL-ḤUDAYRĪ, A. F. AL-AḤWĀNĪ, S. ZĀYĪD, al-Hay'a al-'amma li-šū'ūn al-maṭābi' al-amiriyya, Cairo 1959); I will refer to this edition in the following pages. I will also refer to the Cairo edition when quoting by page number any other section of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*.

⁷ This depends on the fact that Avicenna does not hold the doctrine of the categories to be really useful in logic (see GUTAS, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* cit., pp. 300-303), whereas he often insists on their ontological relevance, and on their use in metaphysics. Indeed, substance and accident are the object of a significantly long treatment in the *Ilāhiyyāt* (*Metaphysics*) of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*, extending over treatises II and III (pp. 57-160 of the Cairo edition). Among the other *summae*, a section on the categories is present in the logical parts of the *Book of the Guidance* (*Kitāb al-Hidāya*), and the *Book of Deliverance* (*Kitāb al-Naḡāt*); the *Dānešnāme-ye 'Alā'ī* (*Book of Science for 'Alā-dawla*), and the *Naḡāt* deal with the doctrine of the categories in their metaphysical sections as well. The doctrine is totally absent from one of Avicenna's most important and influent works, the *Book of Pointers and Reminders* (*Kitāb al-Išārāt wa-l-Tanbīhāt*), in whose first section they are explicitly dismissed as a matter of no importance for the study of logic. The categories are dealt with in some minor logical works, such as the *Middle compendium of logic* (*Muḥtaṣar al-awsaṭ fi l-manṭiq*), whose section on the categories has been edited and published: see A. KALBARCZYK, *The Kitāb al-Maqūlat of the Muḥtaṣar al-awsaṭ fi l-manṭiq: A hitherto unknown Source for studying Ibn Sīnā's Reception of Aristotle's Categories*, « Oriens », 40/2, 2012, pp. 305-354.

Chapter I, 3 of Avicenna's *Maqūlāt* is entitled 'On the explanation of the meaning of what is said of a subject or not, and [the meaning of] what exists in a subject or not'. It corresponds to the section of the second chapter of the *Categories*, where Aristotle traces his famous 'ontological square': a fourfold division of 'beings' (τὰ ὄντα) based on the two properties of 'being said of a subject' (καθ' ὑποκειμένου λέγεσθαι) and 'being in a subject' (ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ εἶναι):

T1: ARISTOTLE, *Categories*, 2, 1a20-b9:

« Of things there are : some are said of a subject but are not in any subject. For example, man is said of a subject, the individual man, but is not in any subject. Some are in a subject but are not said of any subject. (By 'in a subject' I mean what is in something, not as a part, and cannot exist separately from what it is in). For example, the individual knowledge-of-grammar is in a subject, the soul, but is not said of any subject ; and the individual white is in a subject, the body (for all colour is in a body), but is not said of any subject. Some are both said of a subject and in a subject. For example, knowledge is in a subject, the soul, and is also said of a subject, knowledge-of-grammar. Some are neither in a subject nor said of a subject, for example, the individual man or individual horse — for nothing of this sort is neither in a subject nor said of a subject. Things that are individual and numerically one are, without exception, not said of any subject, but there is nothing to prevent some of them from being in a subject — the individual knowledge-of-grammar is one of the things in a subject »⁸.

The four members of the division outlined in this passage are traditionally identified, respectively, with universal substances (said of a subject and not being in a subject), individual accidents (not said of a subject and being in a subject), individual substances (neither said of a subject nor being in a subject) and universal accidents (said of a subject and being in a subject).

This passage is well-known to Aristotelian scholars for its difficulties, notably those regarding the status of particular accidents⁹; moreover, the apparently equivocal meaning of the word ὑποκείμενον, susceptible of signifying both 'subject of predication' and 'substrate of inherence', poses another relevant problem. As a matter of fact, the two expressions 'being in' and 'being said of' seem to have different meanings here; the former appears to signify an ontological status (being in such a way as to be inherent in a subject without being a part of it, and not being able to subsist without it), whereas the latter seemingly denotes a certain

⁸ English translation by J. L. ACKRILL, *Aristotle's Categories and De Interpretatione*, Oxford, Clarendon Press 1979, p. 4.

⁹ See for instance R. E. ALLEN, *Individual Properties in Aristotle's Categories*, « Phronesis », 14, 1969, pp. 31-39.

kind of predication. This ambiguity has suggested different interpretations in modern scholarship: some of them reaffirm this difference, others try instead to propose a unitary account of predication and inherence¹⁰. However, regardless whether 'being in' is understood as accidental predication or as the way in which accidental properties exist, it is generally agreed that it is a condition that concerns non-constitutive attributes, whereas 'said of' expresses an essential relation; the examples provided by Aristotle, here and elsewhere, seem to confirm this interpretation, along with the rule of transitive predication which is expounded in the following chapter of the *Categories*: if man is said of the individual man and animal is said of man, then animal is said of the individual man, which implies that 'said of' has an essential connotation¹¹. As is clear, the interpretation of such a passage in logical, grammatical, or ontological terms is crucial for the overall understanding of Aristotle's *Categories*, since it may give a clue to sort out the *vexata quaestio* of the treatise's subject matter. I will not propose here a solution regarding the interpretation of Aristotle; I will focus, instead, on the exegetic developments on the question, right before coming to Avicenna's approach.

The late antique exegesis must be analysed first of all, on account of the influence it has on the Arabic reception of Aristotle. In the commentaries on the *Categories* by Porphyry and Simplicius, this section is treated as a sort of prelude to the division of the categories carried out in chapter four, as this fourfold classification is claimed to be the smallest supposable division of beings¹². Besides discussing

¹⁰ Among the current interpretations I mention that of C.-H. Chen (*On Aristotle's two Expressions: καθ' ὑποκειμένου λέγεσθαι and ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ εἶναι*, « *Phronesis* », 2/2, 1957, pp. 148-159) sharply distinguishes between the logical/grammatical meaning of 'subject' and the metaphysical one; that of J. L. Ackrill (*Aristotle's Categories and De interpretatione cit.*, pp. 75-76) provides instead a substantially unitary interpretation by holding that, being this passage concerned with things, the relation represented by 'being said of' should also be understood as having an ontological meaning; on the other hand, he deems it unnecessary to discuss the meanings of 'subject', since it 'is a mere label for anything 'said of' it or 'in' it' (p. 76); that of J. M. E. Moravcsik (*Aristotle on Predication*, « *Philosophical Review* », 76, 1967, pp. 80-96) holds that Aristotle is here discussing predication in a linguistic sense, but that the two alternatives 'being in' and 'said of' specifically refer to its different ontological counterparts (p. 85).

¹¹ *Cat.*, 3, 1b10-15; see M. D. ROHR, *Aristotle on the Transitivity of Being Said of*, « *Journal of the History of Philosophy* », 16, 1978, pp. 379-385. It is however disputed whether Aristotle really conceived of a distinction between accidents/predicates and accidents/beings: see on this point M. VAN AUBEL, *Accident, catégories et prédicables dans l'oeuvre d'Aristote*, « *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* », 61, 1963, pp. 361-401.

¹² PORPH., *In Cat.*, 71, 20 Busse; SIMPL., *In Cat.*, 44, 4-20 Kalbfleisch; C. EVANGELIOU, *Aristotle's Categories and Porphyry*, Brill, Leiden - New York - København - Köln 1988, pp. 51-53. For a comparative analysis of the late ancient commentaries on these issues, see the corresponding section of the commentary on Simplicius by C. Luna (*Simplicius, Commentaire sur les Catégories d'Aristote. Chapitres 2-4*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2001, pp. 131-452).

the particular terminology used here by Aristotle to deal with substance and accident, these commentators do not question explicitly the different meanings of 'subject', but they pose the problem of its notion indirectly.

Porphry hints at the significance of the distinction between 'being in' and 'said of' as a matter of different consideration: whilst 'being in' is an existential property, thus provided with ontological value, 'said of' has somewhat to do with conception (ἐπίνοια)¹³. 'Being said of a subject' is held by Porphyry to be equivalent to 'being predicated in the τὸ τί ἐστί', i.e. in the essence of something, and thus indicates an essential relation. Another character of 'being said of' is being predicated synonymously, i.e. in such a way that both the name and the definition of the predicate are said of its subject. These characters do not apply to all universals; as Porphyry himself admits, this condition is satisfied — among universals — by species and genera¹⁴. If we take logic, in Porphyry's opinion, as discussing in a simplified fashion doctrines whose true exposition will be given in the theoretical works, we may expect this interpretation to be not only suitable to Aristotle's examples, but also grounded in Porphyry's ontology. Indeed, as Simplicius witnesses, in his longer commentary addressed to his disciple Gedalium Porphyry has described essential predication more in detail as predicating something 'uncoordinated' (ἀκατάτακτον) of something 'coordinated' (κατατεταγμένον); this has been understood either as predicating a transcendent form of its sensible particular, or — more convincingly — as predicating the abstraction of an immanent form of one of its instantiations¹⁵.

As to 'being in', on the other hand, it undoubtedly refers to the 'ontological' accident; this however is not sharply distinct from the predicable 'accident',

¹³ PORPH., *In Cat.*, 75, 24-29 Busse: « Why do you say that universals are said of a subject, but that accidents are in a subject? What do you mean by speaking of the former as 'said of', but of accidents as 'being'? The reason for this is deep and beyond your level of comprehension. It is beyond the level of comprehension of a beginning student to know that while accidents exist just as substances do, to call something universal is not to ascribe any real property to it, but refers to how it is conceived (μεχρι ἐπινοίας) » (English translation by S. K. STRANGE, *Porphyry. On Aristotle's Categories*, Duckworth, London 1992, p. 58). R. Bodéus translates Porphyry's difficult expression μεχρι ἐπινοίας as 'dans les limites de la pensée' (*Porphyre. Commentaire sur les Catégories* cit., pp. 171-173).

¹⁴ PORPH., *In Cat.*, 80, 23-24 Busse: « The species and genera of any subject satisfy these conditions, whether the subject is a substance or an accident » (English translation by STRANGE, *Porphyry, On Aristotle's Categories* cit., p. 64). The Porphyrian definitions of genus and species, as formulated in the *Isagoge*, already entail their 'being predicated in the "what is it?"' (PORPH., *Isag.*, 2, 15-17; 4, 9-12 Busse).

¹⁵ Two passages of Simplicius' commentary present this description of synonymous predication (SIMPL., *In Cat.*, 53, 6-9; 79, 24-30 Kalbfleisch). For a discussion of these texts and their previous interpretations, see R. CHIARADONNA, *Porphyry and Iamblichus on Universals and Synonymous Predication*, « Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale », 18, 2007, pp. 123-140. On the general character of Porphyry's lost commentary *Ad Gedalium* see below, par. 2 B.

since the clause 'subsistent in a subject' is incorporated into Porphyry's definition of common accident in the *Isagoge*¹⁶. Simplicius follows Porphyry in granting predication 'of a subject' an essential character, and predication according to synonymy¹⁷.

The meanings of ὑποκείμενον explicitly become a matter of discussion in Porphyry's lost commentary *Ad Gedalium*, but only with regard to its status as a substrate. The context is Porphyry's reply to an aporia, presented by Lucius, concerning the status of the constitutive qualities of substances. In a famous passage, reported as an extensive quotation by Simplicius, Porphyry distinguishes between two considerations of the subject: 'subject' may be, in one sense, the primary unqualified matter; in another sense, a qualified individual substance, considered either as particular or universal. Qualities (such as colors, shapes, and other properties) inhere in prime matter as accidents; they also do so in qualified bodies, despite inhering in some of them as constitutive parts, as for instance does 'white' in the snow, or 'hot' in the fire¹⁸. Since Aristotle in the *Categories* is referring to the second sense of subject, these constitutive properties are not to be understood as accidents (whereas they are accidents with regard to prime matter). As it may be noticed, then, the definition of ὑποκείμενον in this passage of the *Categories* bears consequences for many relevant ontological issues.

As concerns the other Greek commentators, some of them point out the ambiguity of the word ὑποκείμενον. Ammonius refers to a distinction between subject 'with respect to subsistence' (πρὸς ὑπαρξιν), which is the substrate of accidents, and subject 'with respect to predication' (πρὸς κατηγορίαν), which is that of which universals are said¹⁹; again, Ammonius holds that Aristotle uses 'being said' to discuss words, whereas he uses 'is' to speak of things²⁰. The distinction between the two sorts of subjects is also found in the commentary

¹⁶ PORPH., *Isag.*, 13, 3-5 Busse: « They define them thus: accidents are what can hold or not hold of the same thing; or: what is neither a genus nor a difference nor a species nor a property but is always subsistent in a subject » (English translation by J. BARNES, *Porphyry, Introduction*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2003, p. 12). On this definition of the predicable 'accident' with respect to the Aristotelian definition, given in the *Topics*, see A. DE LIBERA, *Porphyre. Isagoge, traduction par A. De Libera et A-P. Segonds, introduction et notes par A. de Libera*, Vrin, Paris 1998, pp. XCVIII-CIII); for a discussion of this definition, and the late ancient and Arabic debate concerning it, see DI VINCENZO, *Avicenna's reworking of Porphyry's 'common accident'* cit.

¹⁷ SIMPL., *In Cat.*, 51, 30 - 52, 2 Kalbfleisch.

¹⁸ SIMPL., *In Cat.*, 48, 11-33 Kalbfleisch. The Greek text of this passage and its Arabic translation will be analysed below, par. 2. For a discussion of this aporia, see the doctrinal and historical reconstruction provided by LUNA, *Simplicius, Commentaire sur les Catégories* cit., pp. 225-256.

¹⁹ AMM., *In Cat.*, 26, 10-16 Busse.

²⁰ AMM., *In Cat.*, 26, 23-24 Busse.

attributed to Philoponus²¹; both commentaries agree, however, on the fact that ‘said of’ indicates being ‘substantially’ or ‘pragmatically’ predicated (οὐσιωδῶς καὶ πραγματικῶς), whilst if something is predicated accidentally it is not said of a subject²². A distinction between the two senses of ‘subject’ is also referred to in Olympiodorus’ commentary, although it is not discussed in detail²³. Olympiodorus and Elias/David, despite presenting Aristotle’s square as a division of things, also refer to its four members as to ‘expressions’ (φωναί)²⁴; while Olympiodorus explicitly states that ‘saying of’ indicates essential or substantial predication²⁵, Elias/David does not; but he distinguishes clearly between ‘said of’ and ‘being in’ as two different sorts of predication (κατηγορία)²⁶.

The Arabic commentators of the *Categories*, among both Avicenna’s predecessors and contemporaries, show similar approaches to the distinction between ‘being in’ and ‘being said of’. In al-Fārābī²⁷ we find a wholly logical interpretation; in the beginning of his shorter paraphrase of Aristotle’s *Categories*, he grants ‘said of’ predicates an essential nature; as to ‘being in’, he holds it to indicate accidental predication, in such a way that the accident Aristotle deals with in this section of the *Categories* is to be understood as a sort of genus for the accidental predicables (both property and common accident)²⁸. If we turn to the Baghdad Peripatetics, we see that like the Greek commentators, they reflect on issues related to the ontological consideration of the accident, such as the possible meanings of inherence; but they still take the Aristotelian distinction as referring to different kinds of predication. Al-Ḥasan ibn Suwār (d. 1036), the author of a

²¹ PHIL., *In Cat.*, 30, 25-26 Busse.

²² AMM., *In Cat.*, 31, 9-11 Busse; PHIL., *In Cat.*, 38, 28-31 Busse. It has been noted (LUNA, *Simplicius, Commentaire sur les Catégories d’Aristote* cit., p. 401) that Ammonius’ terminology is neither Porphyrian nor Aristotelian, although Simplicius holds the two expressions ‘synonymously’ and ‘substantially’ to be equivalent (SIMPL., *In Cat.*, 45, 3-5 Kalbfleisch).

²³ OLYMP., *In Cat.*, 44, 32-33 Busse.

²⁴ OLYMP., *In Cat.*, 46, 22 Busse; ELIAS/DAVID, *In Cat.*, 147, 29 Busse.

²⁵ OLYMP., *In Cat.*, 50, 13-15 Busse: « ‘Of a subject’ is when the predicate is predicated of the same substance and the same subsistence ».

²⁶ ELIAS/DAVID, *In Cat.*, 154, 13 ff. Busse. On Olympiodorus and Elias/David’s original exegesis of *Cat.*, 3, see LUNA, *Simplicius, Commentaire sur les Catégories d’Aristote* cit., pp. 401-405.

²⁷ Al-Fārābī, mentioned by the bio-bibliographical sources as a commentator of the *Categories*, is known to have written two works on the *Categories*: a paraphrase and a commentary, no longer extant. The paraphrase has been edited and translated into English by D. M. DUNLOP, *Al-Fārābī’s Paraphrase of the Categories of Aristotle*, « The Islamic Quarterly », 4, 1958, pp. 168-197; 5, 1959, pp. 21-54.

²⁸ « The accident mentioned in this place [i.e. in the *Categories*] is more general than that mentioned in what has preceded [i.e. in the *Isagoge*], for it includes the property and the accident which were mentioned in what has preceded. It is a kind of genus of both, and they are, as it were, the species of it. One of its two kinds is named by the name of its genus’ (English translation by D.M. Dunlop, slightly modified: *Al-Fārābī’s Paraphrase of the Categories of Aristotle*, 169, 14-16 [Arabic], p. 184 [English]).

number of exegetical glosses on the *Categories* preserved in the margins of ms. Paris BnF 2346²⁹, while insisting on the essential nature of 'said of' predicates, understands the predication of what is 'in a subject' as accidental predication³⁰. The same does Abū l-Faraġ Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 1043), a contemporary of Avicenna and a prominent commentator of Aristotle³¹: in the section of his commentary devoted to *Cat.*, 1b9 ff., he interprets the distinction between 'said of' and 'being in' as a distinction between *substantial* and *accidental* predication, thus granting again 'said of a subject' an exclusively essential nature³².

To sum up, halfway between a solely ontological approach and an entirely logical solution (such as the one adopted by Fārābī) we find the attitude of those commentators who blend the two perspectives, by not distinguishing clearly between a logical and an ontological consideration of what is 'in a subject'. This ambiguity is eased by the fact that all these commentators substantially agree upon Porphyry's 'amphibious' identification of the subject-matter of the *Categories* with significant utterances, inasmuch as they refer to things or beings³³. It is however clear that most of them hold 'said of a subject' to be a synonym for

²⁹ This manuscript is entirely digitised, and freely consultable online, on the website *Gallica* (link : <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8422956q>). For an edition (with French translation) of the Arabic text of Ibn Suwār's notes, see K. GEORR, *Les Catégories d'Aristote dans leurs versions syro-arabes*, Beirut 1948.

³⁰ « L'attribution [Ar. *ḥaml*, 'predication'] de ce qui est ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ ne concerne pas la même catégorie et n'est pas de la même nature » (IBN SUWĀR, in GEORR, *Les Catégories d'Aristote dans leurs versions syro-arabes*, p. 174).

³¹ The Arabic text is extant, and edited : C. FERRARI, *Der Kategorienkommentar von Abū l-Faraġ 'Abdallāh ibn al-Ṭayyib. Text und Untersuchungen*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2006. For a profile of Ibn al-Ṭayyib as a philosopher and commentator see the *Introduction*, pp. 17-33.

³² IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Tafsīr kitāb al-maqūlāt*, 77, 32 - 78, 6 Ferrari : « These [predicates] are divided into two sorts, namely into substantial [predicates] and accidental [predicates]; substantial predicates are the predicates which the intellect judges of a subject according to the fact that their essence is the essence [of the subject], and there is no difference between them but with regard to their being specific or common; this predication is called predication 'of', and substantial predication [...]. The accidental [predicates] are those which [the intellect] judges of a subject not according to the fact that their essence is the essence [of the subject], but according to the fact that their essence is existent in [the subject], and this predication is called predication 'in', and accidental predication [...] ».

³³ PORPH., *In Cat.*, 58, 5-6 Busse ; SIMPL., *In Cat.*, 11, 30 Kalbfleisch and ff. The Alexandrian commentators actually define the treatise's subject-matter as 'simple utterances signifying things by means of concepts' : AMM., *In Cat.*, 11, 17 - 12, 1 Busse ; PHIL., *In Cat.*, 9, 12-15 Busse ; OLYMP., *In Cat.*, 21, 39 - 22, 2 Busse ; ELIAS/DAVID, *In Cat.*, 131, 17-18 Busse. This latter idea of the 'aim' of the *Categories* is reprised in the Arabic tradition by Ibn Suwār (361, 1 - 4 Georr) and Ibn al-Ṭayyib (*Tafsīr*, 17, 19-20 Ferrari). On the question of the 'scope' of the *Categories* in the late antique commentaries see P. HOFFMANN, *Catégories et langage selon Simplicius - La question du 'skopos' du traité aristotélicien des 'Catégories'*, in I. HADOT ed., *Simplicius : sa vie, son oeuvre, sa survie, Actes du colloque international de Paris (28. Sept. - 1er Oct. 1985)*, de Gruyter, Berlin - New York 1987, pp. 61-90.

‘essential universal’: this is in fact closely related to the necessity of explaining Aristotle’s rule of the transitivity of predication, as it is presented in *Cat.*, 3, 1b10-15. Only Andronicus of Rhodes, along with other unspecified philosophers, is said by Simplicius to have recognized that some non-essential properties may be predicated ‘of’ their subjects³⁴.

Before discussing Avicenna’s treatment of the problem, it must be noted that his interpretation of the categories insists on their being types of existents³⁵; therefore, a pivotal concern of his commentary on the *Categories* is defining the fields of competence of logic and metaphysics, with regard to the topics discussed in the Aristotelian treatise. Although the details of Avicenna’s knowledge of the previous exegetical tradition are not yet known, his approach shows a solid awareness of the doctrinal questions at stake in the other commentaries. As I will try to show, besides the literal quotation, the whole chapter I am discussing constantly entertains a polemical dialogue with other interpreters of Aristotle.

Very significantly, Avicenna starts his discussion in *Maqūlāt* I, 3 by encouraging the reader to reject, when practising the theoretical sciences, everything that is ‘commonly accepted’ (*mašhūr*). By means of this word, which is the Arabic equivalent for the Greek ἔνδοξον, Avicenna refers not only to the opinions generally accepted by the mass, but also to the opinions of his predecessors³⁶, sometimes even those of Aristotle (at least in the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Šifā’*, but it might also be the case here). What follows is in fact a true *unicum* in the exegetical tradition of the *Categories*: a long introductory section, whose declared scope is the removal of some recurring doubts regarding the notion of ‘subject’. Avicenna proposes in fact a five-fold classification of ‘attributes of things’ (*šifāt al-umūr*), ultimately set

³⁴ SIMPL., *In Cat.*, 54, 8-16 Kalbfleisch.

³⁵ This is well attested by the first chapter of the book (*Maqūlāt* I, 1, 3-8). For discussions of this chapter, see I. Madkour’s preface to the Cairo edition of the *Maqūlāt* (pp. 6-9); GUTAS, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* cit., pp. 300-303; A. BÄCK, *The Ontological Pentagon of Avicenna*, «The Journal of Neoplatonic Studies», 7/2, 1999, pp. 87-109 (pp. 88-91); BERTOLACCI, *The Reception of Aristotle’s Metaphysics* cit., pp. 272-279. As regards the presence of ontological themes in Avicenna’s logical works see, more in general, A. BERTOLACCI, *The ‘Ontologization’ of Logic. Metaphysical Themes in Avicenna’s reworking of the Organon*, in M. CAMERON, J. MARENBOON eds., *Methods and Methodologies. Aristotelian Logic East and West 500-1500*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2011, pp. 27-51.

³⁶ A clear example of this usage is found, for instance, at *Maqūlāt* II, 5, 83, 11 - 84, 3, where Avicenna presents as ‘the commonly accepted division’ (*al-qisma al-mašhūra*) of the categories a division which patently recalls the one proposed by Ibn al-Ṭayyib (*Tafsīr*, 109, 17 - 111, 17 Ferrari) and, very likely, by a predecessor of his in the Baghdad school. Other equivalent formulae, insisting on the customary nature of the doctrines mentioned, are used by Avicenna to refer to the theories of his predecessors: for instance, ‘it has become of use...’ (see Avicenna’s mention of the theory of the tripartition of the universal in *Madḥal* I, 12, 65).

forth to present a somewhat unitary notion of subject³⁷. He distinguishes thereby the following sorts of attributes :

[1] Attributes that describe a thing, the essence of which is already established, by supervening on it externally (such as an accident, *'arīḍ*, and a necessary concomitant, *lāzim*). An example of this sort of attribute is 'white' (or 'risible') with respect to 'man' ;

[2] Attributes which describe a thing, the essence of which is already established, by taking part in its subsistence ; the example for this second kind of attribute is 'animal' with respect to 'man'. 'Animal' does in fact take part in the quiddity and nature of 'man', but does not constitute it as such ;

[3] Attributes which describe a thing not established, by helping determine it without being a part of it ; an example for this is form with respect to prime matter ;

[4] Attributes which describe a thing not established, by being a part of its existence ; an example for this is 'substance', with respect to a body ; for a 'body' is not established before certain forms and qualities are attached to it, but still it is constituted by the fact of being a substance.

[5] Attributes which describe a thing not established, by supervening on it externally (as accidents or necessary concomitants) ; an example for this type is 'whiteness' or another colour with respect to prime matter, or the disposition for motion and rest in a non-qualified body³⁸.

It is not clear, at first glance, whether Avicenna is approaching the problem in a logical perspective, as the predicables cited as examples for cases [1] and [2] suggest ('animal' for genus, 'risible' for property, 'white' for common accident) or from an ontological point of view, as the reference to things or 'realities' (*umūr*) or to 'being established' (a synonym for 'being existent'), and the mention of the couple form/matter [3] hint at. The key for understanding this passage lies in the use of the rather generic term *ṣifa* (here rendered as 'attribute'). This word has, in the theological tradition, the meanings of 'attribute' and 'description', or that of 'thing attributed to another' ; it is also used, in Arabic, either to signify — in grammar — the 'adjective', or to indicate any sort of 'property' of 'character'

³⁷ At *Maqūlāt* I, 3, 20, 4-5, when discussing the usefulness of this distinction (*tafṣīl*), Avicenna clearly states that one of its aims is to present the 'subject' involved in the relations 'being in' and 'being said of' as a 'sort of comprehensive notion' (*ma'nan ka-l-ḡāmi'i*). A detailed interpretation of this classification of attributes has been provided by A. Bäck (*The Ontological Pentagon of Avicenna* cit.), who takes it to be an alternative five-fold division of beings, opposed to the four-fold division of *Categories*, 2.

³⁸ The classification is expounded at *Maqūlāt* I, 3, 18, 6-14 ; the examples follow immediately. An English translation of this passage is found in Bäck, *The Ontological Pentagon of Avicenna* cit., pp. 91-92.

attributed to something³⁹. Avicenna is then either approaching the question from a linguistic point of view, or taking all of these things under a general consideration, in such a way as to include actual predicates on the one hand, forms and accidents on the other hand. *Şifa* might then be understood, here, as a ‘predicate’, but in a looser sense: as something which may be verbally attributed to something, whether this implies its being said of it or its being existent in it, and consequently predicated by paronymy⁴⁰. This does not mean, of course, that Avicenna is not aware of the ambiguity of Aristotle’s text, and of the necessity of distinguishing between the consideration of predicates and the consideration of beings; besides the fact that the second part of the chapter, as will become clear in paragraph 3, is a clarification of this very point, he himself will make it explicit in the following chapter⁴¹.

Indeed, after classifying attributes, Avicenna is able to establish a provisional notion of ‘subject’ (*mawḍūʿ*): ‘subject’ is said to be, by exclusion, anything whose relation to an attribute is different from that of prime matter to form, or in Avicenna’s words: ‘Everything whose relation to the attribute is not according to the relation of a thing to the external, constitutive [attribute] is a subject, regardless whether the attribute is constitutive and not external, or it is external and not constitutive’⁴². Cases [1]-[2], [4]-[5] are thus included in its definition, while matter is ruled out of the domain of subjects. Indeed, Avicenna exhorts the reader to take the word ‘subject’ as bearing this meaning in this specific passage, since this term may have other uses: among its other possible meanings, the notion of subject presented in the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Şifa*’ is in fact formulated differently⁴³. Although the two notions are different, they serve a same scope:

³⁹ The root is *w-ṣ-f*, whose first-form verb means ‘to describe’. See the entry *Şifa* by R. TALMON and D. GIMARET in EI [*Encyclopaedia of Islam*] IX, Brill, Leiden 1997, pp. 551-552; for the various uses of *şifa* and *waṣf* in the *kalām* tradition see R. FRANK, *The Aṣʿarite Ontology: I. Primary Entities*, « Arabic Sciences and Philosophy », 9, 1999, pp. 163-231 (especially pp. 178-182). Together with *waṣf*, *şifa* is also used by Arabic grammarians to indicate the adjective (or a ‘descriptive epithet’: see W. WRIGHT, *Arabic Grammar*, Cambridge 1896-1898, vol. I, p. 105A), or else ‘a clause taking the place of an adjective’ (*ibid.*, vol. II, p. 216C), such as an indeterminate relative clause (*ibid.*, vol. II, p. 317C). Avicenna uses both *waṣf* and *şifa* to speak indeterminately of properties and attributes, but frequently in logical context to refer to the attribution of predicates to their subject; also according to A. GOICHON, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d’Ibn Sīnā*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris 1938, pp. 432-433, *waṣf*, of which *şifa* is a synonym, indicates in first place a predicate (« qualité que l’on donne comme prédicat, d’où le sens d’attribut donné en propre, propriété », p. 432).

⁴⁰ That Avicenna holds the form to be predicable of its matter by paronymy is clear from a parallel passage of the *Muḥtaṣar al-awsaṭ fi l-mantiq* (ed. KALBARCZYK, p. 328, 19-21).

⁴¹ See below, par. 3 and text T4.

⁴² *Maqūlāt* I, 3, 19, 18 - 20, 1.

⁴³ *Maqūlāt* I, 3, 20, 2-3: « Hence, you must understand this [notion] for ‘subject’ here, although [the word] is sometimes employed, in other places, in different ways ». The ‘subject’ defined in the

here as in the *Ilāhiyyāt* Avicenna aims at not according to prime matter the status of 'subject', in order to distinguish the inherence of form in matter from that of accidents in their subjects. This very point is made, in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, by means of the distinction between 'subject' and 'receptacle' (*maḥall*)⁴⁴; it helps clarify the reason why, despite the definition of substance being 'that which does not exist in a subject', matter and form may be deemed substances as well (matter is itself a receptacle, and therefore does not inhere in anything; form inheres in matter not as in a subject, but as in a receptacle). In the *Maqūlāt* the distinction is first introduced in I 3, after this classification, and then developed in two of the following chapters (I 4, I 6), as a topic closely related to the correct definition of the accident. Avicenna's concern of distinguishing matter from subject seems to depend on the opinion of many commentators, who identify the kind of inherence of what is 'in a subject' with the inherence of form in matter⁴⁵; but also clearly stands as a reply to Porphyry's doctrine of the two subjects, which presents the paradox of an attribute (a certain quality, differentia, or form) being at the same time substance and accident⁴⁶.

After these introductory remarks Avicenna proceeds to clarify Aristotle's text, by analysing the meaning of the two expressions 'said of' and 'being in'; these are characterized as relations held by certain attributes with respect to their

Ilāhiyyāt (II, 1, see note below) has a strictly ontological connotation: it is already subsistent in itself and it is a substrate for accidental properties, which cannot exist without it; its capability of accepting constitutive attributes does not account specifically for its being a subject, since it is relieved from any logical/predicative/linguistic consideration. On the contrary, 'subject' may also be identified as a purely logical subject, as the thing of which something can be predicated. As concerns other possible meanings of 'subject' (*mawḍū'*), the word may also refer to the subject matter of a science (as it does for instance in *Ilāhiyyāt* I, 1-2, where Avicenna discusses and determines the subject matter of metaphysics), as distinct from its 'scope' (*ḡaraḍ*). These are the meanings of *mawḍū'* identified in Avicenna's works by GOICHON, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sīnā* cit., pp. 438-439).

⁴⁴ *Ilāhiyyāt* II, 1, 59, 1-3: « We say: It was previously known that there is a difference between the receptacle and the subject; that by 'subject' is meant that which becomes subsistent in itself and, in terms of being the species, becomes thereafter a cause for something to subsist in it (not as a part of it); and that the receptacle is anything in which something dwells [and which] becomes, by virtue of that [indwelling] thing, [the possessor] of a certain state » (English translation by M. E. Marmura, slightly modified).

⁴⁵ Such is the view expressed by Porphyry in *In Arist. Cat.* (PORPH., *In Cat.*, 78, 6-9 Busse); Iamblichus is told to have endorsed this opinion as well, according to Simplicius (SIMPL., *In Cat.*, 46, 15-16 Kalbfleisch).

⁴⁶ This doctrine, besides being the target of chapter I, 6 (entitled 'On the refutation of the discourse of those who claim that one thing is accident and substance under two [different] respects') is recalled explicitly in *Ilāhiyyāt* II, 1, 58, 10-15: « [...] many who claim to have knowledge have allowed that something can be both a substance and an accident with respect to two things [...]. This is a grave error. We have discussed it fully in the first parts of logic » (English translation by M. E. Marmura).

subjects. When describing ‘said of a subject’, Avicenna immediately distances himself from the prevailing interpretation: ‘said of a subject’ must not be referred to what is essentially predicated, but exclusively to what is predicated in such a way as to transfer its name on the subject. Avicenna’s notion of ‘being said of’ apparently mirrors that of a somewhat halved synonymous predication, where the clause of ‘sharing the same definition’ is cut off. However, as the following section of this chapter will show, Avicenna’s account of synonymous predication preserves this clause, but interprets it in a weaker sense. This is of course not the case for ‘being in a subject’, since the predication of the accident is paronymous; ‘whiteness’ does not grant its name to the subject it is said of, for this bears an attribute (‘white’ or ‘whitened’) which is derived by paronymy from the name of the absolute accident. It is then clear that Avicenna holds ‘accident’ to be, here, an abstract property, not a predicate.

Avicenna then proceeds to identify ‘said of’ a subject with the universal, by means of a proof which shows that, although a predicate may be either universal or particular, what is ‘said of a subject’ in this specific sense is the universal, understood as that which is said of many particulars⁴⁷. The expression ‘said of a subject’ is however not a good synonym for ‘universal’, especially when confronted with ‘being in a subject’; whereas this latter expression perfectly converts with ‘accident’, of which it is the standard definition, the former does not convert well with ‘universal’⁴⁸. Here Avicenna openly speaks of a certain artificial or superimposed meaning (*takalluf*) in using the expression ‘subject’, in the same place, with two totally different meanings⁴⁹. This claim confirms the provisional character of the notion of ‘subject’ identified in the beginning of the chapter; on the other hand, being a criticism of Aristotle, it shows Avicenna’s difficulties in handling the ambiguous text of the *Categories*.

2. THE QUOTATION OF THE ANONYMOUS ‘LOGICIAN’: FOUR HYPOTHESES CONCERNING ITS AUTHORSHIP

The second part of chapter I, 3, beginning at this point, is focused on the refutation of wrong doctrines proposed by some previous interpreters. The mention

⁴⁷ This is the standard definition of the universal, as provided by Porphyry in the *Isagoge*. Avicenna’s proof extends over pages 20-21 of the Arabic text.

⁴⁸ For Avicenna’s definition of the accident in the context of metaphysics, see *Ilāhiyyāt* II, 1, 57, 7-10: « [...] the existent is in two divisions. One of them is the existent in another thing (that other thing being [one] that realizes subsistence and species in itself) in a manner dissimilar to the existence of a part of [that other], but whose separation from that [other] cannot take place » (English translation by M. E. Marmura).

⁴⁹ *Maqūlāt* I, 3, 22, 3-5.

of their opinion, which precedes Avicenna's systematic rejection, deserves to be quoted in full:

T2: AVICENNA, *Maqūlāt* I, 3, 23, 7-17:

« Furthermore, a group [of people] has required as a condition, about what is said of the subject, that it be essential and constitutive of the quiddity, and, about the existent in the subject, that it be accidental, since accident and accidental for them are [here] the same thing, although the two are often different; however, in this place, they are not aware of how much the two differ from each other. They judged that 'white', when it is said of 'this white thing', is not said of a subject, but it is existent in a subject, because they thought that 'white' is existent in a subject, for they thought that 'white' is an accident; but they even went beyond this, to say that the universal is what constitutes the essence of the thing; as if what is not [essential] were not universal. Let us cite, then, what one of their protagonists uttered in confirmation of this meaning, and let us point out the disgrace that is in them, so that it becomes clear that the right [opinion] is what we believe. He said: **[1]** *But I said that the universal is what is predicated of its particulars according to the way of 'what [is] the thing?', and that it is what is said of a subject, because sometimes some things are predicated of their subject in a way [which is] different from this; [2] an example of that is the fact that we say of Zayd that he walks, and so we say: 'Zayd walks'; [3] but the meaning of 'walks' is not predicated of Zayd according to [the fact] that it is a universal thing, and Zayd a particular of its; because it is not said of Zayd when [one] asks, about him, 'what is he?'. [4] Because if someone asked: 'What is Zayd?', and the respondent answered: 'he walks', his answer to him would be a mistake, and a lie; because the meaning of 'walks' does not express Zayd's essence, but is only a certain action of his ».*

Two objections are in fact presented here; two doctrinal mistakes account for Avicenna's blame on his predecessors. They both correspond, as a matter of fact, to a fully 'logical' interpretation of Aristotle's passage, as a distinction between what is essentially and accidentally predicated. Avicenna's opponents argue on the one hand that 'said of a subject', i.e. 'universal', is essential, on the other hand that that which exists 'in a subject' is accidental. This, however, is wrong: since 'accidental' refers, in Avicenna's opinion, to everything which is not predicated essentially, it must not be confused with the ontological accident, that which is a counterpart of substance (and the one Aristotle speaks of in this passage of the *Categories*). This point, not discussed in detail here, has already been made by Avicenna in his paraphrase of the *Isagoge*, with reference to Porphyry's definition of 'common accident' (*Madḥal* I, 14)⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ *Madḥal* I, 14, 85, 7 - 86, 9. An English translation of this passage is found, with a detailed commentary, in DI VINCENZO, *Avicenna's reworking of Porphyry's 'common accident'* cit., pp. 189-192.

The objection comes from a group of people (*qawmun*), who hold that ‘said of a subject’ and ‘essential’ are the same thing. What is interesting is that, after presenting the opponents’ view, Avicenna wants to clarify it further by means of a literal quotation of one of them. Indeed, he declares, by means of a self-exhortation (‘Let us cite, then, etc.’), his will to mention the words (lit. ‘expression’ or ‘uttered statement’, *lafz*) of some member(s) of this group (*ba‘du muqaddamihim*); as the Arabic indeterminate pronoun *ba‘d* may have the meaning both of ‘one’ and ‘a few’, I am inclined to opt for ‘one’, by virtue of the third-person verb which introduces the quotation (‘He said’), and especially because of the first (or, alternatively: / second) person verb which opens it (‘I said’, as I inclined to think, or ‘You said’)⁵¹. Avicenna gives two, quite scarce, pieces of information about this opponent: from his words we learn that he is *muqaddam* with respect to the opponents’ group, and that he is a ‘logician’ (*mantiqī*). As for *muqaddam*, it signifies that he is a ‘protagonist’ among them; as for ‘logician’, it means that he is a scholar in logic, or a commentator of logical works. The anonymous author could be, then, a previous Greek (or Arabic) commentator of Aristotle: moreover, as we have seen above (par. 1), the majority of commentators effectively argues for the essentiality of what is ‘said of a subject’.

The text of one of the manuscripts used by the Cairo editors (ms. Istanbul, Millet Kütüphanesi, Ali Emiri 1504) displays, after *ba‘du muqaddamihim*, the interesting addition *ya‘nī Mattā* (‘he means, [Abū Bišr] Mattā [Ibn Yūnus]’). Despite being, very likely, a gloss incorporated into the text at an earlier stage of the tradition, these words (which are not found in any other consulted manuscript) give us a first clue concerning the possible identity of the cited author: Mattā was not only a prominent figure among the Baghdad Peripatetics, but was also a renowned master in the discipline of logic (and the epithet ‘logician’ would fit him well)⁵². Still, a closer inspection of the quotation provides us with other, more ancient candidates, since the example proposed by the anonymous commentator (‘walks’ as a non-essential predicate) is present in Porphyry’s and Simplicius’ commentaries on the *Categories*. Whilst in Simplicius, however, the example is discussed very

⁵¹ It must be noted that one of the eleven manuscripts I have consulted (Ms. Istanbul, Millet Kütüphanesi, Ali Emiri 1504) bears evidence of a plural form ‘they said’ (*qālū*) instead of ‘he said’ (*qāla*), thus attributing the quotation to a number of people; another single manuscript (Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi 2708) has a first-person plural *qulnā* (‘we said’) instead of قَالُوا whose vocalization I will briefly discuss below. The manuscripts I consulted are part of the codicological material gathered in the framework of the ERC project *Philosophy on the Border of Civilizations* (www.avicennaproject.eu).

⁵² See G. ENDRESS, *Der arabische Aristoteles und seine Lehrüberlieferung in Bagdad: Abū Bišr Mattā ibn Yūnus*, in *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie: Philosophie in der islamischen Welt* §7.1, pp. 290-301. I thank Rüdiger Arnzen for drawing my attention on this point.

briefly⁵³, the opinion of this anonymous 'protagonist' bears striking resemblances with that which is found in Porphyry's *In Arist. Cat.*, as the following table may help understand :

[Table 1]

PORPHYRY, <i>In Arist. Cat.</i> , 80,4-8 Busse ^a	AVICENNA, <i>Maqūlāt</i> , 23, 11-17
<p>[α] Καθ' ὑποκειμένου φησὶν ἐκεῖνο κατηγορεῖσθαι τινος, ὅταν ἐν τῷ τί ἐστὶ κατηγορητὰ ἐκεῖνο <ὁ> ἀποδίδοται.</p> <p>He says that something is predicated of something as of a subject when it is stated as belonging to the essence.</p>	<p>[1] wa-innamā qultu [qulta?] inna l-kulliyya huwa llaḍī yuḥmalu 'alā ḡuz' iyyātihī min ṭarīqi « mā l-šay' u », wa-huwa llaḍī yuqālu 'alā mawḍū' in, li-annahū qad yuḥmalu 'alā l-mawḍū' i ašyā' u 'alā ḡayri hāḍihi l-ḡihati ;</p> <p>But I said that the universal is what is predicated of its particulars according to the way of 'what [is] the thing?', and that it is what is said of a subject, because sometimes some things are predicated of their subject in a way [which is] different from this;</p>
<p>[β] οἷον τὸ περιπατεῖν κατηγορεῖται κατὰ Σωκράτους.</p> <p>For example, 'walking' is predicated of Socrates.</p>	<p>[2] miṭālu ḍālika annā nahmilu 'alā Zaydin annahū yamšī, fa-naqūlu : inna Zaydan yamšī ;</p> <p>an example of that is the fact that we say of Zayd that he walks, and so we say : 'Zayd walks' ;</p>

^a I take the Greek text from A. Busse's edition ; nonetheless, this passage is almost identical in the most recent critical edition of Porphyry's commentary, by R. Bodéüs (*Porphyre. Commentaire sur les Catégories cit.*, p. 194).

⁵³ SIMPL., *In Cat.*, 52, 17-18 Kalbfleisch : « In [the phrase] 'Socrates is walking', at any rate, 'walking' is predicated, but not as of a subject » (English translation by M. Chase, slightly modified : *Simplicius, On Aristotle Categories 1-4*, Duckworth, London 2003).

	<p>[3] <i>lākinna ma‘nā yamšī laysa yuḥmalu ‘alā Zaydin ‘alā annahū amrun kulliyyun wa-Zaydun ġuz’iyyuhū; li-annahū laysa yuḥmalu ‘alā Zaydin ‘inda l-mas’alati ‘anhu mā huwa;</i></p> <p>but the meaning of ‘walks’ is not predicated of Zayd according to [the fact] that it is a universal thing, and Zayd a particular of its; because it is not said of Zayd when [one] asks, about him, ‘what is he?’.</p>
<p>[γ] ἄλλ’ ἐὰν ἀποδιδώμεν, τί ἐστὶν Σωκράτης, οὐκ ἂν εἴπομεν αὐτὸν τὸ περιπατεῖν, ὥστε οὐ καθ’ ὑποκειμένου κατηγορεῖται τοῦ Σωκράτους τὸ περιπατεῖν.</p> <p>But if we were to give the essence of Socrates, we would not say that he is walking, because ‘walking’ is not predicated of Socrates as of a subject^b.</p>	<p>[4] <i>li-annahū in sa‘ala sā’ilun : mā huwa Zaydun ? fa-aġābahu l-mas’ūlu bi-annahū yamšī, kāna ġawābuhū lahū ḥaṭa’an wa-kiḍban ; li-anna ma‘nā yamšī laysa yadullu ‘alā māhiyyati Zaydin, bal huwa fi‘lun min af’ālihī.</i></p> <p>Because if someone asked: ‘What is Zayd?’, and the respondent answered: ‘he walks’, his answer to him would be a mistake, and a lie; because the meaning of ‘walks’ does not express Zayd’s essence, but is only a certain action of his.</p>

^b English translation by S. K. Strange (*Porphyry. On Aristotle’s Categories*, Duckworth, London 1992).

I have subdivided the text of both passages into sections, in order to better highlight the main similarities and dissimilarities between them, which I will now discuss in detail.

[α]-[1] The first section of the text reported by Avicenna looks like a reworking translation, or a paraphrase of Porphyry’s passage. The wording is almost the same; a significant difference may however be noticed in the structure of the sentences, as Porphyry is defining ‘being said of a subject’ (as ‘being predicated of something in the ‘what is it?’), while the commentator is clearly defining the ‘universal’. This shift of meaning, as we shall see, is rather important to explain Avicenna’s criticism. However, the Arabic words *kulliyya* (‘universal’) and *ġuz’iyyāt* (‘particulars’) may be seen, respectively, as specifications of the indeterminate Greek terms ἐκείνο and τινος. What certainly has no equivalent in Porphyry is the last sentence of **[α]**, which introduces the following example in **[β]**. There might be doubt regarding the exact way of reading the first Arabic verb (قلت),

which could stand for both *qulta* ('you said') and *qultu* ('I said'). Since this word can hardly be seen as a translation for the Greek φησίν, I hold it to be an addition which should be explained in the context of the original text. If the Arabic were, as Porphyry's Greek is, an answer to the question of a fictional character, then the verb might be read 'you said'; I would instead exclude a second-person verb addressed to Avicenna himself, since the doctrine presented by the commentator is all but Avicennan⁵⁴. I am rather inclined to read *qultu* ('I said'), since it better suits the introduction of the commentator's words as a literal quotation.

[β]-[2] As for these sections, the Arabic words in bold show a quite literal translation of the Greek text; there is a precise equivalent, in Arabic, for each of the Greek words used. The final remark, absent in the Greek, reformulates more clearly the point just made.

[3] The third section has no correspondence at all in the Greek; as concerns its content, it provides the reason why 'walks' is not predicated essentially of Zayd, being the fact that Zayd is not a particular of 'walks'. It is then a sort of expegetic addition with respect to the example proposed in sections **[β]-[2]**.

[γ]-[4] Unlike the second, the fourth part of the Arabic text seems not to translate Porphyry *verbum e verbo*, but the highlighted sentence has the same structure and syntax as the Greek of section **[γ]**; the meaning is quite the same as well. The Greek text of Porphyry's commentary, at least according to the apparatus of the available critical editions, does not provide relevant variants which might help explain some of these divergences.

Once the similarities have been ascertained, it becomes necessary to point at the differences, which prevent from affirming that Avicenna is here quoting a straight and literal Arabic translation of Porphyry's commentary on the *Categories*.

Whether or not a Porphyrian commentary on the *Categories* has effectively been transmitted to the Arabs, we do not know for sure⁵⁵. As a matter of fact, in the lists of Porphyry's works provided by the Arabic bibliographers Ibn al-Nadīm

⁵⁴ This possibility must be however taken into account: it is not rare, in Avicenna's dialectical sections, to find objections which the philosopher addresses to himself, as in fictitious debates.

⁵⁵ The scholars who discussed the Arabic reception of Porphyry up to now either did not take this eventuality into account (R. WALZER, *Porphyry and the Arabic Tradition*, in *Porphyry. Entretiens de la Fondation Hardt XII*, Fondation Hardt, Vandoeuves - Genève 1965, pp. 275-299; C. D'ANCONA, *Porphyry, Arabic*, in F. LAGERLUND ed., *EMP [Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy]*, Springer, Dordrecht - Heidelberg - London - New York 2011, pp. 1056-1062), or hinted at it on the basis of evidence found in Ibn Suwār's glosses (H. HUGONNARD-ROCHE, *Porphyre de Tyr, Survie orientale*, in R. GOULET, ed., *DphA [Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques]* Vb, CNRS Éditions, Paris 2012, pp. 1447-1468).

and al-Qiṭṭī no commentary on the *Categories* is mentioned at all⁵⁶. Ibn al-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist* lists Porphyry among those who 'explained' the *Categories*, but this does not surely imply the existence of an Arabic translation of one of his commentaries⁵⁷: traces of his activity, or a mention of him as a commentator might have been found in other works, surely translated into Arabic, such as Simplicius' commentary. There are however mentions of Porphyry, found in some of the extant Arabic sources on the *Categories*, which may witness a reception of his commentaries: these sources are Ibn Suwār's glosses (10th century), Ibn al-Ṭayyib's lemmatic commentary or *Tafsīr* (11th century), and a commentary preserved in ms. Istanbul, Ayasofya 2483 and attributed to 'Abdallāh al-Ḍahābī (10th / 11th century)⁵⁸.

Thus, assuming that this passage is a witness of an Arabic circulation of Porphyry's exegesis on the *Categories*, I will here take into account four hypotheses: **(A)** that the quotation is not continuous, and that the sentences having no precise correspondence in Greek are insertions made by Avicenna himself; **(B)** that the quotation comes from another Porphyrian commentary; **(C)** that the quotation comes from a paraphrastic translation of Porphyry's small commentary; **(D)** that the quotation comes from an exposition, or an Arabic 'manual' of logic reporting Porphyry's doctrine.

(A) If the passages having no precise correspondence in Greek were explicative additions or glosses by Avicenna himself, then the quotation should not be read as a continuous text, but it would be a heterogeneous composition. This hypothesis seems to me the least likely, for two reasons. In the first place, had really Avicenna wanted to interpolate the text in such an extensive way, one could not see why he introduced it as a direct quotation, whose beginning and end

⁵⁶ *Fihrist*, I, 253 Flügel (trans. B. DODGE, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, Columbia University Press, New York 1970, p. 610; A. SMITH, *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta*, Teubner, Stuttgart - Leipzig 1993, p. 8); AL-QIṬṬĪ, *Ta'riḥ al-ḥukamā'*, ed. J. LIPPERT, Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Leipzig 1903, pp. 256-257 (English translation by D. Wasserstein in SMITH, *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta* cit., pp. 10-11).

⁵⁷ « Among those who explained it and commented on it there was Porphyry, [...] (*fa-mimman šarahahū wa-fassara-hū Furfūriyūs* [...]) ». For the Arabic text of the *Fihrist*'s paragraph on the *Categories*, see Flügel's edition (*Kitāb al-Fihrist, mit Anmerkungen herausgegeben von G. Flügel*, 2 voll., Leipzig 1871), pp. 248, 20-28; there are two available English translations, Dodge's (*The Fihrist of al-Nadīm* cit., 598-599; also reported in SMITH, *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta* cit., pp. 8-11) and Peters' (F. E. PETERS, *Aristoteles Arabus. The Oriental Translations and Commentaries on the Aristotelian Corpus*, Brill, Leiden 1968, p. 7).

⁵⁸ This has been called by G. Endress *Kettenkommentar* (also *Kommentar-Katene*), by virtue of the commentary's formal similarity with the Latin medieval *catenae* (G. ENDRESS, *Die wissenschaftliche Literatur*, in GAP [*Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie*] II, p. 462). A partial edition, with Turkish translation, of this commentary has been published by M. TÜRKER, *El-Âmirî ve Kategoriler'in şehrleriyle ilgili parçalar*, « Araştırma » 3, 1965, pp. 65-122).

are well identifiable. The second reason is that in the following pages Avicenna, while refuting this quotation as a whole, at a given point refers to what is said in section **[3]** (the one which, according to this interpretation, would be most evidently an explicative addition) as to 'his words' (*qawluhū*), thus removing all doubts on the non-Avicennan authorship of this section⁵⁹. I therefore believe that these divergent sentences should be explained inasmuch as they are parts of an originally unitary text.

(B) Another possibility to be taken into account is that this quotation comes from another work by Porphyry, notably the lost commentary on the *Categories* addressed to his disciple Gedalius. We learn in fact from Simplicius that Porphyry wrote two commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories*: a shorter one, now available and edited (*In Arist. Cat.*), and a longer one, divided into seven books (*Ad Gedalium*)⁶⁰. As far as we know from Simplicius, Porphyry's *Ad Gedalium* seems to have had a significant influence, not only on Simplicius himself, but also on Iamblichus' exegesis of the Aristotelian treatise; yet its traces are lost, except for a few fragments⁶¹. If this longer commentary by Porphyry somehow reworks *In Arist. Cat.*, or conversely *In Arist. Cat.* is an abridged version of the *Ad Gedalium*, we might expect Avicenna's quotation to come from this latter. The materials we have for a comparison between the two commentaries are too scanty to settle with certainty this issue⁶²; moreover, even if documented similarities between the two commentaries allowed us to conjecture this, we should try to enforce this thesis by finding other possible traces of the circulation of Porphyry's *Ad Gedalium* in the Arabic tradition. However, some of the witnesses of Porphyry that we have in other Arabic works and authors seem rather to suggest a reception of *In Arist. Cat.*; although we do not know the contents of Porphyry's lost work, this evidence makes the *Gedalius*-hypothesis less economical. This may be shown by briefly referring to the quotations of Porphyry in the aforementioned Arabic

⁵⁹ The doctrine which Avicenna reports as 'his words' is Zayd's not being a particular of the universal 'walks': *Maqūlāt* I, 3, 24, 18. For the detailed analysis of this passage see below, par. 3 ('Avicenna's refutation').

⁶⁰ SIMPL., *In Cat.*, 2, 5-9 Kalbfleisch.

⁶¹ The main source of these fragments, at least of those printed in A. Smith's Teubner edition (SMITH, *Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta* cit., fr. 45T-74F, pp. 35-59), is Simplicius' commentary, which quotes extensive passages. R. Chiaradonna, M. Rashed and D. Sedley recently identified a consistent excerpt of a late ancient *Categories* commentary, found in the so-called Palimpsest of Archimedes, as a new fragment of Porphyry's lost *Ad Gedalium* (R. CHIARADONNA, M. RASHED, D. SEDLEY, *A Rediscovered Categories Commentary*, « Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy », 44, 2013, pp. 129-194).

⁶² This is due to the lack of fragments, and to the relative rareness of passages where the two commentaries deal with the same issues. Even where this comparison is possible, however, the result does not support this hypothesis (see for instance PORPH., *In Cat.*, 65, 2-11 as compared to SIMPL., *In Cat.*, 30, 5-14, fr. 50F Smith).

sources: **(i)** Ibn Suwār's glosses, **(ii)** Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Tafsīr*, **(iii)** the commentary attributed to al-Dahābī⁶³.

(i) As to Ibn Suwār, none of the four mentions of Porphyry in his glosses proves the direct reception of the *Ad Gedalium* commentary; the only literal quotation attributed to Porphyry clearly comes from Simplicius' commentary, whereas another mention is associated to a doctrine which rather seems to come from *In Arist. Cat.*⁶⁴

(ii) When Porphyry is expressly mentioned in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Tafsīr* he is never quoted literally. His name is recalled in the third lecture, with regard to the discussion of the scope of Aristotle's *Categories*; he stands there as the 'leader' of a faction that suggests that the scope of the treatise are 'significant utterances'⁶⁵. He is again cited in the sixth lecture, with respect to an inconsistency in Aristotle's theory of synonyms⁶⁶; in the tenth lecture, with reference to the priority of individual substances⁶⁷; in the twentieth lecture, with regard to the distinction between 'qualified' (ποιόν, *kayfa*) and 'quality' (ποιότης, *kayfiyya*)⁶⁸. These mentions witness a knowledge of Porphyry's doctrines, but do not give relevant information on how these doctrines came to Ibn al-Ṭayyib (translations, quotations in other Greek commentaries, compendia, etc.).

(iii) Of the six quotations attributed to Porphyry in M. Türker's partial edition of al-Dahābī's commentary, none exhibits a literal translation of a known Porphyrian work: on the contrary, most of them paraphrase or summarize passages from *In Arist. Cat.* This is the case of the first mention, regarding Aristotle's omission of heteronyms and polyonyms in his discussion of homonymy⁶⁹; the third mention,

⁶³ I have not consulted the manuscript directly; the basis for my discussion is only the collection of fragments published by M. Türker, to which I will refer in the notes below.

⁶⁴ The extensive quotation will be discussed below, point **(C)**; its very likely provenance from Simplicius' commentary is testified by the fact that, straight after it, Ibn Suwār quotes literally Simplicius' reply to Porphyry (GEORR, *Les Catégories d'Aristote dans leurs versions syro-arabes* cit., pp. 376-377). As to the mention which recalls *In Arist. Cat.*, it is an account of Porphyry's opinion regarding the difference between 'being said of' and 'being in': 'Porphyry says that it results clearly from Aristotle's description of the universal as 'what is said of a subject' that it is a conception (*taṣawwūr*), and an invention (*ih̄tirā'*) of the soul' (Ibn Suwār, in GEORR, *Les Catégories d'Aristote dans leurs versions syro-arabes* cit., p. 171 [French translation]; p. 378, 3-4 [Arabic text]). This idea attributed to Porphyry seems to reflect the one, proposed in *In Arist. Cat.*, which I mentioned above (par. 1): universals are somehow related to conception (ἐπίνοια, which might be reflected by the Arabic *taṣawwūr*), and this explains why Aristotle does not refer to them as to existing things.

⁶⁵ IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Tafsīr*, 16, 26-27 Ferrari.

⁶⁶ IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Tafsīr*, 48, 10-18 Ferrari.

⁶⁷ IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Tafsīr*, 130, 5-15 Ferrari.

⁶⁸ IBN AL-ṬAYYIB, *Tafsīr*, 302, 12-18 Ferrari.

⁶⁹ Compare TÜRKER, *El-Āmirī* cit., p. 103, 2-4 with PORPH., *In Cat.*, 61, 2-3 Busse.

regarding the substances’ property of being determinate⁷⁰; the fourth mention, concerning the ‘most proper property’ of substance, namely being receptive of contraries while being numerically one and the same⁷¹; the fifth mention, which concerns relative positions⁷²; the sixth mention, regarding the relation between quality and qualified⁷³. The second mention, regarding Aristotle’s discussion of differentiae in *Cat.*, 3, does not have a clear correspondence to Porphyry’s text⁷⁴.

Given this evidence, we may now discuss the more likely hypothesis that Avicenna is quoting a reworked translation of Porphyry’s *In Arist. Cat.*

(C) The third possibility is that this quotation draws on a ‘paraphrastic’ translation of Porphyry’s *In Arist. Cat.* It would then stand as an example of a certain translation technique, different from the literalness that characterizes many Aristotelian translations such as those authored by Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn. This hypothesis may only be verified by finding similar cases in other Greek-Arabic translations. A basis for comparison may be given by an extensive fragment in Arabic of Simplicius’ commentary on the *Categories*, which is found in the aforementioned glosses by al-Ḥasan ibn Suwār on the Parisian *Organon*. The passage in question is the one concerning Porphyry’s doctrine of the two subjects. In the following table I compare the Greek original and its Arabic version: the underlined expressions in the left column are passages omitted by the translation, whereas the sentences in bold in the right one are additions of the Arabic text.

[Table 2]

SIMPLICIUS, <i>In Cat.</i> , 48, 11-33 Kalbfleisch	IBN SUWĀR (in GEORR, pp. 376-377)
<p>[α] διττόν, φησίν, ἔστιν τὸ ὑποκειμένον, οὐ μόνον κατὰ τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς, ἀλλὰ καὶ κατὰ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους.</p> <p>There are, he says, two kinds of subject, <u>noy only according to those from the Stoa, but also according to the more ancient thinkers.</u></p>	<p>[1] [Qāla Furfūriyūs :] Naqūlu inna l-mawḏū ‘a yuqālu ‘alā ḍarbayni: ‘alā mā yarāhu l-riwāqiyyūna wa-llaḏīna hum ašaddu taqāduman.</p> <p>[Porphyry said :] We say that ‘subject’ is said in two ways: according to what the Stoics believe, and [according to] those who are more ancient.</p>

⁷⁰ Compare TÜRKER, *El-Āmirî* cit., p. 108, 4-9 with PORPH., *In Cat.*, 96, 26-28 Busse.

⁷¹ Compare TÜRKER, *El-Āmirî* cit., p. 111, 12-17 with PORPH., *In Cat.*, 98, 27-33 Busse.

⁷² Compare TÜRKER, *El-Āmirî* cit., p. 117, 6-18 with PORPH., *In Cat.*, 113, 10-28 Busse.

⁷³ Compare TÜRKER, *El-Āmirî* cit., p. 121, 13-17 with PORPH., *In Cat.*, 128, 13-15 Busse.

⁷⁴ TÜRKER, *El-Āmirî* cit., p. 106, 11-14.

<p>[β] ἢ τε γὰρ ἄποιος ὕλη, ἣν δυνάμει καλεῖ ὁ Ἄριστοτέλης, πρῶτόν ἐστιν τοῦ ὑποκειμένου σημαίνομενον,</p> <p>Qualityless matter, which Aristotle calls 'potential body', is the first meaning of 'subject',</p>	<p>[2] Al-awwalu minhumā l-hayūlā l-ūlā llatī hiya ḡayru mukayyafatin wa-hiya llatī yaqūlu Aristūṭālis innahā bi-l-quwwati ;</p> <p>The first of these two is the prime matter, which is not qualified, and it is that of which Aristotle says that it is 'potentially'.</p>
<p>[γ] καὶ δεύτερον, ὃ κοινῶς ποιοῦν ἢ ἰδίως ὑφίσταται ὑποκείμενον γὰρ καὶ ὁ χαλκός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ Σωκράτης τοῖς ἐπιγινόμενοις ἢ κατηγορουμένοις κατ' αὐτῶν.</p> <p>and the second is that which comes into existence as either a commonly qualified thing or as something individually qualified. <u>For both bronze and Socrates are subjects for those things which supervene upon them or are predicated of them</u></p>	<p>[3] wa-l-ṯānī l-ḡismu l-mukayyafu l-mawḡūdu bi-l-fi'li l-mušāru ilayhi</p> <p>The second is the qualified body which exists in act, and is determinate.</p>
<p>[δ] Πολλὰ οὖν, φησίν, τῶν ἐγγινομένων ὡς μὲν πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ὑποκείμενον ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ ἐστίν, οἷον πᾶν χρῶμα καὶ πᾶν σχῆμα καὶ πᾶσα ποιότης ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ ἐστίν τῇ πρώτῃ ὕλῃ, οὐχ ὡς μέρη αὐτῆς ὄντα καὶ ἀδύνατα χωρὶς αὐτῆς εἶναι.</p> <p>Therefore, he says, many of the things which inhere are in subject with regard to the first subject ; for instance, all colour and all figure and all quality are in prime matter as their substrate, not as parts of it and incapable of existing apart from it.</p>	<p>[4] Fa-hādā l-ḡismu fīhi ašyā'u mā bi-idāfatihā ilā l-mawḡū'i l-awwali a'nī l-hayūlā fa-hiya mimmā fī mawḡū'in ka-l-alwāni wa-l-aškāli wa-bi-l-ḡumlati l-kayfiyyāti. Fa-inna hādīhi bi-idāfatihā ilā l-hayūlā l-ūlā hiya mimmā fī mawḡū'in id kānat mawḡūdatan fī šay'in lā ka-ḡuz'in minhu wa-lā yumkinu an yakūna qiwāmuhā ḥilwan mimmā hiya fīhi.</p> <p>In this body there are certain things which are [in the body] according to their relation to the first subject, I mean matter, and they are such as colours, figures, and generally qualities. For these things, according to their relation to the first matter, belong to what is in a subject, because they are existent in something not as a part of it, and it is not possible that they subsist independently of what they are in.</p>

<p>[ε] ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ δευτέρου ὑποκειμένου οὐ πᾶν χρώμα οὐδὲ πᾶσα ποιότης ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ, ἀλλ' ὅταν μὴ συμπληρωτικαὶ εἰσι τῆς οὐσίας.</p> <p>In the case of the second substrate, however, not all colour nor all quality is in a subject, but [they are so only] when they are not completers of substance.</p>	<p>[5] Fa-ammā idā uḏīfat hāḏihi ilā l-mawḏū 'il-tānī fa-innahā laysa kulluhum mim mā yuqālu fi mawḏū 'in illā idā kānat ḡayra mutammimatin li-ḡawhari l-šay' i wa-lā muqawwimatan lahū.</p> <p>Then, as to the case where these [things] are put in relation to the second subject, they all do not belong to what is in a subject, unless they are not perfective of the substance of the thing, and not constitutive of it.</p>
	<p>[6] Fa-innahā idā kānat ka-ḏālika kānat mim mā fi mawḏū 'in. Wa-idā lam takun ka-ḏālika a' nī idā kānat muqawwimatan lahū wa-mutammimatan fa-innahā laysat mim mā fi mawḏū 'in</p> <p>Because, if it is so, they belong to what is in a subject. And, if it is not so, I mean if they are constitutive of [the thing] and perfective, then they do not belong to what is in a subject ;</p>
<p>[ζ] Τὸ γοῦν λευκὸν ἐπὶ μὲν τοῦ ἐρίου ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ, ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς χιόνης οὐκ ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ, ἀλλὰ συμπληροῖ τὴν οὐσίαν ὡς μέρος, καὶ ὑποκείμενον μᾶλλον ἐστὶν κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν^a.</p> <p>For white in the case of wool is in a subject, but in the case of snow it is not in a subject, but completes the substance as a part, and is rather a subject as far as the substance is concerned.</p>	<p>[7] miṭla l-bayāḏi, fa-innahū immā fi l-šūfi fa-mim-mā huwa fi mawḏū 'in id kāna laysa muqawwiman li-ḏāti l-šūfi wa-immā fi l-talḡi fa-mimmā laysa fi mawḏū 'in id kāna muqawwiman li-ḡawhari l-talḡi wa-ḡuz' a mawḏū 'in ma' a l-ḡawhari.</p> <p>like whiteness : for either it is in wool, and then it belongs to what is in a subject, because it is not constitutive of the essence of wool, or it is in snow, and then it belongs to what is not in a subject, since it is constitutive of the substance of snow, and part of a subject, along with the substance.</p>

^a κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν: K. Kalbfleisch, the critical editor of Simplicius' commentary, adopts this reading from a correction on ms. J (Marciano 224), whereas Hoffmann (*Simplicius, Commentaire sur les Catégories d'Aristote* cit., p. 17) chooses μετὰ τῆς οὐσίας, attested in all manuscripts. The corresponding Arabic locution *ma' a l-ḡawhari* seems to reflect this latter reading as well.

<p>[θ] ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ θερμότης τῆς μὲν τοῦ πυρὸς οὐσίας μέρος ἐστίν, ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ δὲ γίνεται τῷ σιδήρῳ ἄνευ τῆς τοῦ σιδήρου φθοράς.</p> <p>Similarly, heat is a part of the substance of fire, but it comes to be in iron as its subject, since it comes to be in and departs from the iron without the destruction of the iron.</p>	<p>[8] wa-‘alā hādā l-miṭālī ayḍan al-ḥarāratu fa-innahā immā fi l-nāri fa-ḡuz’un min al-ḡawhari wa-immā fi l-ḥadīdi fa-mimmā fi mawḍū‘in a nī ‘aradun [sic] id kānat tūḡadu wa-tabṭulu ma‘a l-ḥadīdi min ḡayri fasādihī.</p> <p>And similarly also heat : for either it is in fire, and then it is a part of the substance of fire, or it is in iron, and then it belongs to the things which are in a subject, I mean, it is an accident, because it exists and ceases to be with iron, without the corruption [of iron].</p>
<p>[ι] ὁ τοίνυν Ἀριστοτέλης τὸ δεύτερον ῥηθὲν ὑποκείμενον ἐνθαῦτα λαβὼν τὸ κατὰ τὸ σύνθετον καὶ τὴν ἄτομον οὐσίαν, ὅπερ μῆτε ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ εἶναί φησιν μῆτε καθ’ ὑποκειμένου τινὸς λέγεσθαι.</p> <p>Now Aristotle here having taken up the second above-mentioned subject — that which is in accordance with the composite and with individual substance, which, he says, neither is in a subject nor is said of any subject —</p>	<p>[9] Fa-Aristūṭālīs yurīdu bi-qawlihī l-mawḍū‘u l-mawḍū‘a l-ṭāniya wa-huwa l-ḡawharu llaḍī huwa šaḥṣun wa-huwa llaḍī ‘abbara ‘anhu bi-qawlihī lā ‘alā mawḍū‘in wa-lā fi mawḍū‘in.</p> <p>Thus, Aristotle means [here], by saying ‘subject’, the second subject, namely the substance which is an individual, and this is what he expressed by his words ‘neither [said] of a subject nor in a subject’.</p>
<p>[κ] εἰκότως πᾶν τὸ μὴ οὐσιωδῶς ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ λεγόμενον, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ συμβεβηκέναι, ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ τούτῳ εἶναί φησιν, ὅσπερ τὴν θερμότητα ἐν τῷ σιδήρῳ.</p> <p>rightly says that everything which is not said of it essentially, but as an accident, is in this as its subject, like heat in iron.</p>	<p>[10] Fa-kullu mā yuḥmalu ‘alā hādā l-ḡawhari wa-yuqālu ‘alayhi lā ‘alā annahū ḡawhariyyun lahū bal ka-l-‘araḍi fa-huwa mimmā yuqālu fi mawḍū‘in bi-manzilati l-ḥarāratī fi l-ḥadīdi.</p> <p>So, everything which is predicated of this substance, and said of it not as being substantial, but like the accident, belongs to what is said ‘in’ a subject, like heat in fire.</p>

<p>[λ] τὰ δὲ συμπληρωτικά ὡς τὴν τοῦ πυρὸς θερμότητα τοῦ μὲν πυρὸς μέρος ἂν εἴποι, ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ δὲ τῇ ἀποίῳ ὕλη.</p> <p>Those things, however, which are completers, like the heat of fire, he would say are a part of the fire, and in qualityless matter as their subject^b.</p>	<p>[11] Fa-kullu mā yuḥmalu ‘alayhi ‘alā annahū muqawwimun li-dātihī bi-manzilati l-ḥarārati fī l-nāri fa-innahā immā li-l-nāri fa-hiya ḡuz’un wa-immā bi-l-iqāfati ilā l-hayūla l-ūlā fa-mimmā fī mawḏū‘in wa-‘araḏun.</p> <p>Then, everything which is predicated of it as being constitutive of its essence, like heat in fire, either belongs to fire, and then it is a part, or it is in relation to the first matter, and then it is in a subject, and it is an accident.</p>
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^b English translation by M. Chase (*Simplicius, On Aristotle Categories 1-4* cit.), slightly modified.

As the table shows, the Arabic translation is rather faithful to Simplicius’ text, being sometimes explicative and didactic. In section [γ]-[3], for instance, the contracted expression ὁ κοινῶς ποῖόν ἢ ἰδίῳς ὑφίσταται (« That which comes into existence as either a commonly qualified thing or as something individually qualified » in M. Chase’s translation) is rendered more plainly — but wrongly — by the translator as *al-ḡismu l-mukayyafu l-mawḡūdu bi-l-fi’li l-mušāru ilayhi* (« The qualified body, existing in act, susceptible of being pointed to »). This interpretation would be favoured by the following mention of Socrates as an example of secondary subject, though the corresponding passage is omitted by the Arabic translation. In some other cases the ‘explanations’ consist of additions of more perspicuous terms for elleiptic expressions in Greek: in sections [θ]-[8] and [λ]-[11], for example, where the Greek only has ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ (‘in a subject’), the Arabic clarifies further by adding respectively *a’ nī ‘araḏun* [sic] (‘I mean, accident’) and *wa-‘araḏun* (‘and an accident’). The same can be observed in section [δ]-[4], where after the mention of a ‘primary subject’ the Arabic text precises: *a’ nī l-hayūlā* (‘I mean, prime matter’). Interestingly, section [6] shows a quite long insertion having no correspondent in the Greek, which might recall section [3] of our previous table.

The paraphrastic character of Simplicius’ translation might allow us to hypothesize that the quotation found in *Maqūlāt* comes from an Arabic version of Simplicius’ commentary, containing reworked passages of Porphyry’s *In Arist. Cat.* Since the example of ‘walks’ is also briefly mentioned by Simplicius (see above), a translator/paraphrast might well have reported Porphyry’s more articulate explanation as an integration for Simplicius’ passage. However, since the

fragments we know of the Arabic version of Simplicius do not present comparable integrations, this hypothesis seems to be less likely. Alternatively, provided that the style of the translation of Simplicius' commentary (whose translator is, however, unknown) reflects a consolidated technique, the passage quoted by Avicenna might come from a similar non-literal, reworking translation of Porphyry's *In Arist. Cat.*; if not from an integral translation, from a *catena*-commentary or a compendium of logical commentators⁷⁵.

(D) The last possibility I take into account is that the quotation of this anonymous logician comes from a paraphrastic exposition of Porphyry's *In Arist. Cat.*, contained in a previous Arabic commentary. The author of this work should then be searched among the Baghdad Aristotelians; in this case, the 'prominent' leader of Avicenna's opponents might be Abū Bišr Mattā b. Yūnus (m. 940), the author of a commentary on the *Categories* that is no longer extant, or Yaḥyā b. 'Adī, who devoted several short treatises to related issues⁷⁶. The identification with Mattā could be supported by the gloss found in ms. Ali Emiri 1504 (see above); if this were the case, the 'confirmation' (*tashīh*) provided by the logician's words could also be understood as an 'approval' of Porphyry's opinion. There is however no other element to verify this hypothesis, which I here propose as a mere conjecture. Nonetheless, being hypotheses **(A)** and **(B)** unlikely, I hold hypothesis **(D)** to be — together with hypothesis **(C)** — the most plausible. The analysis of the refutation might prove helpful in confirming or contradicting the two latter hypotheses.

3. AVICENNA'S REPLY: FORMAL AND DOCTRINAL REFUTATION

The refutation begins immediately after the quotation. Avicenna's objections are both formal and substantial: they are partly directed against the logical inconsistency of the commentator's argument [§ 2], partly against the wrongness of his doctrine [§ 3]. (The paragraph numbers in square brackets refer to the corresponding text of the refutation, as it is reported in the Appendix).

⁷⁵ This is also the hypothesis suggested by C. Ferrari (*Der Kategorienkommentar von Ibn al-Ṭayyib* cit., p. 92) to explain Ibn al-Ṭayyib's knowledge of a number of Greek, Syriac and Arabic commentaries.

⁷⁶ Mattā is cited as a commentator of the *Categories* by Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist*, pp. 248, 20-28 Flügel); Ibn 'Adī is also mentioned by the Arabic compiler, but as the author of an Arabic version of the *Categories* and of Alexander of Aphrodisias' lost commentary, commissioned by Abū Sulaymān al-Siġistānī. For a list of Ibn 'Adī's short treatises on the *Categories* see G. ENDRESS, *The works of Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī: an Analytical Inventory*, L. Reichert Verlag, Wiesbaden 1977, nn. 3.31-37, pp. 48-51. Avicenna's critical attitude towards Ibn 'Adī is well documented: see for instance M. RASHED, *Ibn 'Adī et Avicenne: sur les types d'existants*, in V. CELLUPRICA, C. D'ANCONA eds., *Aristotele e i suoi esegeti neoplatonici*, Bibliopolis, Napoli 2004, pp. 107-172.

[§2.1, §2.3] On the logical side, Avicenna questions the argumentative efficiency of the commentator's proof. What the commentator wishes to demonstrate (his 'problem' or *quaesitum*, *maṭlūb*⁷⁷) is that 'Universal is what is predicated according to the way of 'what is it?'. Indeed, the commentator's argument in the quoted passage does not come to this conclusion directly. Avicenna reformulates it by means of the following syllogism :

Every non-predicate according to the way of 'what is it?' is non-universal ;
'Walks' is a non-predicate according to the way of 'what is it?'

'Walks' is non-universal.

The major premise of this syllogism is nothing but the contradictory converse ('*aks al-naqīd*') of the problem⁷⁸. Since a proposition implies its contradictory converse, and the two propositions affirm the same thing, the problem would immediately follow from the position of the first premise. If the commentator, however, has held the problem to be deducible from its contradictory converse, rather than immediately following from it, then there are two possibilities: since the problem is doubtful, either he held the contradictory converse to be clear by itself; or — since the premises of syllogisms are clearer than the conclusions they aim at — he held that, by clarifying the contradictory converse, the problem itself would become clear. Both alternatives, however, are untenable: in the first case, this syllogism would be useless, since, in order to deduce the problem, it would suffice to assume the contradictory converse alone. In the second case, by using the contradictory converse as a premise in this syllogism, he does not demonstrate it, but takes its clarity for granted, which again goes back to the first case.

[§2.2, §2.4] Another point on which Avicenna criticizes his opponent is the choice of the predicate 'walks' as an example in this place. According to Avicenna, 'walks' seems only used by the commentator to better hide his error; had he used

⁷⁷ *Maṭlūb* is defined, in the logical section of the *Naḡāt*, as the conclusion a syllogism is directed to: « As long as the deduction is not deduced, but is something towards which the syllogism is directed, it is called a problem (*maṭlūb*). When it is deduced, it is called a conclusion (*naṭīga*)' (*Naḡāt*, 53, 7-8 *Dānišpažūh*; English tr. by A. AHMED, *Avicenna's Deliverance: Logic*, Oxford University Press 2011, p. 44).

⁷⁸ I adopt here the terminology used by A. Ahmed in his English translation of the logical section of the *Naḡāt*, where every conclusion is said to imply both its converse and its contradictory converse (*Naḡāt*, 95, 11 *Dānišpažūh*; *Avicenna's Deliverance: Logic* cit., p. 76). Avicenna discusses more in detail contradictory converses in the section of the *Šifā'* which paraphrases the *Prior Analytics* (*Qiyās*, II, 2, 93, 10 - 94, 9): here he describes '*aks al-naqīd*' as « taking the contradictory of the predicate, and positing it as the subject, and positing the contradictory of the subject as the predicate » (93, 10-12). In the case of universal affirmative propositions, such as the one we are concerned with here, 'Every C is B' implies that 'Everything which is not B is not C'.

‘walker’ (as an active participle, *māšīn*), the wrongness of his doctrine would have been much more evident. In fact, for Avicenna ‘walks’ has no other utility, since he holds it to be a mere substitute for the expression ‘every non-essential predicate’; if it is so, then the commentator is deducing ‘every non-essential predicate is not universal’ from ‘every non-essential predicate is not universal’.

[§3] The ‘doctrinal’ refutation follows two lines of argumentation. The first aims to establish a correct way of understanding predication *de subiecto*; the second aims to clarify the distinction between accident and accidental, taking respectively ‘accident’ as an ontological item and ‘accidental’ as a non-essential predicable (such as common accident and property). The two lines are actually intertwined, and both are related to the quotation of the commentator: by proposing a reasonable interpretation of synonymous predication, Avicenna wishes to reintegrate properties and common accidents (i.e. non-essential predicates) among universals; by distinguishing between accident and accidental, he wishes to remove any possible confusion about the nature of non-essential predicates, and to show why his own account of predication *de subiecto* is suitable for them as well.

[§3.1] The commentator deems it impossible that Zayd be a particular of ‘walks’, since ‘walks’ does not express Zayd’s essence. This depends on the fact that he interprets any relation of a universal to its particular as an essential relation, where the definition of the universal is shared by the particular. This error can be a consequence of a superficial opinion regarding the universal; if Zayd is intuitively thought of as an individual of the species ‘man’, it may also be thought that he cannot be a particular of any other thing. Avicenna then provides here a more correct definition of ‘particular’, which entails that of ‘universal’ as well. ‘Particular’ is said to be the subject of an attribute (*waṣf*) which may be predicated of it and something else, therefore of many things, in act or in potency. The attribute, which is said of many things, as was clarified above, is the universal. The specification ‘in act or in potency’ aims to include in the notion of universal attribute sketched here all the kinds of supposable universals (those which are predicated actually of their many subjects, those which are such only in potency)⁷⁹. The case where the attribute is predicated of its subject exclusively is that of the particular itself:

⁷⁹ See *Ilāhiyyāt V*, 1 (195, 5-12) where the universals are defined in three different ways, according to this criterion: « The universal is spoken of in three ways: ‘Universal’ is said of the meaning by way of its being actually predicated of many — as, for example, the human being. Universal is [also] predicated of a meaning if it is permissible for it to be predicated of many, even if it is not a condition that these should exist in actuality — as, for example, the heptagonal house. [...] ‘The universal’ is [also] said of the meaning whose very conception does not prevent its being predicated of many. It is only prevented if some cause prevents it and proof indicates [such prevention]. An example of this is [the case of] the sun and the earth » (English translation by M. E. MARMURA, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, Brigham Young University, Provo 2005, p. 148). For a discussion of the example of the heptagonal house, see T.-A. DRUART, *Avicennan Troubles: The Mysteries of the Heptagonal House and of the Phoenix*, « *Tópicos* », 42, 2012, pp. 51-73.

if 'Zayd' is only predicated of a certain man, this man cannot be a particular of Zayd, since Zayd is a particular itself⁸⁰. Avicenna then recalls that being 'essential' is an additional condition, for a universal, since there are universals (recognized as such by all scholars) that may not constitute the quiddity of their particulars. These are properties, such as 'risible'; they may be essential for the particulars of their own genus ('risible' as a species with respect to 'this individual risible'), but for sure they are not essential for the particulars of other genera (such as 'man'), of which they are predicated accidentally.

Avicenna's insistence on the non-essentiality of universals being widely agreed upon by logicians suggests a blame for incoherence at his opponents' address; in the end of the chapter, he will qualify the fault of these commentators as 'negligence' (*iġfāl*)⁸¹.

[§3.2] The following part of the refutation is based upon a wrong assumption that Avicenna presumably ascribes to the commentator: «'White' [said of] man (and 'walks' said of Zayd) does not belong to what is said of a subject, so it is an accident». This statement is found, in such a formulation, neither in the commentator's words, nor in Porphyry's commentary; it seems to be, however, entailed by them. If one holds that every universal is essential — as the opponent does — then he should rule non-essential predicates out of the domain of universals; since these predicates do not take part in the quiddity of their subjects, they must be predicated in such a way as not to give their definition; but this corresponds to how Aristotle describes the predication of accidents, therefore they must be accidents.

According to Avicenna, there are two options here: he who holds this is either referring to 'accident' as something which is said, by pure homonymy, of accident and accidental; or he holds accident and accidental to be actually the same thing, which would imply that both accident and accidental are 'in a subject'. In the former case, the division of beings should actually be made by combining six elements instead of four: universal and particular, substance and accident, substantial and accidental, taking accident and accidental as distinct items. Avicenna silently

⁸⁰ See the definition of particular simple utterance given in the logical section of the *Kitāb al-Naḡāt*: « [The particular simple utterance] is that whose unique meaning cannot possibly be anything more than a unique thing — either with respect to existence or in accordance with the imagination. Rather, its very sense precludes this. [An example is] our saying 'Zayd'; for the meaning of 'Zayd' — if taken as a unique meaning — is the unique essence (*dāt*) of Zayd. It is neither possible in existence nor in the imagination for it to be for anything other than the unique essence of Zayd since the denotation precludes this. So if you say, 'This sun' or 'This man', it is not allowed for anything other than [this very man and this very sun] to participate in it » (*Naḡāt*, 10, 14 - 11, 1 Dānišpažūh; English translation by AHMED, *Avicenna's Deliverance: Logic* cit., p. 6).

⁸¹ See below the translation in the Appendix, section [§4].

dismisses this hypothesis, very likely on account of its absurdity⁸². In the latter case instead, since the accident is predicated paronymously, in such a way as to give the subject its name, but not the definition, then also accidental predicates like 'white' and 'walks' should not grant Zayd their definition. However, this is false: the definition of 'walks' and 'white' are both applied, in some sense, to Zayd, when he is said to be walking or to be white; for they are predicated of him, although they do not amount to his own definition.

[§3.3] In the following section, Avicenna blames the commentator's incoherence even more explicitly. To understand how the accident may be predicated synonymously, it is necessary to recall what 'these people' themselves said, namely that all universals are predicated synonymously, including even property, which is not essential. Avicenna then implicitly refers to a passage from the second part of the *Isagoge*, where the common features of genus and property are discussed: there Porphyry expressly says that « common [...] is the fact that a genus is synonymously predicated of its own species, and a property of that of which it is a property »⁸³:

T3: AVICENNA, *Maqūlāt* I, 3, 27, 3-6:

« Thus, if they charge themselves with another excess, and say that sharing the definition means that what is a definition for one of the two [things] is either a definition for the other, or a part of the definition of the other; [if they say so], then they are themselves disproved by their statement that the genus has in common with the property the fact that they are both predicated of what is below them by synonymy, by the name and the definition; [in fact], they all granted this ».

This point is reprised, though not acritically, by Porphyry's Greek and Arabic commentators; to some of them Avicenna is for sure referring here, when he speaks of all those who agreed on this point. Avicenna himself discusses this point in *Madḥal* II, 2, and there refers to a judgment of Porphyry's 'regarding the book of the *Categories*', namely that being predicated of a subject, and synonymously, means being essentially predicated⁸⁴. These parallel passages in Avicenna are then to be read together: they point at Porphyry's apparent contradiction with

⁸² This confirms Avicenna's agreement with Aristotle's division of beings (along with the fact that, in the end of the chapter, he will propose it again integrally as a result of these discussions; see below, Appendix [§4]).

⁸³ PORPHY., *Isag.*, 16, 6-7 Busse (English translation by BARNES, *Porphyry, Introduction* cit., p. 14).

⁸⁴ *Madḥal* II, 2, 100, 14-18. For an English translation of this passage, together with the discussion of the Greek and Arabic commentators' attitude towards *Isag.*, 16, 6-7, see DI VINCENZO, *Avicenna's reworking of Porphyry's 'common accident'* cit.

regard to the interpretation of synonymous predication, on the one hand, and his conception of essential and accidental universals, on the other. These clues seem to confirm, then, our attribution of the anonymous quotation to Porphyry or a Porphyrian author: the refutation effectively gives us elements to decide in favour of hypotheses (C)-(D).

It is now necessary, for Avicenna, to recall the correct interpretation of 'synonymous predication', which does not entail that the definition of the predicate corresponds, as a whole or as a part, to the definition of the subject; it only means that the subject is 'described' (*yūṣafu*) by that definition. It is therefore possible to say that Zayd is 'risible' and 'white', in the same way as he is said to be 'man' or 'animal'; i.e. inasmuch as the definition of all these predicates describes him, regardless whether they take part in his constitution as Zayd or not.

[§4] Avicenna's refutation ends with another critical remark: he blames the previous commentators for their negligence, and sums up their mistakes. He then finally provides a division of beings, which exactly corresponds to Aristotle's 'ontological square'. The list of substances Avicenna gives as examples for the fourth member of the division (composite individual, form, matter, soul) mirrors the list of substances given in *Ilāhiyyāt* II, 1, with the sole exception of the intellect⁸⁵.

The text of the refutation makes it clear that Avicenna is refuting Porphyry and his followers; the unmistakable reference to the *Isagoge*, together with the parallel passage of *Madḥal* II, 2, document this. It is therefore likely that, even if the text Avicenna quotes does not come directly from an Arabic translation of Porphyry, it comes from a work explicitly related to him. This confirms the Porphyrian origin of our text, although it does not remove all the doubts regarding its nature, form and style. Avicenna's generally critical attitude towards Porphyry is undisputable; it is not restricted to logic, but involves also other issues, such as noetics (as is proved by the nominal mention of Porphyry, in the metaphysics of the *Iṣārāt*, as the author of a 'foolish' book on the intelligibles⁸⁶). Our text can surely be inserted into Avicenna's anti-Porphyrian dossier.

⁸⁵ See *Ilāhiyyāt* II, 1, 60, 9-14.

⁸⁶ *Al-Iṣārāt wa-l-Tanbihāt*, p. 180 Forget: « To them belonged a man known as Porphyry. He composed a book on the intellect and the intelligibles. This book is praised by the Peripatetics, yet it is totally foolish, and waste » (English translation by S. Inati, slightly modified: *Ibn Sīnā's Remarks and Admonitions: Physics and Metaphysics*, Columbia University Press, New York 2014, p. 171). The same work and doctrine are recalled by Avicenna in his paraphrase of Aristotle's *De anima* (*Nafs* V, 6, 213, 1-2), where Porphyry however is mentioned indirectly as « He who composed [...] the *Isagoge* ». These passages have been discussed by J. FINNEGAN, *Avicenna's Refutation of Porphyrius*, in *Avicenna Commemoration Volume*, The Iran Society, Calcutta 1956, pp. 187-203; see also P. ADAMSON, *Porphyrius Arabus on Nature and Art: 463F Smith in context*, in G. KARAMANOLIS, A. SHEPPARD eds., *Studies on Porphyry*, Institute of Classical Studies, London 2007, pp. 141-163. In the *Šifā'*, Porphyry is also mentioned by name in the section on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (*Hitāba* IV, 2, 214, 2).

In our case, part of Avicenna's refutation of Porphyry depends on a translation mistake, or on the oversimplifying attitude of a paraphrast: whereas Porphyry's original text defines 'being said of a subject', its Arabic version in Avicenna defines the 'universal' (see [α]-[1] above). This shift may be explained either by carelessness on the part of the translator/commentator, who unwillingly overlapped the two notions (in which case we should endorse Avicenna's charge of 'negligence', though not in the sense of 'incoherence'); or, more likely, by the exegetic necessity of explaining 'universal' as it is specifically understood in this section of the *Categories*, namely as a standard synonym for Aristotle's formula 'that which is said of a subject', regardless of the word's technical meaning. Porphyry himself would probably not subscribe the statement that every kind of universal must be essentially predicated, for he himself recognizes that this description of 'being said of' mainly applies to genera and species⁸⁷. For sure, Avicenna disagrees with Porphyry as regards the difference between accident as a predicable and accident as a being. His emphasis on this latter point is justified by an ontological concern: accident and accidental cannot be the same thing, since some substances, for instance a particular 'white' (standing for 'thing coloured in white'), may be predicated accidentally of their subjects⁸⁸. On the other hand, Avicenna's insistence on this distinction reflects his conception of the *Categories*, which he ultimately holds to be a treatise on beings: the substances and accidents which are dealt with in this book are not predicates, but types of existents. This marks another relevant difference between Avicenna and the previous commentators, and justifies his insistence on the aforementioned distinction. We may then list Avicenna among those Aristotelian interpreters who insist on the necessity of distinguishing between a logical and an ontological consideration of the 'subject' referred to by Aristotle in *Cat.*, 2.

Despite this harsh criticism, it is interesting to notice that, paradoxically, Avicenna's view of the difference between 'said of' and 'being in' is in fact formally coincident with the one expressed by Porphyry, which distinguishes between 'being in' as a matter of existence and 'said of' as a matter of conception. This is witnessed by the following passage of *Maqūlāt* I, 4:

⁸⁷ See above, par. 1.

⁸⁸ This point is made explicitly in the logical section of the *Kitāb al-Nağāt*: « As for the accidental, well it is everything we enumerated that is not essential. One may make an error about it and believe incorrectly that it is that accident which is the counterpart of substance. [...] This is not so. For the accidental may be a substance, such as the white [object], whereas an accident, such as whiteness, is not a substance » (*Nağāt, Avicenna's Deliverance: Logic*, English trans. by A. Ahmed, p. 8).

T4: AVICENNA, *Maqūlāt* I, 4, 32,17-33,4:

« We then say, first, that the meaning of our saying 'and its separation from what it inheres in is not possible'⁸⁹ is that any sort of determinate existent you take [as inhering] in the determinate thing it exists in, its separation from that determinate [substrate] is not possible; but the cause for the subsistence of [the inhering existent] is the fact that it inheres in [the substrate], not the fact that that [existent] is a thing which follows [the substrate], after the [substrate]'s being constituted, in act. For this reason [is] the fact that the accident has been characterized by the name 'existent in a subject', for it is a consideration of existence; and the other thing has been characterized by the utterance 'being said of a subject'; for the universal is only existent in the expression, or in the conceptualization (*taṣawwūr*); and both of these are 'being said' ».

This text presents again, implicitly, a distinction between accident and accidental: the former is something which cannot exist apart from its subject of inherence, the latter is a predicate which describes something without taking part in its constitution, regardless whether it be itself a substance or an accident. The accident dealt with in the *Categories* is the former; the accidental, being a universal, is 'said of', and is thus restricted to a logical or linguistic consideration. Although the form is the same, what marks the substantial difference between the views of Porphyry and Avicenna is, as has been shown, their conception of essential and accidental universals. We might then wonder whether Avicenna has in mind, here, the passage of Porphyry's commentary in which 'being in a subject' is said to be an ontological property, and 'being said of a subject' has somewhat to do with conception: his knowledge of the fragment discussed above (par. 2) makes this probable, although not fully verifiable. If this were true, Avicenna's solution might either stand as another implicit charge of incoherence addressed against Porphyry, or witness an ambivalent attitude with respect to the Greek commentator; I would then hold the first alternative to be the most plausible.

Avicenna's insistence on the distinction between accident and accidental, and his doctrine of the subject, bear other substantial implications inasmuch as they ultimately aim to deny, for something, the possibility of being simultaneously a substance and an accident (under two different respects). This possibility is indeed an undesirable consequence of both Porphyry's alleged confusion between accident and accidental, and Porphyry's doctrine of the two subjects (already discussed, here, in par. 1): it especially concerns the status of certain properties,

⁸⁹ In this passage, Avicenna is discussing one of the parts of the Aristotelian definition of 'in a subject' given in *Cat.*, 2.

such as specific differences, whose ontological status is unclear and disputed⁹⁰. This apparent ambiguity seems to have triggered a lively debate already before Avicenna, among the Baghdad Peripatetics: whilst a work by Yahyā Ibn ‘Adī on this topic has recently been discovered in an Iranian manuscript⁹¹, Ibn Suwār discusses the issue of the ontological status of *differentia specifica* in his glosses on the *Categories*, where he comments on Porphyry’s fragment on the two subjects; he also seems to have written specific works on the same question⁹². Avicenna himself shows particular interest in this problem: to this very issue he devotes not only an entire chapter of *Maqūlāt* (I, 6), but also a number of shorter treatises, such as that entitled *On the error of those who said that quantity is substantial, and those who said that a thing is a substance and an accident simultaneously* (*Ḥatā’ man qāla inna l-kammiyya ḡawhariyya wa-man qāla inna šay’an huwa ḡawhar wa-‘araḍ ma’an*)⁹³; it is not unlikely, given Avicenna’s general attitude towards the Baghdad logicians, that his own works on the topic entertain a critical dialogue with those of his predecessors (provided, of course, that he knew them). This issue could therefore be a starting point of Avicenna’s discussions in this and other sections of *Maqūlāt*: the forthcoming editions of Ibn ‘Adī’s, Ibn Suwār’s and Avicenna’s texts will help us understand better the details of this debate, and

⁹⁰ A clear example used by Porphyry in the fragment from his *Ad Gedalium* commentary, as we have seen above, is that of heat, which seems to be both a constitutive property with regard to certain substances (such as fire) and an accidental property with regard to others (for instance, iron).

⁹¹ *Treatise on the Explanation of the Fact that the Heat of Fire is not a Substance for Fire* (*Maqāla fī ibānat anna ḡarārat al-nār laysat ḡawharan li-l-nār*); see R. WISNOVSKY, *New Philosophical Texts of Yahyā Ibn ‘Adī: a Supplement to Endress’ Analytical Inventory*, in F. OPWIS, D. REISMAN eds., *Islamic Philosophy, Science, Culture, Religion. Studies in honor of Dimitri Gutas*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2012, pp. 307-326 (see in particular p. 313). A critical edition of this work is currently being prepared by Rotraud Hansberger and Robert Wisnovsky.

⁹² Ibn Suwār’s discussion in the glosses on the *Categories* is found in the ms. BnF, ar. 2346 (GEORR, *Les Catégories d’Aristote dans leurs versions syro-arabes* cit., pp. 373-377). Among Ibn Suwār’s works, Endress (G. ENDRESS, *Ibn al-Ḥammār*, in *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie: Philosophie in der islamischen Welt* §7.4, pp. 337-338) mentions the account of a debate between Yahyā Ibn ‘Adī and Ibn Bakkūs about the form of fire, reported by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a but not extant; Endress also lists, on the same topic, a preserved work entitled *Answers to the Questions coming from the Community of the Wise, Excellent Šayḡ Abū l-Ḥayr al-Ḥasan ibn Suwār* (*Aḡwibat al-masā’il al-wārīda min balad aš-šayḡ al-fādīl al-ḡakīm Abū l-Ḥayr al-Ḥasan ibn Suwār*).

⁹³ This is the title as found in Mahdavi’s bibliography (Y. MAHDAVI, *Fehrest-e nosḡahā-ye mošannaḡāt-e Ebn-e Sīnā*, Dānešgāh-e Tehran 1954, p. 98) and in Gutas’ recent inventory of Avicenna’s works (GUTAS, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* cit., Brill, Leiden 2014, p. 438); according to Anawati (G. C. ANAWATI, *Essai de bibliographie avicennienne*, Edition al-Maaref, Cairo 1950, pp. 130-131) it is entitled *ḡawhar wa-‘araḍ*. On the same topic, the work *On the Fact that Quantity, Coldness and Heat are not a Substance* (*Fī anna l-kammiyya wa-l-burūda wa-l-ḡarāra laysat bi-ḡawhar*, p. 133 Anawati; p. 19 Mahdavi) and a treatise on the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic heat (p. 135 Anawati, p. 186 Mahdavi). I am currently working on a critical edition and translation of these Avicennan *opuscula*.

the Avicennan conception of the ontological status of *differentia specifica*. At that point, we shall also be able to shed further light on the doctrinal implications of the texts analysed in this paper.

CONCLUSION

The passage of Avicenna's *Maqūlāt* I discussed in this paper bears evidence of what I think should be classified as a fragment of the *Porphyrus Arabus*; unfortunately, the limited extent of the quotation does not allow us to guess from which sort of text it comes. Only further research on the available sources, and hopefully the discovery of still unavailable ones, will give us more material to reconstruct the Arabic reception of Porphyry's commentary on the *Categories*.

The remarkable evidence of a literal quotation, followed by a systematic refutation, shows the importance which Avicenna accords to the distinction between accident and accidental. This doctrine, already established in the commentary on the *Isagoge* (*Madhal* I, 14), is aimed at defining precisely the fields of logic and metaphysics; it would then be a consequence of Avicenna's rigorous classificatory attitude with regard to the sciences. On the other hand, this doctrine relies on the necessity of providing a clear-cut conception of substance and accident, which may avoid the apparent inconsistencies of Aristotle's doctrine in the *Categories*, and some of his commentators' solutions. Porphyry, along with those philosophers who were influenced by his interpretations, is here Avicenna's main polemical target.

Although Avicenna presents himself, in *Maqūlāt* I, 3, as an advocate of Aristotle, his interpretation of 'being said of' is not really Aristotelian; furthermore, his criticism of Aristotle's usage of the word 'subject' is quite explicit. Being a token of his general attitude towards Aristotle, this ambivalent attitude is also a good example of Avicenna's difficulties in interpreting the *Categories*. The subtle tension between the necessity of respecting the 'First Teacher's' letter, on the one hand, and the effort of constructing a consistent categorial ontology, on the other hand, is a constant concern of Avicenna's *Maqūlāt*.

APPENDIX

Translation of *Maqūlāt* I, 3, 23, 4 - 27, 21⁹⁴

[§1 *Two wrong opinions about 'being said of a subject'*]

/A23, 4/ Furthermore, a group [of people] has required as a condition, about what is said of the subject, that it be essential and constitutive of the quiddity, and, about the existent in the subject, that it be accidental, since accident and accidental for them are [here] the same thing, although the two are often different ; however, in this place, they are not aware of how much the two differ from each other. They judged that 'white', when it is said of 'this white thing', is not said of a subject, but it is existent in a subject, because they thought that 'white' is existent in a subject, for they thought that 'white' is an accident ; but they even went beyond this, to say that the universal is what constitutes the essence of the thing ; as if what is not [essential] were not universal. Let us cite, then, what one of their protagonists uttered in confirmation of this meaning, and let us point out the disgrace that is in them, so that it becomes clear that the right [opinion] is what we believe. He said :

But I said that the universal is what is predicated of its particulars according to the way⁹⁵ of 'what [is] the thing?', and that it is what is said of a subject, because sometimes some things are predicated of their subject in a way [which is] different from this ; an example of that is the fact that we say of Zayd that he walks, and so we say : 'Zayd walks' ; but the meaning of 'walks' is not predicated of Zayd according to [the fact] that it is a universal thing, and Zayd a particular of its ; because it is not said of Zayd when [one] asks, about him, 'what is he?'. Because if someone asked : 'What is Zayd?', and the respondent answered : 'he walks', his answer to him would be a mistake, and a lie ; because the meaning of 'walks' does not express Zayd's essence, but is only a certain action of his.

[§2 *'Formal' refutation*]

[§2.1 *The problem follows immediately from the premise*]

Well, now consider this logician : he posited his problem, being the claim that the universal is what is predicated of its particulars according to the way of 'what [is] the

⁹⁴ For this translation I have collated the Cairo text with eleven manuscripts : nine already used by the editors and two more. Those used by the editors are the following : (1) Cairo, al-Azhar, Bekhit 331 ; (2) Cairo, Dār al-kutub 894 ; (3) Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Damat Ibrahim Paşa 822 ; (4) Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Damat Ibrahim Paşa 824 ; (5) Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Aşir Efendi 207 ; (6) Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yeni Câmi 772 ; (7) Istanbul, Millet Kütüphanesi, Ali Emiri 1504 ; (8) Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi 2708 ; ; (9) London, British Library, Or. 7500. The two additional manuscripts are (10) Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Or. 4 (Golius collection) and (11) Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi 2710.

⁹⁵ Reading *min ʔarīqi* with all mss., instead of *'an ʔarīqi* (Cairo).

thing?'; then he wanted to clarify this statement, so he posited as a clarification for this the fact that what is not predicated according to the way of 'what [is] the thing?' is not universal; but this is the contradictory converse of the problem. If this were clear, or conceded, then the first⁹⁶ would follow at a short distance.

[§2.2 *The commentator's choice of the predicate 'walks' makes his error less evident*]

Moreover, he posited the question regarding a particular, namely 'walks', and he left aside [the predicate] 'is] the walker', since this error⁹⁷ would become more evident in the case of 'the walker' (for 'the walker' is a noun, while 'walks' is a verb).

[§2.3 *Again on the inconsistency of the commentator's argument*]

/A24/ We must not be bothered about this as well, but we must say: since he wanted to clarify that 'walks' is not universal, he took the first problem, which is object of doubt, as the major premise in the clarification of the fact that it is not universal, so he said: '[walks is not universal] because 'walks' does not express [Zayd's] quiddity, and everything which is not said of the thing's quiddity is not universal'; but this [statement] is the thing which returned [directly] from the problem to its clarification, since itself and the problem are equal with respect to the judgment⁹⁸. So, if he thought that this is not the problem, but the problem follows from it, and it is in the nature of syllogisms to take things which make the problem follow, for they are better knowledgeable, then it is said to him: 'you take this premise, in this place, **(a)** either as something that is clear, or **(b)** as something that⁹⁹ you clarify first, and then the problem becomes clear from it'.

(a) Thus, if it is clear by itself, then there is no need for the deception of these syllogisms, but it is necessary to assume this, and to say: 'since what is not said of the thing's quiddity is not universal, then every universal is said as an answer to 'what is it?'.

(b) Furthermore, the claim that [this premise] is clear and that it is clearer than the fact that every universal is said as an answer to 'what is it?' is a claim far from being understandable. For he who says: 'it is not true that every universal is said as an answer to 'what is it?'' also says together with this: 'it is not true that everything which is not said as an answer to 'what is it?' is not universal'; and if it is necessary that this becomes clear in order that the problem becomes clear from it, why was it itself taken as a part of the syllogism which proves it, in order that the problem becomes clear by means of it?

⁹⁶ I.e. the problem itself.

⁹⁷ I.e. the commentator's error of overlapping ontological accident and accidental.

⁹⁸ Avicenna's formulation here is rather unclear. I take this to be a restatement of the fact that the premise, being a 'disguised' version of the problem, goes straight from the problem to its clarification; the commentator is thus assuming the problem itself as a premise for its own clarification.

⁹⁹ Supplementing *aw <alā annahā> tatabayyanu* with all of the consulted manuscripts.

[§2.4 *Again on the choice of the predicate*]

Moreover, has the introduction of 'walks', here, a utility other than positing this instead of 'the predicates of the thing which are not universal'? For it became clear that the predicates which are not according to the 'what is it?' are not universal, so how can this be the case by assuming that the predicates which are not according to the 'what is it?' are not universal?

[§3 *'Doctrinal' refutation*][§3.1 *Universals need not be predicated essentially of their particulars*]

Something has been already pointed at in this chapter, but it has not been said clearly; and it resembled what he said, as to what he fancies, namely that 'walks' is not universal since Zayd is not a particular of 'walks'¹⁰⁰. For his saying: 'because Zayd /A25/ is not a particular of 'walks' belongs to those things whose acceptance comes first to the mind, since it came first to the mind that Zayd is an individual of the species 'man', and the individual is a particular of the species; so, it came first to the opinion that he is a particular for the species, not a particular for something else; as if the thing might not be a particular of two things.

But it is necessary that the meaning of our saying 'x is a particular of y' be acquired, hence we say: the meaning of our saying 'x is a particular of y' is that for one of the things which are described by y, so that it is y, it does not follow necessarily that the particular [x] be described exclusively by [y]; thus, y is an attribute for it and for something else, in act or in potency. So, if the attribute belongs to what is predicated of it exclusively, in act and potency together, if it is so, then it cannot be a particular of that attribute. As to the case where this particular and other things are described according to a description with a unitary meaning, and a unitary definition, and according to a description which is such as to be without paronymy, then [the predicate] is more common, as concerns its falling [upon a meaning], than [the particular], and [the particular] is more specific than [the predicate]. For Zayd is more specific than 'walks', and 'walks' is more common than Zayd; for Zayd is not said but of one [thing], while 'walks' is said of what Zayd is said of, and of other [particulars]; hence Zayd is one of the particular things of which 'walks' is predicated. And this is exactly what we mean by 'particular'.

As to the fact that the common predicate of Zayd and others must be a thing predicated of it in its essence, it is an additional condition; [additional] for Zayd as regards his particularity, [additional] for the attribute as regards his universality. [These] people already agreed upon the fact that properties and [common] accidents are universals, and that inasmuch as they are properties and accidents they have particulars extraneous to them; for 'risible', with respect to 'this risible', inasmuch as it is 'this risible', is not

¹⁰⁰ Avicenna is very likely referring to his statement that 'said of a subject' means 'universal' and 'said of many' particulars; if understood incorrectly, it may give rise to a doctrine such as that of the commentator, who holds that something cannot be a particular of more than one universal.

a property, but a species and a constitutive [part] of its quiddity, as you learned¹⁰¹; but it is a property for 'man'. The particulars of 'risible', insofar as it is a property, are the individuals of man; the individuals of men, insofar as they are men, are not constituted by the 'risible'; for ['risible'] does not take part in their quiddity; this because it does not constitute man's quiddity. Nonetheless, it is a universal said of many things (which are its particulars), inasmuch as it is a property.

[§3.2 *Distinction between accident and accidental*]

/A26/ Furthermore, if 'white' with respect to 'man' (and 'walks' with respect to Zayd) does not belong to what is said of a subject, but it is an accident, it must be either **(a)** that the name 'accident' is said of the accidental and of the actual accident by pure homonymy, and there is neither ambiguity¹⁰² nor synonymy in it, or **(b)** that it is not said by homonymy.

(a) If it is said by homonymy, it is necessary that the subdivisions corresponding to the notions be more than the subdivisions they mentioned; for then the principles of the subdivisions would be six: (1) universal and (2) particular, the (3) substance and the (4) accident which are [taken] in one of the two meanings, and the (5) substance and the (6) accident which are [taken] in the sense of accidental and substantial. Each of these two accidents has been employed in the examples they have in that regard; I mean, these have been employed by those who introduce these false conditions; I do not mean that the first who taught us this¹⁰³ ever introduced any of these things.

(b) As to [the event] where 'accident' fell upon them by synonymy, then let it express this meaning¹⁰⁴; but they agreed that what is in a subject is not such that the subject shares with it the definition and the name together; but it sometimes shares the name only, and the definition is not predicated of it. Then, if we say of Zayd that he walks, and he is white, and we search for the definition of 'walks' (namely, 'is a thing which moves from a place to another by putting a leg forward and hinging on the other'), and we search for the definition of 'white' (namely, 'thing coloured with a colour which divides the sight'), we find both these definitions to belong to that which is said of Zayd; for as it is said of Zayd that he walks, so it is said that he moves from a place to another by putting a leg forward and hinging on the other; and as it is said of him that he is white, it is said that he is a

¹⁰¹ See Avicenna's discussion of property, *Madḥal* I, 14, 83 - 85, 6.

¹⁰² Arabic: *taškīk*. By means of this word Avicenna refers to the kind of 'modulated' synonymy which describes the predication of 'existent' (*mawḡūd*): that of a notion which is essentially unitary, but is differentiated according to degrees of anteriority and posteriority, greater and lesser dignity. This doctrine is exposed in detail by Avicenna in the chapter on homonyms and synonyms (*Maqūlāt* I, 2, 10, 8 - 11, 2); for its characters and its Greek and Arabic background see A. TREIGER, *Avicenna's Notion of Transcendental Modulation of Existence (taškīk al-wuḡūd, analogia entis) and Its Greek and Arabic Sources*, « Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale », 21, 2010, pp. 165-198, repr. 2011 in OPWIS, REISMAN eds., *Islamic Philosophy, Science, Culture and Religion* cit., pp. 327-363.

¹⁰³ 'The first who taught us this': Aristotle. This formula recalls the epithet most often attributed to Aristotle, by Avicenna as well, i.e. 'the First Teacher' (*al-mu'allimu l-awwalu*).

¹⁰⁴ I.e. they would both be 'in a subject'.

body coloured with a colour which divides the sight. It is thus clear that this discourse belongs to what must not be taken into account¹⁰⁵.

[§3.3 *The correct way of interpreting synonymous predication*]

It is necessary that you recall, here, what was said concerning the types of commonness and dissimilarity¹⁰⁶, on whose acceptance they all agreed, namely that the five [predicables] are predicated synonymously, and property is predicated synonymously as well; thus, you will learn how quickly they forget. Unless they said, of course, that 'sharing the definition' means that the definition is not predicated simply, but it is **IA27** a definition [for the subject as well], so that natural genera would not share their definitions with their species, but only their names; for the definitions of genera are not definitions for the species; moreover, the individuals certainly do not have any definition; how then could they share their definitions with the genera? Thus, if they charge themselves with another excess, and say that sharing the definition means that what is a definition for one of the two [things] is either a definition for the other, or a part of the definition of the other; [if they say so], then they are themselves disproved by their statement that the genus has in common with the property the fact that they are both predicated of what is below them by synonymy, by the name and the definition; [in fact], they all granted this¹⁰⁷.

The meaning of 'sharing the definition' is not this, but the fact that what is signified by the name, and its definition or description, is predicated of the thing of which the name is predicated; so, the thing is described by the meaning of the name, as it is named by means of its expression, although that is not its definition.

[§4 *Conclusion. Division of beings*]

Thus, by means of these things it became clear that they were highly neglectful. It has become clear that the reason for this is their belief that the accident which is one of the five [predicables] is the accident we speak of in this book. But it has already become clear, by this, that every common meaning which is said of more than one thing, in whatsoever way it is said, is a universal; that the proper meaning is a particular; that the accident which is the opposite of substance is the one we shall define¹⁰⁸. And [it has become clear] that things are either **[1]** said of a subject, and not existent in a subject, and they are the

¹⁰⁵ Namely, this second hypothesis regarding the coincidence of accident and accidental.

¹⁰⁶ Ar. *fi l-mušarakāti wa-l-mubāyanāti*. These expressions might be taken either as referring to the 'common' and 'different features' of the five predicables, as discussed in the second treatise of the *Madḥal* (II 1-3, 91-109), or to 'sharing' and 'not sharing' the definition in predication (as suggested by the reference to 'sharing the definition', *mušāraka fi l-ḥaddi*, a few lines below). I opt for the first alternative, since Avicenna will explicitly refer to the second part of Porphyry's *Isagoge*, devoted to the similarities and dissimilarities of the five predicables (see above, T3).

¹⁰⁷ This is a reference to PORPH., *Isag.*, 16, 6-7 Busse.

¹⁰⁸ Namely, the 'accident' in the ontological sense, whose definition will be provided and discussed in the following chapter (*Maqūlāt* I, 4).

universals of things which are substances. Since they are universal, they are said 'of'; and since they are substances, they do not exist 'in'. Or [2] they are existent in a subject and not said of a subject, and these are particular accidents, for since they are accidents, they are existent in a subject, and since they are particular, they are not [said] 'of'; or [3] they are said of a subject and existent in a subject, and these are universal accidents, because it is with regard to their particulars, that they are said of a subject (like the universal whiteness with regard to a certain white); and because they are accidents, they are existent in a subject; or [4] they are neither said of [a subject] nor existent in [a subject], and these are particular substances, like Zayd, 'Amr, this [particular] matter, this [particular] form, this [particular] soul; since they are substances, they are not existent in a subject, and since they are particular they are not said of a subject.

ABSTRACT

A quotation of an anonymous 'logician' in Avicenna's Categories

This paper provides an analysis of chapter I, 3 of the *Maqūlāt* ('Categories') of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Šifā'* (*Book of the Cure*), devoted to the Aristotelian distinction between 'being in a subject' and 'said of a subject' (as traced in the second chapter of the *Categories*). The enquiry will focus on a literal quotation of an anonymous commentator, given by Avicenna in this chapter, which will be discussed extensively, in order to give plausible hypotheses concerning its source and authorship. Before coming to the text, a brief account of the Greek and Arabic background of the issues at stake will be given; after discussing the quotation, the analysis will concentrate on Avicenna's refutation of the commentator, which ultimately gives more than one clue to assess his identity. It will be argued that the quoted text is a translation or a paraphrase of a passage of Porphyry's *In Aristotelis Categoriae expositio per interrogationem et responsionem*, and the mentioned 'logician' is either Porphyry himself, or a later Arabic commentator rephrasing Porphyry's text. An English translation of the second part of *Maqūlāt* I, 3 is given in the Appendix.

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SISMEL-EDIZIONI DEL GALLUZZO