

Part III

AROUND THE CORPUS OF THE IKHWĀN AL-SAFĀ'



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*FIHRIST OF THE RASĀ'IL IKHWĀN AL-ṢAFĀ':  
TEXTUAL VARIANTS AND THEIR RELATION  
TO AL-RISĀLA AL-JĀMI'A*

In the Beirut edition and most manuscripts, the fifty-one or fifty-two epistles of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* (*Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*) are preceded by an introductory section, the *Fihrist*. It consists of two main parts: (1) a table of contents that summarizes the contents and goal (*gharaḍ*) of each epistle and (2) a more general final section. The main part supposedly reveals what the authors perceived to be the core doctrine conveyed by each epistle; the final section provides an introduction for the work as a whole. There is no critical edition for the text of the *Fihrist*, nor has it been studied much. There are at least three reasons the *Fihrist* should receive scholarly attention. First, given the ongoing debate concerning the authors' doctrinal affiliation, the *Fihrist* is of potential interest for those who want to assess the objectives of the *Rasā'il*. Thus, scholars have employed it in arguments that concern the whole work and/or its authors<sup>1</sup>. For these arguments to be valid, the precise relation of the *Fihrist* to the rest of the work should first be determined.

Second, the *Fihrist* relates to questions concerning the genesis of the *Rasā'il*. The new editions by Oxford University Press and the Institute of Ismaili Studies show that the manuscripts provide very different, in some cases even textually independent, variants for several epistles. This supports the hypothesis that the final form of the *Rasā'il* emerged gradually and underwent a lengthy period of redaction. By contrast, the *Fihrist* gives the impression of a carefully conceived plan

1. For example, the term «people of justice» (*ahl al-ʿadl*) occurs three times in the *Fihrist* as an attribute for the Brethren of Purity; see *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, ed. B. al-Bustānī (Beirut 1957), 1:21, 43, 47. This has been used to support the Mu'tazilī orientation of the authors. None of these instances is present in the short variant, nor is the appellation employed elsewhere in the *Rasā'il*.

that the authors followed in composing the epistles. Closer scrutiny of the *Fihrist* shows that its text, like the epistles, is unstable. The eighteen manuscripts (sixteen of which contain the *Fihrist*) used give three variants for both parts of the *Fihrist*. This makes the problem of the *Fihrist*'s relation with the *Rasā'il* more complicated. It is possible that an earlier variant of the *Fihrist* formed part of the original work but a later variant postdates the work. Distinct *Fihrist* variants might also correspond to different points in the redaction process<sup>2</sup>. It is also possible that the *Fihrist* as a whole was added at some point after the epistles were completed. In that case, instead of the authors' plan for redaction, it may represent the interpretation of some later author or authors on the work's contents.

The third reason to study this text is the most surprising: the *Fihrist* is of importance for *al-Risāla al-jāmi'a* (*Comprehensive Epistle*), the esoteric epistle-by-epistle summary of the *Rasā'il*. Traditionally believed to be composed by the same authors as the *Rasā'il*, now it seems likely to be a later work by a different author. Lengthy sections of the *Jāmi'a* depend textually on a specific variant of the *Fihrist*. This is clearly relevant in relation to the questions concerning the *Jāmi'a*. If the variant of the *Fihrist* on which the *Jāmi'a* draws can be shown to postdate the *Rasā'il*, then this is almost certainly the case for the *Jāmi'a* also.

The aim of this article is to establish the textual nature of the *Fihrist*, and thus provide a foundation for its further study. The article consists of four sections. In the first section, I address some general questions concerning the *Fihrist*'s position in relation to the *Rasā'il*. In the second, I establish the manuscript variants and their textual relation with regard to the epistle summaries, and, in the third section, with regard to the final section. In the fourth, I show the way in which the *Jāmi'a* depends on the *Fihrist*. The scope of this article is philological, and its aim is thus fairly narrow; that is, establishing the *Fihrist* variants, their textual relations, and their relations to the *Jāmi'a*. In the conclusions, I nevertheless make some preliminary ob-

2. W. Madelung, «Maslama al-Qurṭubī's Contribution to the Shaping of the Encyclopedia of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'», in *Labor Limae: Atti in onore di Carmela Baffioni*, ed. A. Straface et al. (Naples 2014), 1:403-17, thus attributes a short variant of the *Fihrist* to Abū Sulaymān al-Maḡdisī and a long variant to Maslama al-Qurṭubī. In Madelung's redaction chronology, these correspond to a middle and late version of the *Rasā'il*.

servations about the consequences that these findings have for larger questions concerning the Ikhwānian corpus.

### *Fihrist in the Rasā'il*

Before proceeding to the textual variants, there are some general questions that concern the *Fihrist* as a whole. The first question regards its prevalence in manuscripts. My survey of eighteen manuscripts<sup>3</sup>, along with the Beirut edition (hereafter BE) of an unknown manuscript source<sup>4</sup>, clarifies that the BE and sixteen manuscripts contain the *Fihrist* at the beginning<sup>5</sup>, while two manu-

3. I consulted a digital copy of each manuscript. Of the eighteen manuscripts, nine have been employed in the new editions by Oxford University Press and the Institute of Ismaili Studies while nine have not. I do not claim that the sample is entirely representative of the more than one hundred existing manuscripts. It does include, however, many of the most ancient manuscripts, including MS Atif Efendi 1681, which most editors of the Oxford edition have used as their base manuscript. The complexity of the manuscript tradition has made it impossible for the editors of the OUP/IIS to establish a stemma codicum for the text, and the classification of manuscripts to groups thus remains unsystematic. For the manuscript tradition in general, see N. El-Bizri, «Prologue», in *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity: The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' and Their Rasā'il: An Introduction*, ed. N. El-Bizri (Oxford 2008), 20-23; O. Alī-de-Unzaga, «The Missing Link: MS 1040: An Important Copy of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* in the Collection of the Institute of Ismaili Studies», in *Texts, Scribes and Transmission: Manuscript Cultures of the Ismaili Communities and Beyond*, ed. W. A. Momin (London 2022), 81-136. For the relations between the manuscripts employed in the OUP/IIS editions, see the observations made by each editor in the technical introductions.

4. As shown by Alī-de-Unzaga, «The Missing Link», rather than an independent edition, the widely used Beirut edition is a reformatted reprint published in 1957, from a Cairo reprint of 1928, of the Bombay edition of 1887-1889. Alī-de-Unzaga demonstrates that MS 1040 of the Institute of Ismaili Studies has a close affinity to the Bombay edition, and that the manuscript employed by its editor is also likely to be of Ismā'īlī provenance.

5. These manuscripts are Bibliothèque nationale de France MSS 2303 (dated 1020/1611) [ج], 2304 (1065/1654) [ج], 2305 (1153/1740) [A], 6000 (undated?) [B], 6.647-6.648 (675/1275) [ج]; MS Atif Efendi 1681 (578/1182) [ع]; MSS Esad Efendi 3637 (ca. seventh/thirteenth century) [ج], 3638 (686/1287) [ل]; MS Feyzullah Efendi 2130 (704/1304) [ف]; MSS Köprülü 870 (ca. 857-86/1453-81) [ك], 871 (820/1417) [ل]; MS Yeni Camı 1199 (887/1482) [C]; MS Damat Ibrahim 808 (undated) [D]; MS Carullah 982 (undated) [E]; MSS Raghip Pasha 839 (undated) [F], 840 (undated) [G]. For each manuscript, the letter in brackets indicates the symbol by which I subsequently refer to it. The Arabic letters correspond to those used in the OUP/IIS editions. Latin letters are used for the manuscripts not employed in those editions, and BE refers to the Beirut edition.

scripts do not<sup>6</sup>. The manuscript evidence thus supports the idea that the *Fihrist* was an integral part of the work, especially since the two variant manuscripts are not among the earliest<sup>7</sup>. The existence of such manuscripts, nevertheless, indicates that there was some variation with regard to the inclusion of the *Fihrist*. Moreover, the earliest manuscript, Atif Efendi 1681 (dated 578/1182), postdates the redaction by at least two centuries. Thus, it is entirely possible that the *Fihrist* was introduced at some point between the original composition and the first surviving manuscript.

A second question concerns the references the *Rasā'il* makes to the *Fihrist*. There are two such references:

اعلم أيها الأخ أنا قد فرغنا من رسالة الحدود والرسوم التي هي آخر رسائل النفسانيات العقلية حسب ما وعدنا في فهرست صدر كتابنا هذا، فنريد الآن أن نذكر في هذا القسم الرابع الكلام في الإلهيات، وهو الغرض الأقصى والغاية القصوى.

Know, O brother, that we have finished with the epistle on definitions and descriptions, which is the last of the psychical-intelligible epistles, as we promised in the *Fihrist* at the beginning of this book of ours. Now we want to explain in this fourth part the discussion on theology, which is the ultimate goal and utmost objective<sup>8</sup>.

وكما لا ينبغي أن نبدل العلم لمن ليس هو من أهله ولا يعرف فضله، وهكذا لا يجوز ولا يحل أن يمنع منه من هو مسترشد طالب له، ولا يبخل به على مستحق له. فينبغي لمن حصلت له هذه الرسائل<sup>9</sup> من إخواننا الكرام أن يدفع منها إلى كل من يستحق ما يقرب من فهمه وما يعلم أنه يصلح له ويليق بمرتبته أولاً فاولاً على الترتيب الذي رتبناه في رسالته الفهرست.

Just as we must not squander knowledge to those to whom it does not belong and who do not know its worth, in the same way it is not allowed or licit to deny it to the one who seeks guidance and knowledge, nor be stingy with it with someone who deserves it. **The one who has come into possession of these epistles** among our noble brethren **should present from them** to every deserving one **what is close to his understanding**,

6. These are MS Amcazade Hüseyin Pasha 452 (1090/1680) [H]; and Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection MS 4263 (956/1549) [I].

7. This aligns with the results in Alí-de-Unzaga, «The Missing Link», 92. The vast majority of the manuscripts surveyed by the author contain the *Fihrist* at the beginning.

8. *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Safā'*, 3:401; the reference is to Epistle 42.

9. I opt for the plural form that corresponds to the *Fihrist* tex and is supported by the second manuscript employed in the edition.

and **what he knows to suit** and befit his grade, **gradually and in the succession in which we ordered them in the *Fihrist***<sup>10</sup>.

Both references present the *Fihrist* as an integral part of the work in the sense that it established the general plan that the authors then followed. The first reference occurs in the transitional passage at the beginning of Epistle 42, which is present in the BE but is omitted in most manuscripts. The second reference appears at the beginning of Epistle 52a, the short variant of the epistle on magic, which is of uncertain authenticity. Moreover, the passage in Epistle 52a is in fact a paraphrase of the final section of the *Fihrist*; the words in bold indicate sections that are taken verbatim from the *Fihrist*<sup>11</sup>. This means that Epistle 52a postdates the *Fihrist*. The fact that this is now the only testimony to the *Fihrist* in the *Rasā'il* is more likely to support the late date of Epistle 52a than the authenticity of the *Fihrist* as a part of the *Rasā'il*. That is, if the *Fihrist* provides guidelines that a student of the *Rasā'il* should follow, why does the only reference to it occur in the very last epistle? The absence of clearly authentic references then supports the claim that the *Fihrist* was composed after the epistles. Yet this does not necessarily mean that it is inauthentic, since it could have been the last part of the *Rasā'il* that the authors composed.

A third question concerns the consistency of the *Fihrist* of a given manuscript of the *Rasā'il* in relation to the actual configuration of epistles in that manuscript. Namely, the manuscripts show some variation with respect to the number, order, and configuration of epistles. The main variants are (1) Epistles 12 (*On Interpretation*) and 13 (*Prior Analytics*)<sup>12</sup>, and (2) Epistles 49 (*Spiritual Beings*) and 50 (*Governance*)<sup>13</sup>, constitute a single epistle; (3) Epistle 4 (*Geography*) is ei-

10. G. de Callatāy and B. Halflants (ed. and trans.), *On Magic I: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistle 52a* (Oxford 2011), 7. This is my translation, made in order to conform to the corresponding translation of the *Fihrist* passage. The critical edition does not indicate that there are variants in which the reference to the *Fihrist* is omitted.

11. The variants of the corresponding text are cited in the third section of this article.

12. Epistles 12 and 13 are combined in all variants except the BE, ك, ج, C, and F. In ج Epistle 13 is separate but is numbered as «the fourth of the logical part», while Epistle 14 is numbered as the 13th epistle.

13. Epistles 49 and 50 form a single epistle in ج and ك.

ther the fifth or sixth epistle<sup>14</sup>, (4) Epistle 6 (*Arithmetic and Geometric Proportions*) is either the second or fourth epistle<sup>15</sup>, and (5) the order of Epistles 7 (*Theoretical Sciences*) and 8 (*Practical Sciences*) is reversed<sup>16</sup>. Due to (1) and (2), the total number of epistles is either fifty-one or fifty-two. If the *Fihrist* were to correspond to the order and configuration of epistles in each manuscript, it would mean that the *Fihrist* was, in each case, edited to correspond to the actual configuration of epistles.

This is not the case, however. Although the order and configuration of the epistles also varies in the *Fihrist*, this order is often not aligned with the actual composition of the epistles. The variant position of Epistle 4 contradicts the *Fihrist* in five cases, and that of Epistle 6 in four cases. The combination of Epistles 12 and 13 contradicts the *Fihrist* in six cases, and Epistles 49 and 50 contradict the *Fihrist* in two cases, and the reverse order of Epistles 7 and 8 contradicts the *Fihrist* in four cases. While the *Fihrist* more often corresponds to the standard order and the actual configuration follows a variant order, it is also sometimes the case that the *Fihrist* diverges from the standard order while the actual epistles do not. The conclusion would appear to be that even if the *Fihrist* text is not stable, it constitutes a separate unit from the actual epistles. That is, the textual transmission of the *Fihrist* and the epistles is largely different.

A fourth question concerns the references to the *Jāmi'a*. In a previous article, I showed that most of the references to the *Jāmi'a* in the *Rasā'il* are later interpolations, and thus do not support the theory of a common authorship<sup>17</sup>. Four of the references, including the most elaborate ones, occur in the *Fihrist*. None of these are present in the earliest manuscript (ع), on which my earlier article was mainly based. A larger survey of manuscripts reveals a more complete picture. Among the total of sixteen manuscripts, four manuscripts contain a reference to the *Jāmi'a* in the *Fihrist*. In two manuscripts, the referen-

14. *On Geography* is the fifth epistle in د, ع, و, B, F, and G, and is the sixth epistle in ف. In ا both *On Geography* and *On Music* are numbered as the fifth epistle, though in fact geography is the fourth epistle, but is numbered as the fifth epistle.

15. It is the second epistle in د, B, and C, and the fourth epistle in ا and ف.

16. The position of Epistles 7 and 8 is reversed in د, و, B, C, G, and H.

17. J. Mattila, «The Authorship of *al-Risāla al-Gāmi'a* Re-examined», in *Arabica* 68 (2021), 461–94.

ces occur after the final section, while in the other two they follow Epistle 52. None of the manuscripts, however, contains all four of the references that are present in the BE. Thus, the BE is not the only testimony that includes a reference to the *Jāmi'a*, even if the manuscript evidence still supports the view that the references to the *Jāmi'a* in the *Fihrist* were introduced later.

### *Table of Contents*

The main part of the *Fihrist* provides a summary of each epistle following a fixed order of presentation: (1) the number of the epistle in one of the four sections (in most manuscripts), (2) a summary of its contents, and (3) a statement of the epistle's goal. In this main part of the *Fihrist*, the manuscripts convey three variants that are distinguished by progressively longer entries for each epistle. In the sample of seventeen testimonies (sixteen manuscripts and the BE) that contain a variant of the *Fihrist*, fifteen contain a short variant (*Fihrist a*), a single manuscript (A) includes an expanded variant (*Fihrist b*), and the BE has an even more elaborate variant (*Fihrist c*). In the following, I rely on MS 8 for the text of *Fihrist a*, which I checked against fourteen manuscripts, and I rely on MS A and the BE for the other two variants.

The variants bear a very specific textual relation to each other. I illustrate this by means of two sample passages. The first is that of Epistle 3 (*On Astronomy*). The entry in *Fihrist a* is as follows:

الثالثة منها هي رسالة<sup>18</sup> في النجوم شبه المدخل في<sup>19</sup> تركيب الأفلاك وصفات البروج ومسير الكواكب. والغرض<sup>20</sup> منها هو تشويق النفوس الصعود إلى<sup>21</sup> عالم الأفلاك وأطباق السموات.<sup>22</sup>

The third of them is an epistle on the stars which is like an introduction to the composition of the spheres, attributes of the zodiac, and trajectory of the planets. The goal is to arouse desire in the souls to ascend to the world of the spheres and the layers of the heavens<sup>23</sup>.

18. Addition in 3, F: أسطرنوميا.

19. Addition in ف: معرفة.

20. Addition in B: المقصود.

21. Addition in 3, د, ن, ف, ل, D, F, G: [نحو] عالمها [و].

22. Addition in ف, D: السبع.

23. *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Šafā'*, 1:22; MS Atıf Efendi 1681, fol. 1b.

This text appears as relatively stable in the manuscripts. The more substantive variation is indicated in the footnotes. The same entry in *Fihrist b* and *c* is as follows:

لثالثة رسالة في النجوم شبه المدخل في معرفة<sup>24</sup> تركيب الأفلاك وصفة البروج وسير الكواكب  
ومعرفة تأثيراتها في هذا العالم وكيفية انفعال<sup>25</sup> الأمهات والمواليد منها بالنشوء والبلى  
والكون والفساد. والغرض منها هو تشويق النفوس الصافية للصعود إلى عالم الأفلاك وأطباق  
السموات [ منازل الروحانيين والملائكة المقربين والملا الأعلى والجواهر العلى والوصول إلى  
القدس والروح الأمين].<sup>26</sup>

The third is an epistle on the stars which is like an introduction to the **knowledge of the composition of the spheres, attributes of the zodiac, and trajectory of the planets, and to the knowledge of their influences on this world, the manner in which the elements and generated beings are affected by them in origination and decay, generation and corruption.** The goal is to arouse desire in the **pure** souls to ascend to the world of the spheres and the layers of the heavens, **the degrees of the spiritual beings and closest angels, highest abode, and supernal substances, and the arrival at the sanctity and trusted spirit**<sup>27</sup>.

The words in bold indicate the additions that the two expanded versions make to version *a*. The testimonies for *Fihrist b* and *c* contain the same text until the final phrase, which is included in the BE but not in MS A. Thus, *Fihrist b* represents an intermediate stage between *Fihrist a* and *c*, in the sense that it contains most, but not all, additions made to *Fihrist a* in *Fihrist c*. The method employed by the editor of the *Fihrist* is one of expansion. The editor of *Fihrist c* retains the precise words of *Fihrist b*, and similarly the editor of *Fihrist b* retains the words of *Fihrist a*, but makes shorter or longer additions to the text. That is, the three versions contain a shared core text that is gradually expanded.

As a result of this method of expansion, the *Fihrist* entries become quite different. In *Fihrist a*, the first section lists three categories of knowledge that the epistle aims to convey: (1) the spheres, (2) the zodiac, and (3) the planets. The longest variant adds two additional

24. The words in bold in this and subsequent citations indicate additions made to the previous variant in an expanded variant.

25. A: انفصال.

26. Omitted in A.

27. *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, 1:22; MS Atif Efendi 1681, fol. 1b.

categories: (4) astral influences on the sublunar world, and (5) the generation of sublunar bodies. In all variants, the second section relates the epistle's goal, or inner meaning, to arousing desire in the human soul to ascend to the supralunar world. In the longest variant, however, this is qualified by associating the ascent with proximity to spiritual beings or angels.

The second example is the entry on Epistle 17 (*On Generation and Corruption*), which is the third epistle of the physical part. *Fihrist a* gives the following entry:

الثالثة منها هي الرسالة في الكون والفساد. والغرض منها البيان عن ماهية الصورة المقومة لكل واحد من الأركان الأربعة التي هي النار والهواء والماء والأرض، وأنها هي الأمهات الكائنة منها<sup>28</sup> المعادن<sup>29</sup> والنبات والحيوان، وكيفية استحالة بعضها إلى بعض بدوران الأفلاك حولها ومطارح شعاعات الكواكب عليها، وأن الطبيعة الفاعلة لها هي قوة من قوى النفس الكلية الفلكية.

The third of them is the epistle on generation and corruption. Its goal is to explain the essence of the form that constitutes each of the four elements, which are fire, air, water, and earth, and that these are the elements from which minerals, plants, and animals are generated. And [to show] the manner in which they are transformed from one to another because of the revolving of spheres around them and the projection of the rays of the spheres at them, and that the nature is their agent and it is one of the faculties of the spherical universal soul<sup>30</sup>.

The text of all the manuscripts agrees almost entirely with regard to the text. *Fihrist b* and *c* give the following entry for the same epistle:

الثالثة منها رسالة في الكون والفساد. والغرض منها هو البيان عن ماهية الصور المقومة لكل واحد من الأركان الأربعة، [أعني الأمهات] التي هي النار والهواء والماء والأرض، وأنها هي الأمهات [الكلية]<sup>31</sup> الكائن منها المعدن والنبات والحيوان، وكيفية استحالة بعضها إلى بعض باختلاف كفاياتها عليها بدوران الأفلاك حولها ومطارح شعاعات الكواكب عليها، [وأن]<sup>32</sup> الطبيعة الفاعلة لها [المحركة لكل واحد منها إلى كمالها وغايتها]<sup>33</sup> هي قوة من قوى النفس الكلية الفلكية [وملك من جملة الملائكة الموكل بها وسانقة لها إلى تمام ما أعد لها من غايتها]<sup>34</sup>.

28. Addition in F: أعني.

29. Omitted in J.

30. *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Šafā'*, I:27; MS Atuf Efendi 1681, fol. 2b.

31. Omitted in A.

32. Omitted in A.

33. Omitted in A.

34. Omitted in A.

The third of them is an epistle on generation and corruption. Its goal is to explain the essence of the forms that constitute each of the four elements, **I mean the elements** that are fire, air, water, and earth, and that these are the universal elements from which minerals, plants, and animals are generated. And [to show] the manner in which they are transformed from one to another because of the **differences in their qualities**, the revolving of spheres around them, and the projection of the rays of the spheres at them. And [to show] that the nature is the agent in them **that moves each one of them towards their perfection and end**, and it is one of the faculties of the spherical universal soul, **and one of all the angels that is charged with them and lead them towards completing the end to which they are disposed**<sup>35</sup>.

In this case, the two testimonies corresponding to *Fihrist b* and *c* share only the first addition to *Fihrist a*. Since that addition is not present in any of the manuscripts conveying *Fihrist a*, this confirms the impression that *Fihrist b* is an intermediate stage between *Fihrist a* and *Fihrist c*. In all variants, the first section consists only of the epistle's title. In contrast to the previous entry, the goal section is not confined to an inner meaning but conveys the contents of the Aristotelian treatise complemented by its Neoplatonic interpretation with regard to the function of nature as one the faculties of the universal soul. Only *Fihrist c* further relates nature and the universal soul to angels. As in the previous passage, the editing method is one of expansion. *Fihrist b* adds a single phrase to the text of *Fihrist a*, and *Fihrist c* adds various phrases to *Fihrist b*. The latter variants (*b* and *c*) retain the entirety of the text of *Fihrist a*.

The same relation prevails in the epistle entries for each of the fifty-one epistles. In each case, *Fihrist c* expands on the entry in *Fihrist a* with additions of varying length; the identical method of expansion is employed: *Fihrist c* always retains all or most of the exact words of the text in *Fihrist a*. Most manuscripts correspond to the most concise version of the *Fihrist*, while the two expanded versions are each represented by a single testimony. Thus, while fifteen manuscripts confirm the text of *Fihrist a*, for the two other variants, a complete survey of manuscripts might reveal an even more complex picture. The result clearly shows that the *Fihrist* was expanded gradually: *Fihrist b* adds to *Fihrist a*, and *Fihrist c* further adds to *Fihrist b*. This does not

35. *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, I:27; MS Atuf Efendi 1681, fol. 2b.

proceed in the opposite direction in any of the epistle entries, and in every case the longer variant retains the exact wordings of the shorter variant. Therefore, *Fihrist c* depends textually on *Fihrist b*, and *Fihrist b* depends textually on *Fihrist a*. Moreover, each variant depends on the former variant in the precise sense that it retains all or most of its precise words, while it expands the contents by inserting words or phrases around the original text.

### *Final Section*

The epistle entries of the *Rasā'il* are followed by a final section of a more general nature. This section does not focus so much on the *Rasā'il's* subject matter as it provides a kind of user's manual for how to employ the epistles. Here also, the manuscripts leave three variants, but these do not correspond to the three variants for the table of contents. Instead, (1) two manuscripts provide a very concise final section (variant 1), (2) most manuscripts give a more elaborate version (variant 2), and (3) the BE provides a much longer version (variant 3). The first variant of the final section is the following:

قال أبو سليمان: وينبغي لمن حصلت عنده هذه الرسائل لا يعرضها إلا على طالبي العلوم ومحبي الحكمة. فإذا وجد من يسترشد طلباً للهداية والنجاة دفع إلى كل واحد ما يعرف من فهمه ويصلح له أولاً فأولاً على الترتيب المبين واحداً بعد واحد حتى إذا تمكنت الحكمة من نفسه. طلب عند ذلك الكل بحرص ورغبة وعمل بها على الولاء كما هي مرتبة في الفهرست، ويكون له بذلك الثواب الجزيل. والله يهدي من يشاء إلى صراط مستقيم، وما يعقلها إلا العالمون.

Abū Sulaymān said: The one who has come into possession of these epistles must only show them to the seekers of the sciences and lovers of wisdom. If he finds some who seek the right way and pursue guidance and salvation, he should present to each of them according to what he knows of his understanding and what befits him, and gradually and in proper order show him one [epistle] after another until he gains possession of the wisdom in himself. After all that, he will seek all [of them] with eagerness and desire, and follow them in the succession in which they are ordered in the *Fihrist*. He will receive an abundant reward for that. God guides whom He wills to the right path, but only those with knowledge understand it.

This is the only variant in which the epilogue is attributed to a specific person. Besides MS ع, it is conveyed in MS F after an entirely different variant of the *Fihrist* and after the first page of Epistle 1

(*Arithmetic*), and it is in different handwriting. The two manuscripts agree perfectly. The person cited – Abū Sulaymān [al-Maḡdisī?] – might be one of the authors of the *Rasā'il* in Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī's (d. 414/1023) account<sup>36</sup>. Though even if this were the case, it does not necessarily confirm al-Tawḥīdī's testimony, since the attribution may have been introduced by a later author of the *Fihrist*, or even by the copyist. In any case, the final section very concisely addresses the proper use of the *Epistles*. They should not be divulged freely but only given to those who seek knowledge and wisdom, and they should be studied in the precise order specified in the *Fihrist*.

Most manuscripts convey a longer version, spanning a little less than one manuscript page. The longer version contains essentially the same message but conveys it by means of a florid metaphor. The one in possession of the *Epistles* is compared to a wise, rich, beneficent (*jawwād*), and noble (*karīm*) man who has been granted a flourishing garden with all kinds of fruit. He urges people to enter the garden and eat all the fruit they wish, but they do not believe him and do not respond to his call. He then locks the garden's gates, and all those who pass them now desire its contents. The man allows some of them in and urges them to eat all that they desire. The story is meant to introduce the final section's core message:

وهكذا ينبغي لمن حصلت عنده هذه الرسائل<sup>37</sup> أن لا يعرضها إلا على طالبها<sup>38</sup> العلوم [كيف ما كان]<sup>39</sup> ومحبي الحكم. فإذا وجد من يسترشد<sup>40</sup> دفع إلى كل واحد منهم<sup>41</sup> ما يقرب من فهمه<sup>42</sup> ويصلح له أولاً فأولاً على الترتيب والنظام<sup>43</sup> المبين واحداً بعد واحد على الولاء<sup>44</sup> حتى إذا تمكنت الحكمة من نفسه<sup>45</sup>. طلب عند ذلك الكل بحرص ورغبة وإرادة<sup>46</sup> وعمل بها على

36. See I. Poonawala, «Why We Need an Arabic Critical Edition with an Annotated English Translation of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*», in *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity: The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' and Their Rasā'il: An Introduction*, ed. N. El-Bizri (Oxford 2008), 46.

37. Addition in ف: كلها.

38. Addition in A, ف: هذه.

39. Omitted in ج, A, أ, ف, ك, E, F.

40. Addition in A, ف, F: [والحكمة] من محبي ذلك والرغبين في العلم.

41. Omitted in A, أ, ف, D, E, F.

42. Addition in ج, D: من محبي ذلك; B, د, G: من محبي ذلك والعلوم والحكم. من دفع إلى كل واحد ما يقرب من فهمه.

43. Omitted in أ, E.

44. على الولاء: omitted in أ, E.

45. قبله: E.

46. Omitted in أ, E.

الولاء كما رُتبت في الفهرست. [فيكون<sup>47</sup> بذلك طلبه للقربة به إلى الله تعالى] وما عنده من<sup>48</sup> جزيل الثواب<sup>49</sup> [ليبارك الله<sup>50</sup> في العالم والمتعلم ويتأدب بقوله عليه<sup>51</sup> السلام: قوام الدنيا بأربع: عالم مستعمل علمه وجاهل لا يستتف أن يتعلم وغني لا يبخل بمعرفه وفقير لا يبيع آخرته بدنياه].<sup>52</sup>

The one who has come into possession of these epistles must **also proceed this way** and only show them to the seekers of sciences and lovers of wisdom, **however they may be**. If he finds some who seek the right way he should present to each of them **what is close to** his understanding and what befits him, and gradually, in proper order **and arrangement**, show him one [epistle] after another in **succession** until he gains possession of the wisdom in himself. After all that, he will seek all [of them] with eagerness, desire, **and will**, and follow them in the succession in which they are ordered in the *Fihrist*. **Thereby he will pursue through it nearness to God the Exalted and His abundant reward so that God may bless the savant and student, and he may be educated by the Prophet's, peace be upon him, words: "The subsistence of this world depends on four [things]: the savant who employs his knowledge, [the] ignorant [one] who does not disdain study, [the] rich [one] who is not stingy with the good, and [the] poor [one] who does not trade the afterlife for this world".**

Again, the words in bold indicate the additions that variant 2 makes to variant 1; the plain text is shared by the two variants. Among the manuscripts, A and E appear to represent an intermediary stage between the first and second variants, in that they contain the garden story at the beginning but, apart from the reference to Abū Sulaymān, follow the first variant after it. Again the same method of expansion is employed. The entire first variant of the final section is embedded in the second variant. However, the reference to Abū Sulaymān is removed and additions and omissions of different lengths are also made. Most of the text in the first variant is still retained, but it is now introduced by the allegorical garden story to which the "in-

47. Addition in ج, F: له.

48. Omitted in F: من ... طلبه.

49. A and F omit the bracketed section, and give instead: A: للشفاء.

50. Omitted in ج.

51. Addition in ج, A: الصلاة و.

52. يكون ... بدنياه: omitted in A and E, which instead follow the ending of *Fihrist* a:

ويكون له بذلك من الله عز وجل الثواب الجزيل إن شاء الله.

tellectual gardens” of the *Epistles* are related. In both the case of the garden and the epistles, it is best to lock the gates to deny access to the undeserving. The additions in the passage cited notably include the prophetic citation at the end inserted to emphasize the value of knowledge. After the shared passage, the text of the second variant goes on to emphasize that the “society” (*jamā'a*) of the Brethren of Purity follow these guidelines since their instruction pursues the otherworldly good and proximity to God.

The third variant of the final section spans almost four edited pages in the BE<sup>53</sup>. It starts with a considerably expanded version of the garden story, which is followed by the main message.

فهكذا ينبغي لمن حصلت عنده هذه الرسائل والرسالة لا يضيّعها بوضعها في غير أهلها  
وبذلها لمن لم يرغب فيها ولا يظلمها بمنعها عن مستحقّها وصرّفها عن مستوجبها ولا يعرّفها  
إلا لكل حرّ خيّر سديد مبصر للقصد مجلب للرشد من طالبي العلم ومؤثري الأدب ومحبي الحكم،  
وليتحرّز في حفظها وإسرارها وإعلانها وإظهارها كلّ التحرز ... فإنها جلاء وشفاء ونور  
وضياء، بل كالداء إن لم تكن دواء وكالفساد إن لم تكن صلاحا وكالهلاك إن لم تكن نجاة تدّوي  
وقد تدوي وتميت وتحيي. فهي كالترياق الكبير الذي هو في نفسه وحده وتختلف الأحوال عنده،  
فيفعل الشيء وضده بحسب القوايل والمنفعلات عنه ... وأما الضياء، فإنه لا يصلح إلا لمن فتح  
عينه وصح نظره وقوي بصره، ويزيده الجلاء جلاء والنور قوة وضياء. فأما من لم يفتح عينه  
أو كان قريب العهد بالخروج من الظلام، فيضعف جدا عن مقابلة ضوء النهار ونور الشمس،  
بل يكسبه الضياء ظلمة البصر حتى ربما صار ضلالا وعى ... دفعها إليه رسالة رسالة على  
الولاء شبيهه الغذاء والتربية والنماء والدواء للصحة والشفاء والكحل والجلاء لتقوية البصر  
والضياء ما يقرب من فهمه ويليق بمحله من علمه ويستصلحه لمثله قدر ما يغذيه ويربيه  
ويصحّه ويشفيه، بل يبصره ويهديه ويشدّه ويقوّيه أولا فاولا على الترتيب المبيّن في الفهرست،  
حتى إذا ما تمكنت الحكمة من نفسه وأنست به وتصوّرت عنده واستقرّ في خلدّه وقوي فيه  
وتحقّق بفكره معانيه. طلب عند ذلك الكل بشدّة حرص وانشراح صدر وغاية رغبة وخلوص  
نية وقوّة عزيمة وفضل معرفة وزيادة يقين وصحة بصيرة، فحصلها وعمل بها، واستحقّ بعد  
النظر فيهن والوقوف على جمل معانيهن النظر في الرسالة الجامعة...

The one who has come into possession of these epistles and the [*Comprehensive*] *Epistle* must also proceed this way and not squander them by giving them to people to whom they do not belong and granting them to those who do not desire them, nor do wrong to them by denying them from the entitled or averting them from those with merit. Of them he must only inform those who are free, good, pertinent, insightful [with regard to] its objectives, and those who [can] gain guidance among the seekers of science, those who choose refinement, and lovers of wisdom, and [he must] be extremely wary in

53. *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, 1:43-47.

preserving their secrets and not making them public and manifest ... For the *Epistles* are about clarity, healing, light, and brightness. Indeed, they are like medicine for disease, prosperity for decay, and salvation for perdition. They heal but may also make sick, they kill but may also revive. They are like the great theriac that is one and the same in itself but varies in its states, and causes both an effect and its contrary in accordance with that which receives it and is affected by it.... Brightness only benefits one whose eyes are open and [one who has] healthy and strong eyesight; then the clarity becomes clearer and the light stronger and brighter. The one whose eyes are not open, or who just exited the darkness, is extremely weak in accepting the light of the day and brightness of the sun. Indeed, the brightness may bring darkness to his eyesight, even sometimes misleading or blinding him... [These people should be] presented one epistle after another in succession, as if it is nourishment, education, and growth, as medicine for health and healing, as kohl and clarity to enforce the eyesight and brightness, according to what is close to his understanding, appropriate to his position in knowledge, and suitable for someone like him with regard to nourishing, educating, curing, and healing him, and indeed enlightening, guiding, strengthening, and fortifying him gradually in the proper order shown in the *Fihrist*. **This is until he gains possession of the wisdom in himself, knows it intimately, and conceives it in his mind so that it becomes firmly and permanently established in him and he gains the truth of its meanings.** After all that, he will seek all [of them] with extreme eagerness, [with an] open heart, intense desire, pure intention, strong determination, abundant knowledge, utter certitude, and true insight. He will grasp the epistles and follow them, and after studying them and grasping all their meanings, he is entitled to study the *Comprehensive Epistle*.

The additions to variant 2 are substantial; again I have indicated the additional text with words in bold. Due to the length of the passage, the citation only retains those parts of the third version that reflect its relation with the second variant. Besides additions, variant 3 also makes significant omissions to the corresponding passage in variant 2; notably, the prophetic tradition cited by the second variant is absent in variant 3. Despite this, the core message remains the same in variant 3: the *Epistles* should only be divulged to those who deserve them. In addition, there is a much greater emphasis on the theme of guarding the secrets of the *Epistles*, an emphasis that is not explicit-

ly present in either the first or the second variant. This message is further emphasized by the introduction of a plethora of new metaphors in this core passage. The function of the *Epistles* is now compared to light, medicine, nourishment, and the theriac, among other things. Thus, just as bright light only serves one with good eyesight, in the same way, the *Epistles* are only useful for the one properly prepared to understand them. The most surprising result, however, is that despite its greatly expanded form, epilogue 3 still retains most of the precise expressions in epilogue 1, even though they are now scattered over a much longer passage.

Besides expanding on the garden story and the core passage, variant 3 also introduces an entirely new section<sup>54</sup>. This is located before the final section, between the epistle entries on the fifty-second epistle and the *Jāmiʿa*. Its subject matter may be characterized as cosmological. Thus, its focus is on the hypostasis of the intellect and the progression of further degrees of existence from it by the intermediacy of the universal soul. The passage seems to have an Ismāʿīlī flavor, in particular in its employment of the terms “preceder” (*sābiq*) and “follower” (*tālī*) for the two primary hypostases.

As was the case for the list of epistles, the manuscripts thus provide three very different variants for the final section. However, the two sets of variants do not correspond to each other, which suggests that their textual transmission might be partly separate. Once again, the editor of each variant of the final section expands on the text of another variant. All three variants share the core passage concerning the proper employment of the *Epistles*. Variant 2 makes significant additions to variant 1 but the original text remains entirely recognizable. However, in variant 3 the additions are so substantial that it becomes a completely different text. For the final section, the editor, or editors, also introduces novel content. Thus, variant 2 adds the garden metaphor before the core passage; variant 3 introduces a number of additional metaphors in the core passage, as well as a cosmological section before the final section. Thus, while most of the precise expressions of the very concise variant 1 remain in variant 3, in character it is a completely different text.

54. *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*, 1:41–42.

*Al-Risāla al-Jāmi'a*

Perhaps the most surprising discovery is that large sections of the *Jāmi'a* depend textually on the table of contents section of *Fihrist c*. Moreover, the relation between parts of the *Jāmi'a* and *Fihrist c* is very similar to that prevailing between the *Fihrist* variants. I employ the two sample epistle entries of the second section to illustrate this relation. The section devoted to Epistle 3 in the *Jāmi'a* consists of the following passage:

فصل في ذكر الرسالة الثالثة منها في النجوم<sup>55</sup>  
ثم يتبعها الرسالة الثالثة من الرسائل الرياضية وهي رسالة في النجوم شبه المدخل  
[والمقدمات]<sup>56</sup>. وذكرنا فيها من علم النجوم ما جعلناه دلالة على ما أشرنا إليه وعولنا في  
القول عليه من الآيات المكتوبة والدلالات المنصوبة في الآفاق والأنفس والسموات والأرض  
من تركيب الأفلاك وصفة البروج وسير الكواكب ومعرفة تأثيراتها في هذا العالم وكيفية انفعال  
الأمهات والمواليذ منها بالنشوء والبلوى والكون والفساد.

فصل في بيان الغرض منها<sup>57</sup>  
وكان الغرض المقصود منها هو تشويق النفوس الزكية الصافية<sup>58</sup> الطاهرة النيرة المتضينة  
بنور الحكمة ودلائل المعرفة إلى الصعود إلى عالم الأفلاك وأطباق السماوات والوصول إلى  
درجة [الكمال التي هي درجة]<sup>59</sup> الملائكة وليهون عليها [مفارقة الأمكنة الطبيعية واللذات  
الجسمانية والشهوات الدنيوية ويهون عليها]<sup>60</sup> الموت وتتمناه ويكون ريحانة لها ولا تخاف  
منه ولا تحزن على مفارقة مألوف الدنيا ونعيمها وملكها ولتعلم وتستيقن أن الذي تصل إليه  
وتقدم عليه أعظم جلالة لها وأكبر منزلة وأنها تعالين ما لا عين رأت ولا أذن سمعت ولا خطر  
على قلب بشر. وأنها ترقى إلى منازل الروحانيين وترافق الملائكة المقربين والملا الأعلى  
والجواهر العلى وتلحق بمن تقدمها من الأنبياء والمرسلين والمؤمنين العارفين والشهداء  
والصالحين والوصول إلى ساحة القدس والروح الأمين ومجاورة رب العالمين في روح وريحان  
وجنة نعيم.

Then it is followed by the third epistle from the mathematical epistles [it] is an epistle on the stars, and it is like an introduction and pre-

55. The title is omitted in six manuscripts that appear in Kacimi's edition of *al-Risāla al-jāmi'a*. See M. Kacimi, (ed.), *Edición crítica árabe y estudio de la Risālat al-ŷami'a dāt al-fawā'id al-nāfi'a, tāŷ Rasā'il Iḵwān al-Ṣafā'* (finales del s. IV H./X e.C., principios del s. V H./XI e.C.), vol. 2 (PhD, Universidad de Alicante, 2015).

56. Omitted in four manuscripts.

57. Title omitted in six manuscripts.

58. Omitted in four manuscripts.

59. Omitted in four manuscripts.

60. Omitted in Ghālib's edition, while the omitted section is given in one manuscript in the critical apparatus. See M. Ghālib (ed.), *al-Risāla al-jāmi'a: Tāŷ Rasā'il Iḵwān al-Ṣafā' wa-khullān al-wafā'* (Beirut 1974).

amble. In it we stated about astronomy that which we made into a token of that which we pointed to and intended in the discourse on written signs and appointed tokens of horizons and souls, and heaven and earth, among the composition of the spheres, attributes of the zodiac, and trajectory of the planets, and on the knowledge of their influences on this world, and the manner in which the elements and generated beings are affected by them in origination and decay, in generation and corruption.

The **intended** goal was to arouse desire in the **untainted**, pure, **clean**, and **luminous** souls **illuminated by the light of wisdom and tokens of knowledge** to ascend to the world of the spheres and the layers of the heavens, and **arrival at the stage of perfection which is the degree of the angels that are separated from physical place, corporeal pleasures, and worldly desires**. Then they despise death and desire it, for it is blissful for them and they do not fear it, nor are they saddened to leave their accustomed world and its delights and possessions. For they come to know and become certain that the place to which they will arrive and come is greater in sublimity and higher in degree, and that they will witness what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and has not occurred to human heart. They will rise to the degrees of the spiritual beings and **accompany** the closest angels, highest abode, and supernal substances; **they will join the prophets, messengers, believers, knowers, witnesses, and virtuous who preceded them, and arrive at the sphere of sanctity and trusted spirit, and proximity of the Lord of the worlds in spirit, bliss, paradise, and felicity**<sup>61</sup>.

The words in bold indicate the additions that the *Jāmi'ā* makes to the text of *Fihrist c* and the plain text is shared by the *Jāmi'ā* and *Fihrist c*. The additions are much more substantive than those that *Fihrist c* made to *Fihrist a*; thus, they radically change the tone of the passage. In both *Fihrist* variants, the content of Epistle 3 is identified as being essentially scientific in nature, even though the astronomical content is related to the inner meaning of inciting the soul's desire to ascend

61. *Al-Risāla al-jāmi'ā*, ed. Kacimi, 102–3; ed. Ghālib, 95–96. The Arabic text follows Kacimi's edition, based on fifteen manuscripts. I have indicated in footnotes omissions attested to by two or more manuscripts, based on the critical apparatus. I have checked the text against Ghālib's edition, which is based on two manuscripts and the previous edition by J. Ṣalībā (ed.), *al-Risāla al-jāmi'ā: Tāj Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' wa-khullān al-wafā'* (Damascus 1949–51), and I have indicated the substantive variants in footnotes. For this passage, the editions agree almost completely, apart from a single omission in Ghālib's edition (which is, however, included in one of the manuscripts employed by Ghālib).

to the higher world. At the beginning of the passage, the additions in the *Jāmi'a* make the astronomical content reveal signs of “horizons and souls”, an expression frequently employed in the work. The additions of the latter part expand on the goal related to the soul's ascent such that it constitutes most of the passage, whereas in the formulation of *Fihrist a* it consists of a short sentence. As a result of the two stages of editing, the original description of Epistle 3 as an essentially technical treatise is completely transformed into an essentially esoteric treatise. Since the passage cited constitutes the entire section devoted to Epistle 3 in the *Jāmi'a*, almost its entire technical content is gone from its representation in that work.

In Epistle 17, the section in the *Jāmi'a* is equally concise:

فصل في ذكر الثالثة منها رسالة<sup>62</sup> في الكون والفساد  
ومعرفة الأشخاص والاجساد والنشوء والبلي والبيان عن ماهية الصور المقومة<sup>63</sup> لكل واحد من  
الأركان الأربعة التي هي الأمهات، وهي النار والهواء والأرض والماء، وأنها أمهات الموالي  
الكاننة منها جميع الموجودات من المعادن والنبات والحيوان، وكيفية استحالة بعضها إلى بعض  
[باختلاف كيفياتها وأعداد كمياتها وتباين أبنياتها وكيفية استحالة بعضها إلى بعض]<sup>64</sup> بدوران  
الأفلاك حولها ومطارح شعاعات الكواكب عليها والطبيعة المنفصلة والقوة المحركة لكل واحد  
منها إلى كمالها. وأن الغرض المقصود منها هو الوقوف على أن المحرك لها والمنبعث منها  
هي<sup>65</sup> قوة جزئية من قوى النفس الكلية الفلكية بالإرادة الإلهية والعناية الربانية، [وأن ملكاً  
من جملة الملائكة موكل بها. وأن الرؤساء الظاهرين في الأوقات بالآيات]<sup>66</sup> والمعجزات هي  
أشخاص صورانية متحدة بها أرواح نورانية مؤيدة بتأييدات إلهية منبعثة من النفس الكلية  
القدسية القابلة<sup>67</sup> لفيض العقل بلا واسطة. نزلت لخلاص النفوس الجزئية من عالم الفناء  
وتذكروهم محل البقاء، وتمحو عنهم آثار الخطيئة الكبرى وما حل بهم من المصيبة العظمى  
وتنقذهم من أسر الهوى وتفكهم من قيود الطبيعة وتردهم إلى عالم السموات [والرجوع  
إلى]<sup>68</sup> دار الملكوت في عالم العقل. وأن آخر المذكرين وخاتم المنذرين هو النفس الزكية الذي  
يكون به افتتاح أول<sup>69</sup> دور الكشف وارتفاع دور الستر وظهور الحقائق. عند ذلك لا ينفع نفساً  
إيمانها لم تكن آمنت من قبل أو كسبت في إيمانها خيراً.

**A chapter that discusses** the third of them, which is an epistle on generation and corruption **and knowledge of the individuals and bodies, origination and decay**, and an explanation of the essence of the forms

62. Omitted in seven manuscripts.

63. Omitted in two manuscripts.

64. Omitted in Ghālib's edition.

65. Omitted in nine manuscripts.

66. Omitted in two manuscripts.

67. Omitted in two manuscripts.

68. Omitted in two manuscripts.

69. Omitted in five manuscripts.

that constitute each of the four elements, **which are** the elements of fire, air, earth, and water. These are the elements **of generated beings** from which **all the existents of** minerals, plants, and animals are generated. And [it shows] the manner in which they are transformed from one to another because of the differences in their qualities, **various quantities, variation of progenies, and the manner in which they are transformed from one to another by** the revolving of spheres around them and projection of rays of the spheres at them. And [it shows] that the passive nature and moving power in each of them [is what] moves them toward their perfection. **Its intended goal is the knowledge of that which moves them and from which they are generated** is a **particular** faculty among the faculties of the spherical universal soul **by divine will and lordly providence**, and that [it is] one of all the angels that are charged with them. **For the leaders that come forth in different times with signs and miracles are individuations of forms united with and supported by luminous spirits and divine inspirations proceeding from the holy universal soul which receives the emanation of the intellect with no intermediary.** The soul descends in order to release the particular souls from the world of annihilation, reminds them of the abode of eternity, eradicates from them the effects of the great error and the immense calamity that afflicted them, saves them from the captivity of matter, releases them from the chains of nature, and reverts them to the world of the heavens and the abode of divine kingdom in the world of the intellect. **For the final reminder and the seal of the admonishers is the pure soul through which the first cycle of disclosure is opened, the cycle of concealment is lifted, and the truths become manifest. At that time, no soul is benefitted by its belief if it did not believe before or acquire good things by its belief**<sup>70</sup>.

In comparison to the previous passage, this passage contains more explicit changes from *Fihrist c* to the *Jāmi'a*. In particular, the final words of *Fihrist c* are omitted altogether, and the beginning of the section on the goal is moved to a later position in the passage. Otherwise the method of editing is one that retains the exact wording of the original text but expands on it by adding words or expressions between the words of the original text. The extensive additions in the *Jāmi'a* again completely transform the tone of the original passage. In *Fihrist a*, the description of the contents of Epistle 17 corresponds more or less to Aristotle's *On Generation and Corruption*,

70. *Al-Risāla al-jāmi'a*, ed. Kacimi, 171-72; ed. Ghālib, 147-48.

with the added Neoplatonic element of the agency of the universal soul. *Fihrist c* relates the universal soul to angels, and thus makes the passage a little more religious in character. In the *Jāmi'a*, the original context of Aristotelian physics is transformed into a detail of its larger esoteric meaning. This involves various new inner meanings ascribed to the epistle that are also omnipresent in the *Jāmi'a*. These are the release of particular souls from the material world; the “great error” of Adam that resulted in the particular souls’ descent; the souls’ imprisonment in nature; and the prophetic cycles of manifestation and occultation. The passage cited again constitutes the entirety of the section devoted to Epistle 17 in the *Jāmi'a*. Thus, the *Jāmi'a* provides no further explanation of exactly how all of these themes relate to the original epistle.

The beginnings of all fifty-two epistle sections in the *Jāmi'a* relate to *Fihrist c* in this way. That is, in each case the *Jāmi'a* retains the original wordings of *Fihrist c* but expands on them by adding words and passages around the original text. For many epistles, the section in the *Jāmi'a* consists exclusively of an expanded *Fihrist* entry. In other cases, the *Fihrist* section constitutes an introduction to a more independent development of the themes of that particular epistle. Ultimately, the result is that a very large part of the *Jāmi'a*, including entire entries for many epistles, depends textually on *Fihrist c*. The obvious conclusion is that the author of the *Jāmi'a* employed the *Fihrist*, and more specifically the precise variant conveyed by the BE, as his main source text in composing the treatise.

### Conclusions

Despite its initially innocuous position as the table of contents of the *Epistles*, the investigation of the *Fihrist* reveals its unexpectedly large significance. Some conclusions are entirely philological, while others relate to larger questions concerning the formation of the Ikhwānian corpus. Beginning with the philological issues, the textual nature of the *Fihrist* as it appears in the manuscripts is surprisingly complex. For its main part of the table of contents, the manuscripts provide three main variants of *Fihrist a*, *b*, and *c*. For the final section, there are also three variants but these do not correspond to the former in their distribution in manuscripts. The existence of very dif-

ferent variants is not necessarily surprising since the new editions by Oxford University Press and the Institute of Ismaili Studies show that this is also the case for many of the epistles. The method of editing in which each variant expands on the text of another variant appears to be different from that employed in other epistles. Thus, *Fihrist b* expands on the text of *Fihrist a*, and *Fihrist c* expands on that of *Fihrist b*. In each case, the editor employs a specific method in which he retains all or most of the exact wordings of the text and inserts words and phrases between them. This is also true of the three variants of the final section, where the concise first variant is gradually expanded to the very elaborate third variant. Even the third variant, however, includes most of the exact wordings of the first variant. Beyond the core passage, however, each variant also introduces novel textual blocks to the final section.

This textual relation between the variants is of obvious consequence for their relative dating. Since *Fihrist c* depends on *Fihrist b*, the former must be later than the latter, and similarly *Fihrist b* must be later than *Fihrist a*. This is also true of the three variants of the final section: the third variant postdates the second, and the second the first. This should also be of interest for the classification of manuscripts. Insofar as the *Fihrist* is textually separate from the actual epistles, it is not necessarily the case that an older version of the *Fihrist* corresponds to an older version of the epistles. But the results seem to correspond to expectations. The fact that MS  $\xi$  is the earliest manuscript of the *Rasā'il* we have does not, of course, mean that it conveys the most original text. Yet, this is supported by the fact that it conveys *Fihrist a*, and, along with only one other surveyed manuscript, also contains the first variant of the final section. Similarly, for the BE, it is the sole testimony for *Fihrist c*, as well as the third variant of the final section.

The question of whether the *Fihrist* forms a part of the original composition of the *Rasā'il* is more complex. The fact that most manuscripts, even the earliest ones, include the *Fihrist* means that it was an integral part of the work for as long as we have manuscript evidence. Since the *Jāmi'a* depends textually on *Fihrist c*, even the latest *Fihrist* variant cannot be later than the oldest known manuscript of the *Jāmi'a*, dated at 596/1200. Similarly, *Fihrist a* cannot be later than the oldest manuscript that conveys it, that is, the one dated 578/1182. Nevertheless, it seems entirely possible that the *Fihrist* was introdu-

ced in the work during the centuries after its original composition. The absence of references to the *Fihrist* in the *Rasā'il* suggests that it was probably composed after all of the epistles, apart from the possibly spurious Epistle 52a.

A larger question concerns the method of editing. I am not aware of other examples, at least in the *Rasā'il*, in which the editor employs this specific method. The editor's choice to retain the original words exactly, but to expand on the text with additional words and phrases around the original text is somewhat bizarre. In the variants of the final section and the *Jāmi'a* in particular, the precise wordings of the previous variant are retained and the method of expansion is used even when the resulting text becomes completely different from the original. Why would the author not simply edit the original text entirely to better correspond to his understanding of its meanings? Perhaps each expansion is the result of marginal notes in the manuscript, which the copyist incorporated into the main text<sup>71</sup>. A more far-fetched explanation may be that the editor considered the original text sacred in some sense, such as by attributing it to a Shī'ī imam. Indeed, the manuscript tradition attributed Ikhwānian texts to the imams.

A second larger question concerns the *Jāmi'a*. I have established that large parts of the *Jāmi'a*, including the entirety of the entry for some epistles, depend textually on *Fihrist c*. What does this mean for the relationship between the *Jāmi'a* and the *Rasā'il*? Clearly, the *Jāmi'a* must postdate *Fihrist c*. Since *Fihrist c* further postdates *Fihrist a*, and even *Fihrist a* possibly postdates the *Rasā'il*, this further supports the view that the *Jāmi'a* is a later addition to the corpus. As to why this relation exists between the *Jāmi'a* and *Fihrist*, the first answer is that they were authored by the same person. This does not seem likely, however, since the *Jāmi'a* gives very different meanings to the epistles from those of *Fihrist c*. The second answer is that the author of the *Jāmi'a* simply employed *Fihrist c* as the base text for composing his treatise. For each epistle, he expanded on the *Fihrist* text by adding elements that conveyed his esoteric understanding of its subject matter. For many epistles, he was satisfied with the result, and thus the epistle entry in the *Jāmi'a* consists only of the expanded *Fihrist*. This is the case for most of the scientific epistles, which the author of

71. I thank Godefroid de Callataÿ for this suggestion.

the *Jāmi'a* clearly does not view to be of central importance. In the case of those epistles that the author perceived to be more central, however, he followed the expanded *Fihrist* by an independent discussion of the subject. As a final note, the *Jāmi'a* employs specifically the variant of the *Fihrist* for which the only testimony so far is the BE. The manuscript source of this testimony, which is likely of Ismā'īlī provenance, supports the claim that the genesis of the *Jāmi'a* took place in an Ismā'īlī context.

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## ABSTRACT

Janne Mattila, *Fihrist of the Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā': Textual Variants and Their Relation to al-Risāla al-Jāmi'a*

The aim of this article is, first, to investigate the textual nature of the *Fihrist* that precedes the epistles of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, and thereby its relation to the rest of the work. Second, the article addresses the relation of *al-Risāla al-jāmi'a* to the *Fihrist*. The *Fihrist* consists of two main parts: (1) a table of contents that summarizes each of the epistles and (2) a final section. The four sections of this article address (1) the *Fihrist's* position in the *Rasā'il* in general; (2) the manuscript variants of the epistle summaries; (3) the final section of the *Fihrist*; and (4) the relation between the *Jāmi'a* and the *Fihrist*. Although most manuscripts contain the *Fihrist*, the absence of genuine references from the *Rasā'il* to the *Fihrist* indicate that it was either composed as the final part of the *Rasā'il* or postdates the *Rasā'il*. The manuscripts contain three main variants for both the table of contents section and the final section of the *Fihrist*. Their distribution in manuscripts is different, which suggests that the transmission of the two sections was separate. In the case of both sections, the editors employ a method of expansion: the text of the previous variant is retained while new text is inserted between words and phrases. For the final section, later variants also add novel blocks of content, in particular an allegorical garden story. The relation of the *Jāmi'a* to the *Fihrist* is similar: the beginning of each epistle entry in the *Jāmi'a* expands on the third variant of the *Fihrist*. For many epistles, this constitutes the complete entry in the *Jāmi'a*; for others, the *Fihrist* section is followed by an independent commentary. In consequence, large sections of the *Jāmi'a* depend textually on the the *Fihrist*. This supports the view that the *Jāmi'a* postdates the *Rasā'il*.

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