

The Letter before the Spirit: The Importance of Text Editions for the Study of the Reception of Aristotle

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A HIDDEN *HAPAX LEGOMENON* IN AVICENNA'S METAPHYSICS:
CONSIDERATIONS ON THE USE OF *ANNIYYA* AND *AYYIYYA*
IN THE *ILĀHIYYĀT* OF THE *KITĀB AL-ŠIFĀ'**

Amos Bertolacci

Summary

A critical edition of the masterpiece of Avicenna's metaphysics—the *Science of Divine Things* (*Ilāhiyyāt*) of the *Book of the Cure* (*Kitāb al-Šifā'*)—is much needed in order to assess the metaphysical thought of its author and the extent of his debt to Aristotle and the Peripatetic tradition. The example discussed in the present contribution regards the title of the very first chapter of the work, in which the term *anniyya* (“existence”), common to the current printed versions of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, should arguably be corrected into *ayyīyya* (“essential quality”). The proposed correction is corroborated by the apparent use of the latter term (equally misreported as *anniyya* in available editions) in other parts of the *Šifā'*, with particular regard to the reworking of Porphyry's *Isagoge* (*Madḥal*), and sheds light on Avicenna's preservation of an instance of Kindian terminology also in a work strongly dependent on Farabian patterns like the *Ilāhiyyāt*.

The present essay discusses the centre-piece of Avicenna's metaphysics, the *Science of Divine Things* (*Ilāhiyyāt*) of the *Book of the Cure* (*Kitāb al-Šifā'*), a work in ten treatises constituting the fourth and final part of the most famous summa of logic, natural philosophy, mathematics and metaphysics by Avicenna. The *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Šifā'* is fundamental in various respects. First of all, it is Avicenna's most extensive treatment of metaphysics. Secondly, it is his presentation of this discipline most directly and massively related to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Thirdly, it is one

* I am very grateful to Dimitri Gutas (Yale University) for his careful reading and invaluable comments on a first draft of the present article. I wish to thank warmly Robert Wisnovsky, Asad Ahmed, Heidrun Eichner and Hans Daiber for their generosity in sharing with me information on the manuscripts of Avicenna's works, and the Al-Azhar Library of Cairo, in the person of Mr. Mahdi Shaloot, and the Center for Documentation of Cultural and Natural Heritage (CULTNAT) of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, in the person of the director Dr. Fathi Saleh, for having provided me with a copy of the ms. al-Azhar, Behīṭ 331 *falsafa*. My sincere gratitude goes also to the editors of the present volume for their helpful remarks on content and style.

of Avicenna's most influential works, since it was rapidly and extensively disseminated in the Muslim world, but soon afterwards it was also translated into Latin, thus exerting a deep and lasting influence on Christian philosophy. My aim in the present contribution is to show that a critical edition of the *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Šifā'* is very much needed, by demonstrating how an apparently minimal correction of the text of this work can have far-reaching consequences for our understanding of Avicenna's metaphysical thought, sources and vocabulary.

I have already shown elsewhere that our actual knowledge of the *Ilāhiyyāt* is based on a very small portion of the massive manuscript tradition of the work and that none of its printed integral versions (the lithograph published in Tehrān in 1885; the current "edition" published in Cairo in 1960 by a team of four scholars; and the printed version published in Qum in 1997/8 by Ḥasanzādah al-Āmulī) meets the standards of a true critical edition.¹ The corrections of the Cairo edition that I have provisionally proposed—on the basis of the collation of the text edited by G.C. Anawati, S. Zayed, M.Y. Moussa, and S. Dunya with a few other codices, the Latin medieval translation, and the parallel places in Avicenna's *Book of Salvation* (*Kitāb al-Nağāt*)—prove to be useful in various respects. They disclose, for example, further doctrines for which Avicenna depends on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and they suggest corrections of the *loci paralleli* of the *Ilāhiyyāt* in other works of Avicenna. Furthermore, they show how locutions typical of later Arab authors have corrupted Avicenna's original text, and they allow some ameliorations even in the otherwise excellent critical edition of the Latin Medieval translation of the *Ilāhiyyāt*.²

Many of the corrections that I have already listed and discussed are macroscopic like the change of the term *huwīyya* ("being") in *huwahuwīyya* ("identity"), of the term *wuğūd* ("existence") in *waḥda* ("unity"), of the term *musabbib* ("causer") in *sabab* ("cause"), and so forth. In the present contribution I will focus, by way of example, on a much more subtle—but

¹ See A. Bertolacci, *The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics in Avicenna's Kitāb al-Šifā': A Milestone of Western Metaphysical Thought*, Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2006, pp. 483–485. Id., "On the Manuscripts of the *Ilāhiyyāt* of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Šifā'*", in *Islamic Thought in the Middle Ages. Studies in Text, Transmission and Translation, in Honour of Hans Daiber*, ed. A. Akasoy, W. Raven, Brill, Leiden 2008, pp. 59–75.

² Bertolacci, *The Reception* cit., pp. 485–558; Id., "Some Texts of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the *Ilāhiyyāt* of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Šifā'*", in *Before and After Avicenna. Proceedings of the First Conference of the Avicenna Study Group*, ed. D.C. Reisman, A.H. al-Rahim, Brill, Leiden 2003, pp. 25–45; id., "On the Manuscripts" cit.

in no way less significant—case of correction, in which the edited term (*anniyya*) and its proposed correction (*ayyiyya*) are almost identical. The suggested correction would constitute a *hapax legomenon* of the *Ilāhiyyāt* and a term never considered so far, to the best of my knowledge, to belong to Avicenna's philosophical vocabulary. Moreover, it would provide a further instance of Avicenna's reliance on Kindian terminology, besides the various cases of dependence already evidenced in scholarly literature. The occurrence of *ayyiyya* in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, in its turn, would disclose the possibility of correcting *anniyya* into *ayyiyya*, with regard to a higher number of cases, in another section of the *Šifā'*, namely in the part of the work's logic being the adaptation of Porphyry's *Isagoge*.³

I divide the exposition into three sections. In the first section I explain why one of the occurrences of *anniyya* in the *Ilāhiyyāt* appears to be dubious. In the second section I argue for the substitution of the occurrence of *anniyya* in question with *ayyiyya*. In the third section I briefly describe the genealogy of the term *ayyiyya*, indicate in al-Kindī its first prominent user in Arabic philosophy, and tentatively suggest to extend to the logic of the *Šifā'* the scope of Avicenna's recourse to this term.

I—A Suspect Occurrence of *Anniyya* in *Ilāhiyyāt I, 1*

Scrutiny of the manuscripts of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, as well as of the exegetical tradition of this work, shows that one of the very first words of Avicenna's work, as many others afterwards, is erroneously reproduced in the Cairo current edition. At stake is the ontological key term *anniyya* in the title of the first chapter of the work. The Cairo editors of the *Ilāhiyyāt* and of the other parts of the *Šifā'* consistently vocalize this term as *inniyya* (thus placing the initial *hamza* below the supporting *alif*), although its correct spelling is in all likelihood *anniyya* (with *hamza* above the *alif*). However, the orthography of the term under discussion does not concern us here, and in what follows I will refrain from tackling the issue by referring to it, in every case, as *anniyya*, according to its most likely vocalization.⁴

³ The correction in question is not listed in the *errata corrigée* of the Cairo edition that I have provided in Bertolacci, *The Reception* cit., pp. 485–558, but is adopted in my Italian translation of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (*Libro della Guarigione, Le Cose Divine* di Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), a cura di A. Bertolacci, UTET, Turin 2007; henceforth: Bertolacci); see below, n. 30.

⁴ In *A Greek and Arabic Lexicon: Materials for a Dictionary of the Mediæval Translations from Greek into Arabic*, ed. G. Endress, D. Gutas, Brill, Leiden (henceforth: GALex),

The term *annīyya* has been investigated extensively in important recent studies, which cumulatively show its relevant role in the Medieval Arabic translations of philosophical Greek works, its wide-ranging position in Avicenna's terminology and in the entire Arabic philosophical jargon, and its challenging nature for translators from Arabic of all times, both those writing in Latin and those writing in modern European languages.⁵ The problems of interpretation posed by *annīyya* are mainly due to its multifarious meanings, evidenced by the plethora of translations of this term into European languages, a cursory list of which includes somewhat cryptic renderings, such as "quoddité", "haecécité", "être", "entitas", "essence individuelle", "existence", and so forth, just to limit the survey to the occurrences in Avicenna's works.⁶ In view of this wide array of

vol. I, pp. 428–436, the term is reported exclusively as *annīyya*, and this latter can be taken as its correct spelling. On the different vocalizations proposed for this term, see R.M. Frank, "The Origin of the Arabic Philosophical Term *annīyya*", *Cahiers de Byrsa*, 6, 1956, pp. 181–201, pp. 183–184, 199. The warning of A.-M. Goichon: "Ne pas confondre [sc. *annīyya*] avec *innīyya*, l'abstraite tiré de la conjonction *si* et qui indique la «conditionnalité» d'un jugement" (*Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sīnā*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris 1938; rist. Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the J.W. Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main 1999, pp. 11–12), can be disregarded, since the term *innīyya* (translated as "conditionnalité") that Goichon recommends to keep distinct from *annīyya* in this case derives in her opinion from the conjunction *in* ("if") in the fictitious formula *burhān in* ("demonstration of the if", translated by Goichon either as "argumentation *si*" (*Lexique cit.*, p. 22) or as "argumentation conditionnelle" (Ibn Sīnā [Avicenne], *Livre des Directives et Remarques* [*Kitāb al-'Isārāt wa l-tanbihāt*], traduction avec introduction et notes par A.-M. Goichon, Commission internationale pour la traduction des chefs-d'oeuvre, Beirut-Paris 1951; repr. 1999, p. 233, and n. 1). However, the actual expression that Avicenna uses in these logical-epistemological contexts is in fact *burhān anna* ("demonstration of the that", i.e. of the fact), where the conjunction involved is the declarative *anna* ("that") rather than the hypothetical *in* ("if"); the abstract noun associated with this formula should hence be read *annīyya*, rather than *innīyya*, in conjunction with the other uses of *annīyya* rather than in isolation from them. The expression *burhān anna* is the Arabic equivalent of the syllogism $\delta\tau\iota$ of *Posterior Analytics* A, 13 (see the rendering of $\delta\tau\iota$ as *anna* and *al-annu* in the Arabic translation of *An. Post.* A, 13 in *GALex*, vol. I, pp. 418, 427, 436). The contention "Nous n'avons pas rencontré chez Ibn Sīnā, pour le mot *'annīyya*, le sens de «(preuve) par le *quā*», *'ann*" (Ibn Sīnā, *Livre des Directives et Remarques cit.*, p. 307, n. 3) is therefore pointless.

⁵ A useful *status quaestionis*, with reference to all relevant previous literature, is available in A. Hasnawi, "*Annīyya* ou *Innīyya* (essence, existence)", in *Encyclopédie philosophique universelle. Publié sous la direction d'A. Jacob*, vol. II: *Les notions philosophiques*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1990, pp. 101–102. See also C. D'Ancona, "Platonic and Neoplatonic Terminology for Being in Arabic Translation," *Studia graeco-arabica*, 1, 2011, pp. 23–45.

⁶ See Goichon, *Lexique cit.*, pp. 9–12, and the survey of previous scholarship in M.-Th. d'Alverny, "*Annīyya*-*Anitas*", in *Mélanges offerts à E. Gilson*, ed. Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies of Toronto, Vrin, Paris 1959, pp. 59–91 (on pp. 59–67). See also J. Michot, "La réponse d'Avicenne à Bahmanyâr et al-Kirmânî. Présentation, traduction

different meanings, one understands the tendency of Medieval, Early Modern and contemporary translators to simply transliterate this word—*anitas* in the Medieval Latin translation of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (see Appendix below); *alanie* in the Latin translation by Andrea Alpago of the *Risāla Adḥawiyya fī l-ma'ād*, *Epistle of the Feast of Sacrifice concerning the Return*; *anniyya* in recent studies—and thus avoid the risk of choosing expressly one of its various shades of meaning.⁷ This semantic ambiguity has deep roots, due to the great variety of the underlying Greek equivalents of *anniyya* in the translations from Greek into Arabic, covering the entire spectrum of ontology.⁸ Schematically speaking, within the ontological vocabulary, *anniyya* does not only refer to the general concept of “being”, but also, more specifically, to the two “extremes” of ontology represented on the one hand by “essence” and on the other hand by “existence”. My goal in the present essay is not to deal with *anniyya* as such, delving once more into the intricacies of its origin, nature and use; my purpose is rather to show that the diffusion, prestige and variety of meanings of this term have probably engendered a textual corruption in the manuscript tradition of Avicenna's *Ilāhiyyāt*. As a result, the more notorious *anniyya* appears to have replaced in all current printed versions a much rarer and more univocal term (*ayyīyya*) that, albeit an abstract noun like *anniyya* with an almost identical graphic aspect, bears a different meaning, which is more precise and more suitable to the context.⁹

critique et lexique arabe-français de la *Mubāḥatha* III”, *Le Muséon* 110, 1997, pp. 143–221, p. 171 (“quodditē”), and Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of The Healing*. A parallel English-Arabic text translated, introduced, and annotated by M.E. Marmura, Brigham Young University Press, Provo (Utah) 2005 (henceforth: Marmura), p. 383, endnote 1 (“In certain contexts it is best to translate *inniyya/anniyya* as ‘existence’”).

⁷ D'Alverny transliterates the four occurrences of *anniyya* in chapter 4 of the *Risāla Adḥawiyya* (“Anniyya-Anitas” cit., pp. 86–88). One of them is transliterated also by Lucchetta in her Italian translation of the work (Avicenna, *Epistola sulla vita futura*. I. Testo arabo, traduzione, introduzione e note a cura di F. Lucchetta, Antenore, Padova 1969, p. 145, 9). See also the transliteration of one of the occurrences of *anniyya* in the *Madḥal* of Avicenna's *Šifā'* in M. Alonso Alonso, “La “al-anniyya” de Avicena y el problema de la esencia y existencia (fuentes literarias)”, *Pensamiento*, 14, 1958, pp. 311–345 (p. 397).

⁸ *Anniyya* is a translation for a variety of ontological Greek terms, like τὸ εἶναι (“being” in general), but also τὸ εἶναι τι, τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι and τὸ τί ἐστίν (“essence”), as well as τὸ εἶναι with existential meaning, ὑπάρχω (“to exist”) and ὑπόστασις (“existence”) in the Arabic translations of Greek philosophical works (see GALex, vol. I, pp. 428–436). The occurrences of *anniyya* in Plotino, *La discesa dell'anima nei corpi* (*Enn. IV 8 [6]*). *Plotiniana Arabica* (*Pseudo-Teologia di Aristotele, Capitoli 1 e 7; “Detti del sapiente greco”*), a cura di C. D'Ancona, Il Poligrafo, Padova 2003, pp. 472–473, are prevalently translated as “essere”.

⁹ The term *ayyīyya* is not taken into account in Goichon, *Lexique*, and A.-M. Goichon, *Vocabulaires comparés d'Aristote et d'Ibn Sīnā*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1939; rist.

The literal translation of chapter I, 1 of the *Ilāhiyyāt* is as follows (the term *annīyya* is intentionally left untranslated):

Text 1: “Chapter on the beginning of the search of the subject matter of first philosophy, so that its *annīyya* among the sciences becomes evident”.¹⁰

In this title, Avicenna is saying that the investigation of the subject matter of first philosophy (i.e. metaphysics) aims at clarifying its *annīyya*, i.e., strictly speaking, the *annīyya* of the subject matter of first philosophy (as the masculine, rather than feminine, pronominal suffix attached to *annīyya* attests), and, in a wider sense and through its subject matter, the *annīyya* of this science in its full scope.¹¹ This construction *ad sensum*, which is not unusual under Avicenna’s pen, does not concern us directly here. In all likelihood, Avicenna is referring to the specificity of the subject matter of metaphysics among the subject matters of the other sciences and, by extension, to the specificity of metaphysics itself in the scientific domain. Accordingly, modern translators variously render the term in question as “essence”, “nature”, “constitution”, or “individual quiddity”.¹²

Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the J.W. Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, 1999, and does not appear in the first volume of the GALex.

¹⁰ Faṣḥun fi btidā’i ṭalabi mawḍū’i l-falsafati l-ūlā li-tatabayyana innīyyatuhū fi l-’ulūm. Arabic text as in *Al-Šifā’, al-Ilāhiyyāt (1)*, ed. Ġ.Š. Qanawātī, S. Zāyid, al-Hay’a al-’amma li-šū’ūn al-maṭābi’ al-amīriyya, Cairo 1960; *Al-Šifā’, al-Ilāhiyyāt (2)*, ed. M.Y. Mūsā, S. Dunyā, S. Zāyid, al-Hay’a al-’amma li-šū’ūn al-maṭābi’ al-amīriyya, Cairo 1960. The number of pages and lines of the Latin translation are provided between square brackets (Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina, I–IV*. Édition critique par S. Van Riet. Introduction par G. Verbeke, Peeters-Brill, Louvain-Leiden 1977; *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina, V–X*. Édition critique par S. Van Riet. Introduction par G. Verbeke, Peeters-Brill, Louvain-Leiden 1980).

¹¹ The precise reference of the pronominal suffix remains ambiguous in most modern translations, with the exception of M. Horten’s German translation (*Die Metaphysik Avicennas enthaltend die Metaphysik, Theologie, Kosmologie und Ethik*, übersetzt und erläutert von M. Horten, Leipzig 1907; repr. Minerva, Frankfurt am Main 1960; henceforth: Horten), in which it is referred *ad sensum* to first philosophy, rather than to the subject matter of first philosophy (see below, n. 12). Cf. the similar construction of the Latin translation (below, n. 23).

¹² Horten, p. 1: “Ein erstmaliges Suchen nach dem Objekte der prima philosophia, damit ihre *eigentliche Natur* innerhalb der Wissenschaften klar werde” (cf. *ibid.*, ftn. 5: “Wörtlich: ‘ihre Individualität’”); Avicenne, *La Métaphysique du Šifā’*. Livres I à V. Traduction, introduction, notes et commentaires par G.C. Anawati, Vrin, Paris 1978; Avicenne, *La Métaphysique du Šifā’*. Livres de VI à X. Traduction, notes et commentaires par G.C. Anawati, Vrin, Paris 1985 (henceforth: Anawati), vol. I, p. 85: “Où l’on commence à chercher le sujet (*mawḍū’*) de la philosophie première pour que soit manifestée son *essence* (*annīya*) [par rapport] aux sciences”; Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), *Metafisica. La Scienza delle cose divine* (al-Ilāhiyyāt) dal Libro della Guarigione (Kitāb al-Šifā’), a cura di O. Lizzini e P. Porro, Bompiani, Milano 2002, 2006° (henceforth: Lizzini), p. 17: “In cui si comincia a ricercare il soggetto della filosofia prima per rendere evidente il suo *costituirsì* come

But translations like these, although compatible with Avicenna's overall intention in the title of chapter I, 1, are problematic when they are considered in the context of the entire *Ilāhiyyāt*. Studies on Avicenna's lexicography have pointed out that *anniyya* usually means "essence" and cognate concepts in psychological contexts. In Avicenna's metaphysics, on the other hand, it means rather "existence", as an opposite term to "quiddity" (*māhiyya*) and as a synonym of *wuġūd*.¹³ The *Ilāhiyyāt* mirrors quite faithfully this situation: most, if not all, the occurrences of *anniyya* other than the one discussed here mean "existence" rather than, and often in opposition to, "essence". The occurrences of *anniyya* in the *Ilāhiyyāt* are concentrated in two main *loci*, namely chapters I, 1–2 in the introduction of the work, where the term is employed to outline the epistemological profile of the science of metaphysics, and chapters VIII, 4–6 in the theological section of the text, where it serves to describe God's nature.¹⁴ A clear existential meaning of *anniyya* surfaces in both contexts. Let us take, for example, the following two texts:

Text 2: I, 2, p. 13, 11–12 [p. 13, 34–36]:... establishing [the existence] (*itbāt*) of the subject matter and verifying its quiddity (*māhiyya*) cannot occur in the science of which it is the subject matter, but only assuming its existence (*anniyya*) and quiddity (*māhiyya*) [can occur in it].¹⁵

scienza"; Marmura, p. 1: "On beginning to seek the subject of first philosophy so that its *individual quiddity* among the sciences becomes evident". Cf. Alonso Alonso, "La "al-anniyya" de Avicena" cit., p. 389: "Se comienza a tratar del sujeto de la filosofía primera para manifestar su 'al-anniyya' en relación con otras ciencias".

¹³ See Hasnawi, "*Annīyya* ou *Innīyya* (essence, existence)" cit., pp. 101–102.

¹⁴ The list of occurrences can be inferred from the lexica of the critical edition of the Latin translation (Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina, I–X*. Lexiques par S. Van Riet, Peeters-Brill, Louvain-la-Neuve-Leiden 1983), with the addition of the two occurrences omitted in the Latin translation: VIII, 4, p. 344, 11; VIII, 4, p. 346, 13 (see below, Appendix).

¹⁵ ... li-stiḥālātī an yakūna itbātu l-mawḏū'i wa-taḥqīqu māhiyyatihī fi l-'ilmi llaḏī huwa mawḏū'uhū bal taslimu innīyyatihī wa-māhiyyatihī faqaṭ. Lat. transl.: "inconueniens est ut stabiliat suum subiectum an sit et certificet quid sit scientia cuius ipsum est subiectum, sed potius debet concedere tantum *quia est* et quid est" (emphasis mine). Anawati, p. 93: "Il est en effet impossible d'établir un sujet et de vérifier sa quiddité dans la science dont il est le sujet, mais il faut seulement admettre son *existence* (*annīyya*) et sa quiddité" (emphasis mine). Lizzini, p. 37: "È, infatti, impossibile stabilire [l'esistenza] del soggetto ed individuare che cosa esso sia nella stessa scienza di cui esso è il soggetto; in essa si dovrà, invece, soltanto ammettere *che esso esista* (*anniyya*) e che cosa esso sia (*māhiyya*)"; cf. n. 57, p. 1059: "O anche: «si dovranno ammetterne l'*esistenza* e la quiddità» (emphasis mine). Marmura, pp. 9–10: "([this] because of the impossibility of establishing the subject matter of a science and ascertaining its quiddity in the very science that has that subject), [it thus needs] only the admission of its *existence* and quiddity" (emphasis mine). Bertolacci, p. 156: "È impossibile, infatti, stabilire un soggetto [come esistente] e verificare la sua

Text 3: *Ilāhīyyāt* VIII, 4, p. 344, 10–11 [pp. 398, 83–399, 84] The First has no quiddity (*māhiyya*) other than existence (*annīyya*). You have already known the notion of “quiddity” (*māhiyya*), and that by which it is distinct from existence (*annīyya*), in the things in which it is distinct from it, at the beginning of this our clarification.¹⁶

In both cases, the most sensible rendering of *annīyya* is “existence”, as the majority of modern translations attest. Both texts are very famous and require no further doctrinal comment in addition to the analysis provided in previous studies.¹⁷ The existential meaning of *annīyya* in Text 2

quiddità nella medesima scienza di cui esso è il soggetto; *il fatto che* il soggetto *esiste* e la sua quiddità, al contrario, vengono solamente ammessi [nella scienza di cui esso è il soggetto] (emphasis mine). Cf. Goichon, *Lexique*, pp. 9–10: “Ainsi va-t-il [i.e. Avicenna] jusqu’à parler de la ‘*annīya* de l’être, à propos de l’objet de la métaphysique; son objet étant «l’être en tant qu’être», cette science devra «dégager seulement sa ‘*annīya* et sa *māhiyya*», *qu’il y a* de l’être comme tel et quel est sa quiddité” (emphasis mine). The only exception is represented by Horten, p. 20: “Est is nämlich unmöglich, daß die Feststellung der Existenz des Objektes und die Definition seines Wesens der Wissenschaft zufalle, deren (formelles) Objekt dieses selbst ist. Sie kann dasselbe höchstens als in seiner *Individualität* und seinem Wesen evident annehmen” (emphasis mine).

¹⁶ inna al-awwala lā māhiyyata laḥū ḡayru l-inniyyati wa-qad ‘arafa ma’nā l-māhiyyati wa-bi-mādā tufāriqu l-inniyyata fimā tufāriqūhū fī futāḥi tibyanīnā ḥādā. Lizzini, p. 783: “. . . il Primo non ha una quiddità che sia diversa dal suo proprio *essere*; sei già venuto a conoscenza, all’inizio di questa nostra esposizione, di quel che significa “quiddità” e del perché essa si differenzi dall’essere, laddove se ne differenzia”; cf. p. 1302: “Avicenna lo utilizza [sc. *annīyya*] . . . insieme a *māhiyya* “quiddità”, cui si oppone, per dare voce alla distinzione di essenza (*māhiyya*) ed *esistenza* negli enti creati e alla loro indistinzione in Dio (cfr. *Ilāh.*, VIII, 4, p. 346)” (emphasis mine). Marmura, p. 274: “The First has no quiddity other than His *individual existence*. You have known the meaning of quiddity and the things by which it differs from *individual existence* at the beginning of this our exposition” (emphasis mine). Bertolacci, p. 644: “. . . il [Principio] Primo non ha nessuna quiddità che sia diversa dal *fatto di esistere*. Hai già appreso la nozione di quiddità, e grazie a che cosa essa si distingue dal *fatto di esistere*, nelle cose in cui ciò accade, all’inizio di questa nostra chiarificazione”. Cf. Hasnawi, “*Annīyya* ou *Inniyya* (essence, existence)” cit., p. 101b: “Le «Premier n’a pas une quiddité autre que son *existence* (*a/inniyya*)»” (emphasis mine). The Latin translation (“ . . . primum non habet quidditatem nisi *anitatem* quae sit discreta ab ipsa”; the following sentence is omitted in Latin) and Anawati (vol. II, p. 86: “Le Premier n’a pas de quiddité autre que *al-annīyya* et tu [as] appris ce que signifie la quiddité et par quoi elle se distingue de la *annīyya* sur les points où elle en diffère, au début de notre présent exposé”) simply transliterate the term. Cf. Horten, p. 499: “. . . der erste Seiende keine Wesenheit im eigentlichen Sinne des Wortes habe, die verschieden sei von seiner *Individualität*. Den Begriff der Wesenheit hast du bereits kennen gelernt und ebenso das, wodurch er sich von der *Individualität* unterscheidet am Anfange unserer Darlegungen dieses Buches” (emphasis mine).

¹⁷ References to previous interpretations of Texts 2–3 can be found in Bertolacci, *The Reception* cit., pp. 123, 283, and Id., “The Distinction of Essence and Existence in Avicenna’s Metaphysics: The Text and Its Context”, in *Islamic Philosophy, Science, Culture, and Religion: Studies in Honor of Dimitri Gutas*, ed. F. Opwis, D.C. Reisman, Brill, Leiden, 2012, pp. 257–288.

is evidenced by its opposition to quiddity (*māhiyya*) and the parallelism with “establishing” or “confirming” (*itbāt*), in the sense of “proving the existence”.¹⁸ The existential connotation of *anniyya* in Text 3 is even more perspicuous, since it is supported not only by the opposition to quiddity (*māhiyya*), but also by the retrospective reference to the famous distinction of essence (*ḥaqīqa*, *māhiyya*) and existence (*wuḡūd*) in *Ilāhiyyāt* I, 5 (“You have already known...”). Indicative of this existential meaning of *anniyya* is also the equivalence that Avicenna establishes between *anniyya* and *wuḡūd* in at least two joint mentions of these two terms in passages of VIII, 4 proximate to Text 3.¹⁹ However, if in Text 2 the *anniyya* of the subject matter of a science means, in all likelihood, its existence, it is difficult to assume that the *anniyya* of the subject matter of metaphysics mentioned in the title of the same chapter (our Text 1) would not refer to existence as well. The scenario emerging from the *Ilāhiyyāt* is substantially confirmed by Avicenna’s logic, especially by the section of the *Šifā’* corresponding to the *Posterior Analytics*, where *anniyya* means either “that-ness” (i. e. the occurrence of a state of affairs) as an opposite term to “why-ness” (*limiyya*, namely the cause of the state of affairs in question),²⁰ or “existence” as an opposite term to “quiddity” (*māhiyya*) and as a synonym of *wuḡūd*, as in metaphysics.²¹ With respect to the

¹⁸ One of the two occurrences of *anniyya* in the bulk of chapter I, 1 (p. 5, 17 [p. 4, 59]) might have a more indefinite meaning: Avicenna speaks of the *anniyyat Allāh*, an expression that could be compared with *dāt al-‘illa l-ūlā* (“essence of the First Cause”, or “the First Cause itself”) a few lines before (p. 5, 5 [p. 3, 41–42]). Accordingly, vague renderings of *anniyya* in this expression have been proposed (Lat. transl.: “ipse [sc. Deus]”; Anawati, p. 87: “être”; Lizzini, p. 21: “essere”; cf. Horten, p. 7: “eigentümliches Wesen”). As a matter of fact, the decisive parallelism is that with the expression *wuḡūd al-ilāhi* (“the existence of the divinity”, p. 6, 1 [p. 4, 64]), that allows a translation conveying, also in this case, the idea of existence (Marmura, p. 3: “existence”; Bertolacci, p. 143: “il fatto che esiste”). The second occurrence of *anniyya* in chapter I, 1 (p. 7, 4 [p. 5, 94]), in the similar expression *anniyyat al-mabda’ al-awwal* (“*anniyya* of the First Principle”), is translated with terms denoting existence in the Latin Medieval translation and most of the modern translations (the only exception being Horten, p. 9: “individuelles Wesen”).

¹⁹ See VIII, 4, p. 346, 13 [om.]; VIII, 4, p. 347, 1 [p. 401, 34].

²⁰ *Limayya* is the spelling proposed by Goichon, *Lexique* cit., p. 374 (#655), and *Vocabulaires* cit., p. 32 (cf. *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina, I–X*. *Lexiques* cit., p. 122, #786). Hasnawi, “*Anniyya* ou *Inniyya* (essence, existence)” cit., transliterates this term as *limmiyya*.

²¹ To the cases signalled by Hasnawi, “*Anniyya* ou *Inniyya* (essence, existence)” cit., the occurrence of *anniyya* in *Burhān* IV, 5 (*Al-Burhān min Kitāb al-Šifā’*, ed. ‘A. Badawī, Maktaba al-nahḍa al-miṣriyya, Cairo 1954, 1966², p. 228, 7; *Al-Šifā’, al-Mantiq, al-Burhān*, ed. A. ‘Afīfī, Al-Maṭba’a al-amīriyya, Cairo 1956, p. 301, 2), can be added. Also the three

quantity of occurrences, this logical-metaphysical usage, with existential accents, appears to be more frequent than the psychological one.²²

In other words, *anniyya* in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, far from conveying the idea of “essence” and similar concepts, refers precisely to the counterpart of “essence” and cognate terms in the context of an ontology, which is—like Avicenna’s—governed by the distinction of essence and existence. In this regard, the Latin translator of Text 1 provides a faithful rendering of *anniyya* with *esse* (“being”), although he refers *esse* to first philosophy (“*ipsa esse*”), rather than to the subject matter of first philosophy, and he construes it in a predicative way (“*esse de numero scientiarum*”).²³ Therefore, according to the Latin translation, Avicenna would be pointing to the inclusion of metaphysics among the sciences on account of its compliance with the fundamental epistemic requirement of any science, namely the possession of a subject matter. However, neither the scientific character of metaphysics, nor the very existence of this discipline (or of its subject matter) can be what Avicenna has in mind here. The actual presence of metaphysics in the system of the sciences, on the one hand, and the existence of this science or of its subject matter (“existent *qua* existent”), on the other, are not issues first debated and then clarified by Avicenna, but are rather obvious truths assumed from the very beginning of the work, as demonstrated by the classification of the sciences and the discussion of the primary concepts that Avicenna proposes in the initial chapters of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (I, 1; I, 5). Therefore, the term *anniyya* in our passage either has a meaning (“essence”) that is somewhat unusual in Avicenna’s terminology in the *Ilāhiyyāt*,²⁴ or, if Avicenna’s vocabulary in this work remains consistent throughout, the statement involving *anniyya* (signifying, in this case, “existence”) in chapter I, 1 is quite pointless. Neither perspective is very attractive.

occurrences of *anniyya* in Avicenna’s *Ta’liqāt*, ed. Badawī, p. 35, 1, 5, appear to have an existential meaning (the term is printed with a *mādda* as first letter in all three cases).

²² Taking the *Sifā’* as a case in point, against the five known occurrences of *anniyya* in the *Burhān* and the 14 occurrences in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, only one single occurrence of the term in the psychological section (*Avicenna’s De Anima (Arabic Text), being the psychological part of the Kitāb al-Shifā’*, ed. F. Rahman, Oxford University Press, London-New York-Toronto 1959; repr. 1970, V, 7, p. 255, 9 [162, 55]), has been ascertained.

²³ “Capitulum de inquisitione subiecti primae philosophiae ad hoc ut ostendatur ipsa esse de numero scientiarum”.

²⁴ M.E. Marmura is aware of the difficulty when he states about Text 1: “The term in Avicenna’s writings often refers also to individual existence . . . In certain contexts it is best to translate *inniyya/anniyya* as ‘existence’” (Marmura, p. 383, endnote 1).

II—Ayyiyya *Instead of* Anniyya

The apparatus of the Cairo edition indicates no variant reading of *anniyya* in Text 1, as if all the testimonies that were consulted openly and unequivocally reported this term. However, a closer inspection of the manuscript tradition opens a wider scenario. It is true that the reading *anniyya* is clearly attested by a group of witnesses of Avicenna's text used in the Cairo edition (like the Tehran lithograph), and it is confirmed by other manuscripts.²⁵ But the manuscript tradition used in the Cairo edition also offers a reading alternative to *anniyya*, which I regard as the correct one. One of the manuscripts used by the Cairo editors (MS Ş = Cairo, Dār al-Kutub 826) presents *ayyiyya* as a marginal correction of *anniyya*. Unfortunately, this important variant was not recorded in the apparatus. The same type of marginal or interlinear correction occurs in other codices, thus attesting the circulation of the parallel reading *ayyiyya*.²⁶ In fact, the MS Tehran, Dānishgāh 4214, Mishkāt 242, for example, presents *ayyiyya* as the main and only reading.²⁷ The reading *ayyiyya* in some manuscripts, whether as correction or in the main text, is clearly the *lectio difficilior* and has good credentials to be the right reading. Since it looks very unlikely that a scribe would correct by himself *anniyya* to *ayyiyya*, the reading *ayyiyya* in the aforementioned codices comes in all likelihood from reliable other manuscripts, and is therefore corroborated by good and old evidence. *Ayyiyya* differs from *anniyya* only with respect to the punctuation

²⁵ Among the manuscripts used in the Cairo edition, the reading *anniyya* is attested, for example, in ms. B (al-Azhar, Beḥit 331 *falsafa* [*ḥuṣūṣiyya*], 44988 [*ʿumūmiyya*]); in this ms. the reading *anniyya* is confirmed by a collation mark); ms. M (British Museum [now: British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections], or. 7500); and Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, *ḥikma wa-falsafa* 262 (possibly used in the Cairo edition with the siglum H: see Bertolacci, *The Reception* cit., p. 483, n. 4). On the other hand, ms. D (Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, *falsafa* 894) is acephalous, whereas the *incipit* of the *Ilāhīyyāt* in ms. Ğ (Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, *ḥikma* 144) is hardly legible in the reproduction I have consulted. On ms. Ş, see below. Other codices attesting *anniyya* are, for example, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, *ḥikma wa-falsafa* 349; Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, Ṭalʿat 363; Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā 140; Istanbul, Ayasofya 2389; Khoy, Madrasa Nimāzī 247; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pococke 117; Tehran, Dānishgāh, Mishkāt 243. *Anniyya* also appears, with no indication of variants, in the printed version of Āmulī, and is attested by one of the five unspecified codices whose incipits are photographically reproduced at the end of his edition (first specimen); on the other four manuscripts used by Āmulī, see below, n. 26.

²⁶ See, for example, ms. Lucknow, Nadwat al-ʿUlamāʾ, *ḥikma wa-falsafa* 59, and four of the five manuscripts used in Āmulī's printed version (see above, n. 25).

²⁷ On the other hand, several codices report the term partially or totally unpointed, so that its skeleton (*rasm*) can be read both as *anniyya* and *ayyiyya* (see, for example, ms. Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Or. 4; ms. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pococke 125).

of its second letter. Therefore, the term is a rather obvious candidate for the type of manuscript corruption that in technical terminology is called the error of *taṣḥīf*, as distinct from the more substantial error of *tahrīf*, in which the author's original text is corrupted, not because the skeleton (*rasm*) of one or more letters of a certain word has been mispointed, but because some letters have been replaced by others.²⁸ In other words, a scribe can easily corrupt an original *ayyīyya* into the more usual term *annīyya* as an instance of *lectio facillior*, or be prompted to write as *annīyya* an unpointed *rasm* of *ayyīyya* in the exemplar. Moreover, *ayyīyya* is also attested by the indirect tradition of the *Ilāhīyyāt*, as the notations of a series of commentators indicate.²⁹

Ayyīyya is the abstract noun derived from the interrogative pronoun *ayyun* ("which", "what", "what kind of?"). Therefore, it means "quality" or "specifying/distinctive quality", and in this meaning it fits perfectly the context of our passage. By replacing *annīyya* with *ayyīyya*, Text 1 would very conveniently render the following:

Text 1.1: "Chapter on the beginning of the search of the subject matter of first philosophy, so that its distinctive quality (*ayyīyya*) among the sciences becomes evident".³⁰

For all these reasons, further clarifications aside, *ayyīyya* looks like a very plausible correction of *annīyya* in our text. Instead, I regard *aynīyya* (literally "where-ity") that surfaces in the manuscript tradition of Text 1 (see the Ms. Khoy, Madrasa Nimāzī 248) as a derivative of *ayyīyya* and/or *annīyya* (possibly a conflation of both).³¹ Therefore, we can confidently read *ayyīyya* instead of *annīyya* in Text 1.³²

²⁸ See A. Gacek, *The Arabic Manuscript Tradition. A Glossary of Technical Terms and Bibliography*, Brill, Leiden 2001, pp. 31–32, 83.

²⁹ See Muḥammad Mahdī ibn Abī Ḍarr al-Narāqī (d. 1794 or 1795), *Šarḥ al-Ilāhīyyāt min Kitāb al-Šifā'*, ed. M. Mohaghegh, Tehran 1986, p. 3 (quoted by Marmura, p. 383) and the other commentators mentioned in Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Šifā' (al-Ilāhīyyāt)*, with *Marginal Glosses by Mullā Šadrā and Others*, ed. H. Naji Isfahani, Society for the Appreciation of Cultural Works and Dignitaries, Institute of Islamic Studies of Tehran, McGill University, Tehran 1383H.S./2004, p. 3, n. 2.

³⁰ See Bertolacci, p. 138: "Capitolo riguardante l'inizio della ricerca del soggetto della filosofia prima, affinché risulti chiara la sua qualità distintiva tra [i soggetti de] le scienze".

³¹ Ms. Khoy, Madrasa Nimāzī 248, is reported as attesting *ayyīyya*, instead of *aynīyya*, in Naji Isfahani's edition of *Ilāhīyyāt I–II* (p. 6; see above, n. 29). I have not been able to inspect the other Iranian codices allegedly supporting *ayyīyya* in this edition.

³² The overall number of occurrences of *annīyya* in the *Ilāhīyyāt* remains, however, the same (14 cases), since in VIII, 6, p. 358, 1 [p. 416, 39], *itnaynīyya* ("two-ness" or "duality") in the Cairo edition should be corrected in *annīyya* as an instance of *lectio difficilior* (see Bertolacci, *The Reception* cit., p. 538, and Appendix, below).

III—*The Origin of the Term Ayyiyya and Its Possible Presence in Avicenna's Rewriting of the Isagoge*

Apart from the aforementioned considerations, the substitution of *ayyiyya* for *anniyya* in Text 1 is recommendable for another important reason. Despite being relatively rare in Arabic philosophical language, the term has very prestigious origins in Arabic philosophy. For instance, it is already used in the most important metaphysical work of the founder of *falsafa*, al-Kindī, in the discussion of specific difference. We owe the recovery of *ayyiyya* in al-Kindī's work to M.ʿA. Abū Rīdā's 1950 edition, since in the previous edition by A.F. al-Ahwānī (1948) the term was reported as *anniyya*, according to a corruption similar to the one that affects Avicenna's Text 1 in the Cairo edition.³³ Al-Kindī employs *ayyiyya* twice in *On First Philosophy* (*Fī l-Falsafa l-Ūlā*) within a survey of the five predicable items (species, genus, differentia, property, and accident). The context reveals that the background of his use of *ayyiyya* is the Arabic tradition of Porphyry's *Isagoge*, a work in which the specific difference is said to signify a peculiar type of quality (ποιότης), a term whose Arabic equivalent could be adequately represented by *ayyiyya*.³⁴

³³ See *Kitāb al-Kindī ilā l-Muʿtaṣim bi-llāh fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, in *Rasāʾil al-Kindī al-falsafiyya*, ed. M.ʿA. Abū Rīdā, vol. I, Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, Cairo 1950, pp. 97–162, p. 129, 12, 14; cf. *Kitāb al-Kindī ilā l-Muʿtaṣim bi-llāh fī l-falsafa al-ūlā*, ed. A.F. al-Ahwānī, Dār lhyāʾ al-kutub al-ʿarabiyya, Cairo 1948, p. 107, 14, p. 108, 1. R. Rashed and J. Jolivet (*Œuvres philosophiques et scientifiques d'Al-Kindī. Volume II. Métaphysique et Cosmologie*, par R. Rashed et J. Jolivet, Brill, Leiden-Boston-Köln 1998, pp. 1–117) endorse the reading *ayyiyya* (p. 49, 12, 14), translating it as “quelleté” (the siglum “alif” associated with *anniyya* in the critical apparatus must hence refer, at least in this case, to al-Ahwānī's edition, rather than Abū Rīdā's). A.L. Ivry (*Al-Kindī's Metaphysics. A Translation of Yaʿqūb al-Kindī's Treatise “On First Philosophy”* (fī al-Falsafah al-ūlā), State University of New York Press, Albany 1974, p. 82) translates *ayyiyya* in Abū Rīdā's edition as “quality”.

³⁴ In *Œuvres philosophiques et scientifiques d'Al-Kindī. Volume II. Métaphysique et Cosmologie* cit., the “Notes complémentaires” 6 (pp. 101–102) and 48 (p. 106) indicate in Porphyry's *Isagoge* p. 11, 6–12 and *In Cat.* p. 95, 17–20 (*Porphyrii Isagoge et in Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium*, ed. A. Busse, CAG IV.1, Reimer, Berlin 1887) the background of Kindī's use of *ayyiyya*. The term ποιότης occurs, within the discussion of specific difference, in *Isagoge* 8, 17. Whereas the Latin translation of Boethius (Aristoteles Latinus, *Categoriarum supplementa, Porphyrii Isagoge translatio Boethii et anonymi fragmentum vulgo vocatum “Liber sex principiorum”*, edidit Laurentius Minio-Paluello adiuvante Bernardo G. Dod, Desclée de Brouwer, Bruges 1966, p. 15, 2) renders this term faithfully as “quality” (*qualitas*), the Arabic translation of Abū Ūtmān al-Dimašqī (*Manṭiq Aristū*, ed. ʿA. Badawī, 3 voll., Maktabat Dār al-Kutub al-miṣriyya, Cairo 1948–1952, vol. III, p. 1036, 17; cf. K. Gyekye, *Arabic Logic: Ibn al-Ṭayyib's Commentary on Porphyry's Eisagoge*, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY 1979, p. 105) provides a looser rendering with “nature” (*tabīʿa*). On *ayyun* as a translation of ποίος, see GALex, pp. 688–689.

Al-Kindī himself in the Commentary on Ptolemy's *Almagest* (*Fī l-ṣinā'a al-ʿuẓmā*), Isaac Israeli in the *Book on Definitions*, and Yahyā ibn Adī in the treatise *On the Four Scientific Questions regarding the Art of Logic* (*Fī l-buḥūṭ al-arba'a al-ʿilmiyya ʿan ṣinā'at al-manṭiq*) present us with a second context in which the term *ayyīyya* plays a significant role in Arabic thought, namely the prolegomena literature, whose format and content are inherited from the Greek commentaries on Aristotle of Late Antiquity. The Greek prolegomena to the Aristotelian *corpus* consist of a series of four introductions, which discuss respectively: philosophy in general, Porphyry's *Isagoge* in particular, Aristotle's oeuvre in general, and each of his works—starting with the *Categories*—in particular. In the first of these prolegomena, the four fundamental questions raised by Aristotle in *Posterior Analytics* B, 1—restated and reordered, for example, as in Themistius' commentary on *An. Post.*—are applied to the study of philosophy with a propaedeutic function. We observe this application of the four fundamental questions in Elias' and David's Prolegomena to philosophy, which depend on the lost similar work of their master Olympiodorus. On account of this elaboration, the question “that” (ὅτι) in Aristotle's text is replaced with the question “of what kind is it” (ὅποιον τί ἐστὶ) and postponed from the first to the third position. In connection with this Greek model in the aforementioned works of al-Kindī, Isaac Israeli and Yahyā ibn Adī, the term *ayyīyya* surfaces as a hallmark of the question “of what kind is it” (*ayyu ṣay'in huwa*, or more briefly *ayyun*).³⁵

At the present stage of research, it is difficult to assess whether Avicenna got acquainted with the term through the first or the second channel of transmission into Arabic, also because the two contexts appear to

³⁵ See F. Rosenthal, “Al-Kindī and Ptolemy”, *Studi Orientalistici in onore di G. Levi della Vida*, Istituto per L'Oriente, Rome 1956, vol. II, pp. 436–456 (also in Id., *Science and Medicine in Islam. A Collection of Essays*, Variorum, Aldershot, 1990, IV), p. 441; Isaac Israeli. *A Neoplatonic Philosopher of the Early Tenth Century*. His Works Translated with Comments and an Outline of his Philosophy by A. Altmann, S.M. Stern, Oxford University Press, London 1958; rist. Greenwood Press, Westport Connecticut 1979, pp. 13–14, 1718; M.-Th. d'Alverny, “Anniyya-Anitas” cit., pp. 68–71. D'Alverny surmises *ayyīyya* to be the Arabic equivalent of the term *qualitas* (“quality” in Altmann and Stern's translation, p. 11) that appears in the Latin translation of Isaac Israeli's *Book of Definitions*, whose Arabic original is lost (pp. 69–70). On p. 71, she discusses the relevant occurrence of *ayyīyya* in Yahyā ibn Adī's *Treatise on the Four Scientific Questions regarding the Art of Logic* (cf. G. Endress, *The Works of Yahyā ibn-Adī. An Analytical Inventory*, Reichert, Wiesbaden 1977, pp. 42–43). The occurrence of *ayyīyya* in al-Kindī's commentary on the *Almagest* is discussed in *Œuvres philosophiques et scientifiques d'Al-Kindī. Volume II. Métaphysique et Cosmologie*, cit., p. 106, ad n. 48. On *ayyu* with following genitive, or *ayyu ṣay'in*, as a translation of ὅποιος, see GALex, pp. 691–692.

be interconnected. In the introductory scheme, in fact, both in Greek and in Arabic, the question “of what kind is it” is explicitly linked with the cognitive role of specific difference as discussed in the *Isagoge*.³⁶ With regard to the formulation and diffusion into Arabic of this theme and the related terminology, al-Kindī holds a place of eminence. Al-Kindī alone, to the best of my knowledge, employs the term *ayyīyya* in both contexts. He certainly played a decisive role in the transmission of this motive from Greek sources to Isaac Israeli (one of the exponents of the so-called Kindian “school”); and he can be regarded as the direct model of Avicenna’s use of the term in Text 1, in as far as he is the first author to employ it in a metaphysical setting.

If we concur to read *ayyīyya* instead of *annīyya* in the title of chapter I, 1 of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, and if we connect its origin with the Arabic tradition of Porphyry’s *Isagoge*, we could ask ourselves whether at least some of the occurrences of *annīyya* in the current edition of Avicenna’s reworking of the *Isagoge* in the *Šifāʾ*, those in the context of the discussion of specific difference (*faṣl*), are corruptions of an original reading *ayyīyya*. As a matter of fact, most of the twenty-two occurrences of *annīyya* registered in the Glossary of the edition refer to Avicenna’s discussion of specific difference.³⁷ Moreover, the Latin translation of all these occurrences, except one, include the adjective *qualis* in expressions like *quale quid* or *quale esse*. This term suggests that the Latin translator(s) might have read an Arabic word encompassing the term *ayyun* in the Arabic manuscript(s) used for the translation.³⁸ The possibility of a corruption of *ayyīyya* into

³⁶ Although chapter I, 1 forms—together with the following three chapters—the prolegomena of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (Avicenna discusses in these four chapters traditional topics like the subject matter, aim, utility, name, position in the system of knowledge, and articulation of metaphysics; see Bertolacci, *The Reception* cit., pp. 169–170), the occurrence of *ayyīyya* in the title of this chapter cannot be related in any significant way to the four questions discussed in the Prolegomena literature, both because the other three questions are neglected by Avicenna in this place, and because the introductory scheme at stake serves as an introduction to philosophy in general, not to one of the parts of Aristotle’s philosophy, like metaphysics, in particular. The tradition connecting *ayyīyya* with the discussion of differentia in the *Isagoge*, by contrast, appears to be decidedly more influential on Avicenna (on the possible use of *ayyīyya* in Avicenna’s reworking of the *Isagoge* in the *Šifāʾ*, see below, nn. 37–39). Although the “question which” (*maṭlab ayyin*) is faced by Avicenna in his reworking of the *Posterior Analytics* in the *Šifāʾ* (see *Al-Burhān min Kitāb al-Šifāʾ* cit., I, 5, p. 68 *passim*; IV, 1, p. 261, 5, 9), he does not seem to use the term *ayyīyya* in this latter context.

³⁷ *Al-Šifāʾ, al-Mantiq, al-Madḥal*, ed. Ğ.Š. Qanawati, M. Al-Ḥuḍayrī, A.F. Al-Ahwānī, Al-Maṭbaʿa al-amīriyya, Cairo 1952, p. 126; see the survey in Alonso Alonso, “La “al-annīyya” de Avicenna” cit., pp. 377–378.

³⁸ This feature of the Latin translation is noticed by Goichon, *Lexique* cit., pp. 10–11.

annīyya is corroborated by the content of chapter I, 8 (“Chapter on the division of the simple universal expression into its five divisions”) and chapter I, 13 (“Chapter on Specific Difference”). In these two *loci*, with regard to the treatment of the specific difference, Avicenna in three cases tightly associates the term printed as *annīyya* with the question “what kind of thing it is” (*ayyu šay’in huwa*).³⁹ Only future critical editions of the Arabic text and the Latin translation of Avicenna’s *Madḥal*, and a systematic doctrinal study of this work, will allow validation of this hypothesis, which for the time being remains a plausible guess.

Conclusion

The type of research rendered in the present paper can be extended in different directions. If one examines Avicenna’s oeuvre from a synchronic perspective, one might, for example, want to thoroughly investigate the occurrences of *annīyya* in Avicenna’s psychology. There, as we have seen, this term has the meaning of “essence” and occurs less frequently than in his texts on logic and metaphysics. Prestigious scholars have proposed to translate *annīyya* in a psychological context as “I-ness” and related terms.⁴⁰ They have also proposed the derivation of *annīyya* from the personal

³⁹ *Al-Šifā’, al-Mantiq, al-Madḥal* cit., p. 44, 14; p. 46, 2–3; p. 77, 13.

⁴⁰ Hasnawi, “*Annīyya* ou *Innīyya* (essence, existence)” cit., p. 102a: “Ce fait rend légitime la traduction du terme *a/innīyya* dans ces passages par «moi» ou «je» que plusieurs exégètes ont suggérée” (with references to Gardet, Pines, d’Alverny and Lucchetta). See Goichon, *Lexique* cit., p. 11: “(l’homme) sait que son haecceité (son «je» existant pour mieux dire [= *annīyya*]) est quelque chose”; Avicenna, *Epistola sulla vita futura* cit., p. 140, n. 1: “L’*annīyya* si potrebbe tradurre «egoità»”. Of the five occurrences of *annīyya* in the *Risāla Aḍḥawīyya*, Lucchetta translates three as “io” (“I”) (p. 13, 8, p. 141, 1, p. 143, 6; cf. “entità”, p. 147, 8, “*annīyya*”, p. 145, 9). The tendency to translate *annīyya* with a personal pronoun starts with the Medieval Latin translator, who renders the expression *wuḡūd annīyyatihī* in *Avicenna’s De Anima (Arabic Text)* cit., V, 7, p. 255, 9, with *se esse* (p. 162, 55), where *esse* corresponds to *wuḡūd* and *se* to *annīyya* (see the “Lexique arabo-latin” in *Liber de Anima seu Sextus de Naturalibus, IV–V*. Édition critique par S. Van Riet. Introduction par G. Verbeke, Peeters-Brill, Louvain-Leiden 1968, p. 216b). S. Pines, “La conception de la conscience de soi chez Avicenne et chez Abu’l-Barakat al-Baghdadi”, *Archives d’Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 29, 1954, pp. 21–98, translates this occurrence of *annīyya* with “propre moi” (p. 26), and although he translates as “être” the same term in Abū l-Barakāt al-Baḡdādī’s *Kitāb al-Mu’tabar* (ibid., p. 67), he remarks (ibid., n. 7): “Une autre traduction serait: son moi”. This type of translation has been applied also to the occurrences of *annīyya* in metaphysical contexts: see J. Janssens, “Avicenne”, in *Le vocabulaire des philosophes*, ed. J.-P. Zarader, vol. V: Supplements I, Ellipses, Paris 2006, pp. 13–64, p. 28: “la plénitude du «Je suis» divin (*annīyya*)”.

pronoun "I" (*anā*) in these cases.⁴¹ Since Avicenna himself alludes to a certain relationship between *anā* and *anniyya* in the discussion of one of his most famous psychological doctrines (the so-called theory of the "flying man"),⁴² one might wonder whether *anniyya* in this and similar cases could be connected, in Avicenna's eyes, to *anā* rather than to *anna*, and whether this peculiar connection—which does not seem viable, at first sight, in a logical or metaphysical context—might explain a duality in Avicenna's usage of the term. From a diachronic perspective, on the other hand, it would be interesting to further investigate whether, and—if so—with which consequences, Latin scholars of the Middle Ages have been faced with a single term (*anitas*) covering two different Arabic equivalents. On the one hand, they were acquainted with the *anitas* that renders *anniyya* in the Latin translation of Avicenna's *Ilāhiyyāt* (a translation that was probably made by Gundissalinus in Toledo in the second half of the twelfth century),⁴³ a hybrid term resulting from the transliteration of the first part of the Arabic equivalent (*anna-/inna* transliterated as *an-*) and

⁴¹ See Pines, "La conception de la conscience de soi" cit., p. 26, n. 1. M.E. Marmura, "Avicenna and the Problem of the Infinite Number of Souls", *Medieval Studies*, 22, 1960, pp. 232–239, pp. 238–239: "... his concept of *anniyya*, a term which he derives from the first personal pronoun *anā*, 'I', and which might be literally rendered, 'I-ness'; cf. Marmura, p. 383: "Avicenna's language in this chapter suggests that the term *anniyya* derives for him (at least in this discussion) from the first personal pronoun *anā*, 'I', in the same way the term *huwiyya*, 'haecceity', derives from the third personal pronoun, *huwa*". Hasnawi, "*Annīyya* ou *Innīyya* (essence, existence)" cit., p. 102a, adopts a more cautious attitude: "elle [i.e. *a/innīyya*] peut être considérée comme rendant l'inspiration générale de ces passages où le term *anā* = moi est souvent prononcé, mais rien n'indique qu'il faille en conclure qu'*a/innīyya* y est positivement dérivé de *anā*, comme cela est explicitement le cas chez certains mystiques". If *anniyya* derived from the first person pronoun *anā*, its orthography should be *anāwiyya* (see the derivation of *dunyawīyya* from *dunyā*) or *anā'iyya* (see the derivation of *samā'iyya* from *samā'*); the form *anniyya* would be very unusual and unprecedented in case of such a derivation.

⁴² In the *Risāla Adḥawīyya* Avicenna begins chapter 4, in which the term *anniyya* repeatedly occurs, by saying: "When man deems it suitable to reflect on the thing on account of which he is called 'he' (*huwa*) and he calls himself 'I' (*anā*),..." (Avicenna, *Epistola sulla vita futura* cit., p. 141, 2–3: "Quando all'uomo capita di riflettere sulla cosa per cui si dice di lui «egli» e per cui egli dice di se stesso «io»..."). The abstract noun *huwiyya*, deriving from the personal pronoun *huwa*, occurs three times in the prospective reference to chapter 4 in the introduction of the work (Avicenna, *Epistola sulla vita futura* cit., p. 13, 10–11). In another passage of chapter 4, Avicenna relates *anniyya* not only to the pronoun *huwa*, but also to the particle *anna*: "... the notion of *anniyya*... is the thing from which one knows that (*anna*) [the man] is 'he' (*huwa*)" (Avicenna, *Epistola sulla vita futura* cit., p. 145, 9: "... il significato di *anniyya*... è... quella cosa dalla quale si sa che è «egli»").

⁴³ See A. Bertolacci, "A Community of Translators: The Latin Medieval Versions of Avicenna's Book of the Cure", in *Communities of Learning: Networks and the Shaping of Intellectual Identity in Europe 1100–1500*, ed. C.J. Mews, J.N. Crossley, Brepols, Turnhout 2011, pp. 37–54.

the translation of its second part (the suffix of abstract nouns *-iyya* being translated as *-itas*).⁴⁴ On the other hand, they might have found in Gerard of Cremona's Latin translation of Isaac Israeli's *Liber de definitionibus* (a contemporary translation from the same Toledan environment) and in the *Liber introductorius in artem logicae demonstrationis* (the Latin translation of an epistle of the Brethren of Purity) an *anitas* that is arguably a translation, not of *anniyya*, but of *haliyya* ("whether-ness"), where both the first part of the term (the interrogative particle *hal-* rendered as *an-*) and the suffix *-iyya* (*-itas*) are properly translated.⁴⁵

Future research will hopefully pursue these and similar lines of investigation. The correction of *anniyya* discussed here illustrates how Avicenna knows and endorses, besides this term, another product of the multiform vocabulary coined within the so-called al-Kindī's "circle of translators" more than a century before, namely the abstract noun *ayyīyya*. Avicenna uses this noun extensively in the logic section of his most important and influential philosophical work and even places it in a very prominent position within the metaphysics section of the same work. Avicenna's adoption of this term is significant in itself, because it sheds light on an unknown aspect of Avicenna's philosophical lexicon. Avicenna's recourse to *ayyīyya* is also interesting from a historical perspective. In light of the critical evaluation of the Kindian terminology displayed by al-Fārābī and, in his footsteps, Averroes, together with a defense of Aristotle's ontology against a model of the distinction between essence and existence of Neoplatonic origin,⁴⁶ Avicenna's

⁴⁴ Alonso Alonso, "La "al-anniyya" de Avicena" cit., p. 402, n. 24, and Goichon, *Lexique* cit., p. 10, notice the corruption of *anitas* in *unitas* in the Venetian 1508 edition of Avicenna's works; on the origin of this corruption in the manuscript tradition, and the correction of *anitas* in *entitas* proposed by Godefroy de Fontaines, see d'Alverny, "Anniyya-Anitas" cit., p. 78, n. 67, p. 91 and n. 122.

⁴⁵ This hypothesis is advanced by Altmann and Stern, *Isaac Israeli. A Neoplatonic Philosopher* cit., p. 10, §1 ad lin. 10, p. 13 and n. 2, and corroborated by d'Alverny, "Anniyya-Anitas" cit., pp. 69–70. On these translations, see C. Burnett, "Arabic Philosophical Works Translated into Latin", in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, ed. R. Pasnau, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2010, pp. 814–822, p. 394 and nn. 35, 39.

⁴⁶ See S. Menn, "Al-Fārābī's *Kitāb al-Hurūf* and His Analysis of the Senses of Being", *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 18, 2008, pp. 59–97; Id., "Fārābī in the Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics: Averroes against Avicenna on Being and Unity", in *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics*. Proceedings of the Conference held at Villa Vigoni (Menaggio, Como), 2–6 July 2008, ed. D.N. Hasse, A. Bertolacci, De Gruyter, Berlin 2012, pp. 51–96. In the first essay, Menn includes *ayyīyya* (as well as *limīyya*, "whyness", and *aysa*, "being") among the Kindian terms "which did not survive into the standard Arabic philosophical lexicon" (p. 92): if the analysis proposed here is correct, Menn's contention—at least with regard to Avicenna—should be nuanced.

receptive attitude towards *anniyya*, *huwīyya* and similar terms (to which now *ayyīyya* can be added),⁴⁷ may illustrate, on the level of terminology, a more inclusive approach to the Arabic philosophical tradition. In other words, the Kindian term *ayyīyya* in the title of a chapter whose main doctrine (“existent *qua* existent” as the subject matter of metaphysics) and methodology (the epistemological requirements of the *Posterior Analytics*) are openly borrowed from Aristotle, through the pivotal mediation of al-Fārābī,⁴⁸ manifests the persistence of a remotely Kindian background in a framework of metaphysics clearly modeled on Aristotelian and Farabian parameters: in this account of the *regina scientiarum*, the basic philosophical options depend essentially on al-Fārābī’s reading of the *Metaphysics*, but they do not exclude a continuity with the Kindian tradition, in such a way that remnants of al-Kindī’s view of metaphysics surface here and there, in terminology as well as in doctrinal and structural issues.⁴⁹ This can be taken as the trademark of Avicenna’s titanic effort of synthesis, that manifests itself in metaphysics as well as in other areas of his thought.⁵⁰

The change of a single letter in a word that opens a metaphysical treatise of several hundred pages will provide not only a better grasp of the sense of the passage in which the word occurs and a more coherent view of the author’s vocabulary, but also a clearer image of his theoretical

⁴⁷ Avicenna’s resuscitation of another term of Kindian coinage (*aysa*, “being”) is aptly remarked by J. Janssens, “Al-Kindī: The Founder of Philosophical Exegesis of the Qur’ān”, *Journal of Qur’anic Studies*, 9, 2007, pp. 1–21, p. 6 and n. 35.

⁴⁸ I have dealt with this topic in *The Reception* cit., pp. 111–147, and “Avicenna and Averroes on the Proof of God’s Existence and the Subject-Matter of Metaphysics”, *Medioevo*, 32, 2007, pp. 61–97.

⁴⁹ On the influence of al-Kindī on Avicenna’s metaphysics, see my “From al-Kindī to al-Fārābī: Avicenna’s Progressive Knowledge of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* according to his Autobiography”, *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 11.2, 2001, pp. 257–295, and the data gathered in Bertolacci, *The Reception* cit., pp. 461–462. Avicenna takes from al-Kindī the idea of connecting the content of book α of the *Metaphysics* with that of book Λ, although he conceives of metaphysics, on the footsteps of al-Fārābī, as an ontology, i.e. a discipline deputed to investigate the species, properties and causes of being *qua* being, and not as a philosophical theology, as with al-Kindī. Avicenna’s idea of expanding the content of *Metaph.* Λ with a Neoplatonic doctrine of emanation might be mediated by al-Fārābī’s political *summae*, rather than by al-Kindī.

⁵⁰ A harmonizing tendency can be detected also in Avicenna’s zoology with regard to Aristotle’s biology and Galen’s medical theory (see R. Kruk, “Ibn Sīnā on Animals: Between the First Teacher and the Physician”, in *Avicenna and His Heritage*. Proceedings of the International Colloquium “Avicenna and his Heritage”, Leuven-Louvain-la-Neuve, 8–11 September 1999, ed. J. Janssens and D. De Smet, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2002, pp. 325–341; F. Sanagustin, *Avicenne (XI^e siècle), théoricien de la médecine et philosophe—Approche épistémologique*, Presses de l’Ifpo, Damas 2010).

preferences and school affiliations. I take this fact as a shining example of how the philological investigation of the text of a work is conducive to, and must therefore precede the appreciation of its spirit and of its place in the history of philosophy.

Appendix

Occurrences of ayyiyya and anniyya in Avicenna's Ilāhiyyāt

- 1) I, 1, p. 3, 7 [p. 1, 3: esse]: legitur *inniyya* in Cairo ed.; legendum *ayyiyya* (see above, Text 1 and Text 1.1)
- 2) I, 1, p. 5, 17 [p. 4, 59: ipse]: *anniyya* (see above, n. 18)
- 3) I, 1, p. 7, 4 [p. 5, 94: esse]: *anniyya* (see above, n. 18)
- 4) I, 2, p. 13, 12 [p. 13, 36: quia est]: *anniyya* (see above, Text 2)
- 5) VIII, 4, p. 344, 10 [p. 399, 84: anitas]: *anniyya* (see above, Text 3)
- 6) VIII, 4, p. 344, 11 [om.]: *anniyya*
- 7) VIII, 4, p. 346, 12 [p. 401, 32: anitas]: *anniyya*
- 8) VIII, 4, p. 346, 13 [om.]: *anniyya* (see above, n. 19)
- 9) VIII, 4, p. 347, 1 [p. 401, 33: anitas]: *anniyya*
- 10) VIII, 4, p. 347, 1 [p. 401, 34: anitas]: *anniyya* (see above, n. 19)
- 11) VIII, 4, p. 347, 2 [p. 401, 35: anitas]: *anniyya*
- 12) VIII, 4, p. 347, 5 [p. 401, 40: anitas]: *anniyya*
- 13) VIII, 4, p. 347, 5 [p. 402, 41: anitas]: *anniyya*
- 14) VIII, 5, p. 354, 12 [p. 411, 45: anitas]: *anniyya*
- 15) VIII, 6, p. 358, 1 [p. 416, 39: anitas]: legitur *itnayniyya* in Cairo ed.; legendum *anniyya* (see above, n. 32)

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