

Gabriele Ferrario

IN A HIDDEN PLACE: TRACES OF BĀṬINISM IN THE FRAGMENTS OF THE CAIRO GENIZAH

The approximately 350,000 manuscript fragments retrieved from the Genizah of the Ben Ezra Synagogue of Old Cairo have significantly contributed to our understanding of several aspects of medieval Judaism, of the status and life of Jewish communities in the Arabo-Islamic context, and of the medieval Mediterranean world in general¹. The Cairo Genizah, which has exceeded its strictly religious aim as a repository for worn-out writings containing the name of God, has come to embrace the wider scope as a storage room for any form of writing in any language (mostly Judeo-Arabic, Hebrew, and Arabic). It is undoubtedly a rare example of a non-curated manuscript jumble embracing the sacred and the mundane, the official and the ephemeral, the public and the private, the elevated and the trivial. Together with pages from luxurious bibles, prayer books, and rabbinical writings, the Genizah has preserved leaves of philosophical, medical, alchemical, and astronomical books, but also commercial and private letters, writing exercises, lists of expenses, petitions to communal and Islamic authorities – the whole range of writings produced by a community in all its daily endeavors². For this reason, research on

1. Bibliography on the documentary corpus of the Genizah is vast. The fundamental work on the relevance of Genizah manuscripts for the study of medieval societies in the eastern Mediterranean world remains S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 6 vols. (Berkeley 1967-93). On the importance of Genizah documents for the reconstruction of the administrative practices of Egyptian caliphates, see M. Rustow, *The Lost Archive: Traces of a Caliphate in a Cairo Synagogue* (Princeton 2020).

2. Effective tools for the discovery of Genizah fragments are the Cambridge University Digital Library (<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/genizah/1>, accessed December 2023) and the Princeton Genizah Lab website (<https://genizalab.princeton.edu>, accessed December 2023); all the images of Genizah manu-

Genizah fragments has also revealed non-mainstream aspects of medieval Judaism, from non-standard systems of vocalization of the biblical text, to the widespread diffusion of magical theories and practices, from details of the private lives of medieval Jewish celebrities to features of the system of education of children in the community³. The Genizah has also preserved Arabic originals, Judeo-Arabic renditions, and Hebrew translations of texts that were believed to be lost or that were preserved only in much more recent or defective manuscripts⁴. The majority of the materials retrieved from the Cairo Genizah have been roughly dated to the so-called “classical Genizah period,” spanning from the fourth/tenth to the end of seventh/thirteenth century, a period that saw the Ikhshidid, Fāṭimid, Ayyūbid, and Mamlūk dynasties in power in Egypt⁵. The influence of each of these dynasties’ political, religious, and intellectual orientation is na-

scripts can be viewed on the website of the Friedberg Genizah Project (<https://fjms.genizah.org>, accessed December 2023). The monthly feature «Fragment of the Month» of the Genizah Research Unit at Cambridge provides an entry into the variety of fragments preserved in the Genizah Collections and new discoveries (<https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/fragment-month>, accessed December 2023).

3. On non-standard systems of vocalization of the Hebrew Bible, see, for instance, the medieval section of W. R. Garr, S. E. Fassberg (eds.), *A Handbook of Biblical Hebrew* (University Park, PA 2016). On magic in the Genizah, see the work of Gideon Bohak, particularly his «Greek, Coptic and Jewish Magic in the Cairo Genizah», *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 36, no. 1 (1999), 27–44. On the education of children, see S. D. Goitein, *Jewish Education in Muslim Countries Based on Records from the Cairo Genizah* (Jerusalem 1962) [Hebrew]; and J. Olszowy-Schlanger, «Learning to Read and Write in Medieval Egypt: Children’s Exercise Books from the Cairo Geniza», *Journal of Semitic Studies* 48, no. 1 (2003), 47–69.

4. Discoveries in the Genizah are frequent. Some recent finds include a Judeo-Arabic version of Thābit b. Qurra *On Talismans* which is lost in its Arabic original (the two extant Latin versions are *De Imaginibus* and *Liber Prestigiorum*), see G. Bohak and C. Burnett, *Thābit ibn Qurra On Talismans: Ps.-Ptolemy on Images 1–9 Together with the Liber Prestigiorum Thebidis of Abelard of Bath* (Florence 2021); and a very early Judeo-Arabic version of a medical work of Qusṭā b. Lūqā, see G. Ferrario, «Graeco-Arabic Medicine in Jewish Attire: An Early Judeo-Arabic version of Qusṭā b. Lūqā’s On Numbness from the Cairo Genizah», *Technai* 13 (2022), 9–29.

5. The outlines of Egypt’s historical developments during the Middle Ages and the peculiarity of the Egyptian cultural and religious context are surveyed in C. Petry, *The Cambridge History of Egypt* (Cambridge 1998). On religious minorities in Egypt, see in particular, chapter 7, 175–97, by T. Wilfong and chapter 8, 198–210, by N. Stillman.

turally also reflected among Genizah fragments and, in consideration of the intellectual climate of the surrounding Muslim societies, it is not surprising that fragments of material showing esoteric, or rather *bāṭinī* intellectual tendencies, made their way into the Genizah of the Ben Ezra Synagogue. The concept of *bāṭin* can be applied to a wide range of intellectual products since everything that is hidden or reflects a reliance on hidden rather than apparent causes can be legitimately defined as *bāṭin*: the label *bāṭinism* has been used to talk about aspects of Shī'ī Ismā'īlī thought, about tendencies of mysticism, about Neoplatonically-oriented philosophies, and about every hermetic and esoteric topic, from alchemy to astrology, from numerology to magic⁶.

In this contribution, I present some examples of *bāṭinī* materials that surfaced during a survey of the relevant Genizah fragments. Together with the limitations of my own expertise, this survey and its results are characterized by other limitations that should be taken in consideration. First, my survey is mainly focused on the fragments preserved at Cambridge University Library, and includes the Taylor-Schechter, the Lewis-Gibson, and the Mosseri collections: these collections account for about 200,000 of the approximately 350,000 Genizah fragments originally retrieved from Cairo⁷. The handlist of *bāṭinī* fragments I collected while cataloguing portions of these collections has been supplemented by the material found in the extant catalogues, in particular in those devoted to the Arabic and Judeo-Arabic manuscripts, the online entries in the Cambridge University Digital Library, and the material available from the Princeton Genizah Lab⁸. A second limit lies in the fragmentary nature of the manuscripts themselves: the very aim of the Genizah and the

6. A survey of the various historical meanings attached to the word *bāṭin* can be found in P. E. Walker, «Bāṭiniyya», in *EP*, online: http://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912-ei3_COM_30635 (accessed December 2023) and in the bibliography there mentioned.

7. My bias toward the Genizah collections at Cambridge has very practical origins: I was a research associate at Cambridge's Genizah Research Unit from 2010 to 2017 with the general task of producing catalogue entries for the still uncatalogued fragments.

8. C. F. Baker and M. R. P. Polliack, *Arabic and Judeo-Arabic Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections* (Cambridge 2001); A. Shvitzel and F. Niessen, *Arabic and Judeo-Arabic Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections: Taylor-Schechter New Series* (Cambridge 2006).

ravages of time have often left us only portions of texts that are just a few pages long in rare lucky cases, but are more commonly single leaves or portions of leaves of just a few lines. Colophons, dedications, copying circumstances, authors' names, titles of books and of sections were very often lost, leaving the identification of the larger works these fragments belonged to (in case these books are known) to the memory, prowess, and luck of the researcher. Third, I have not included in the survey items from the vast magical corpus of the Genizah. These fragments, that clearly deserve a notable mention in a discussion of *bāṭinism*, have been thoroughly studied by Gideon Bohak, who showed the cultural, doctrinal, and practical features displayed in these materials, and evidenced the simultaneous presence of Neoplatonic, Islamic, and Rabbinic influences in medieval Jewish magical production⁹.

Two Lists of Books

Traces of the circulation of *bāṭinī* ideas and texts in medieval Jewish Cairo are found in fragments preserving lists of books. These lists, which have been the object of significant scholarly contributions, were produced for a number of occasions and fulfilled various functions¹⁰. They were prepared as inventories of private libraries and often organized by shelfmarks, size, color of volumes, incipits, and topics; lists were used in the book trade, compiled by booksellers and by their customers, and often provided with prices; lists were also compiled when a book owner died and his possessions were put up for sale; in the case of renovation works to a synagogue that required the dislocation of its library, a list of its books was drawn up to ensure the preservation of the synagogue's belongings; copyists also prepared lists of books they could produce, and sometimes provided the

9. See Bohak, «Greek, Coptic and Jewish»; and G. Bohak, «The Book of Twiches of Shem Son of Noah and Other Manuals of Palmomancy from the Cairo Genizah and from al-Qūṣayr», in *From Samarqand to Toledo* (Leiden 2023), 139–61. On geomantic fragments in the Genizah, see B. Villuendas Sabaté, *La geomancia en los manuscritos judeo-árabes de la Gueniza de El Cairo* (Cordoba 2015).

10. See N. Allony, *The Jewish Library in the Middle Ages: Book Lists from the Cairo Genizah* (Jerusalem 2006) [Hebrew]; and M. Frenkel, «Book Lists from the Cairo Genizah: A Window on the Production of Texts in the Middle Ages», *BSOAS* 80, no. 2 (2017), 233–52 (and the bibliography mentioned at 234–35).

prices for their labor; book owners often wrote the titles of the books they loaned and sometimes also recorded the deposit for borrowing the book(s); finally, thematic lists of reading material for specific topics were prepared by students who, at times, also indicated the name of their teacher and the topic of the course.

The fragment T-S Ar.42.9 (Cambridge University Library) is a paper page measuring 18×12.4 cm and including 19 lines of Arabic text on recto and 11 lines on verso. Although fundamentally a Jewish institution, the Genizah preserved a significant number of Arabic manuscripts in Arabic script. Judeo-Arabic was naturally the most widespread language used in the Genizah fragments, but the Jewish scholars of Cairo were familiar with the Arabic language that they read and used regularly. As is very common among Genizah fragments, the content of the recto and verso of this leaf are disparate and do not belong together. While the verso preserves a portion of an unidentified secular poem in Arabic, the recto is a list of book titles that reveals *bāṭinī* topics. The state of conservation of the fragment, which is holed, torn, and shows signs of rubbing of the ink, does not allow a complete decipherment. It is, however, possible to read (line 1) that these are “all the books of the wise master” (*jamīʿ kutub al-shaykh al-ḥakīm*), whose interest in *bāṭinī* readings is revealed by the presence, at line 19, of the mention of a specific portion of the *Epistles* of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ; while the name of the Brethren of Purity is clearly legible, the portion of text that precedes it is damaged and allows only conjectural readings. We could read either a reference to “the portion on the soul” of the *Epistles* or the numeral “the fifth”. If the first hypothesis is correct, the booklist of the wise master would refer to the contents of *Epistles* 32–41¹¹; according to the other option, *Epistle* 5, which corresponds to the Brethren’s treatise on music, may have been intended here¹². The context of the booklist in which the *Epistles* are mentioned in this fragment provides – where readable –

11. The psychological epistles of the Brethren of Purity have recently been edited and translated in P. E. Walker, D. Simonowitz, I. K. Poonawala, and G. de Callatay (eds. and trans.), *Sciences of the Soul and Intellect, Part I: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 32–36* (Oxford 2016); and in C. Baffioni and I. K. Poonawala, *Sciences of the Soul and Intellect, Part III. An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 39–41* (Oxford 2017).

12. The most recent edition and study of *Epistle* 5 is O. Wright, *On Music: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistle 5* (Oxford 2010).

further information about the literary possessions and interests of the “wise master”. A book by Yūḥannā (*Kitāb Yūḥannā*) is mentioned at line 2, and possibly refers to Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh, the Nestorian Christian physician active in the first part of the third/ninth century; Yūḥannā was the personal physician for the ‘Abbāsid caliphs al-Ma’mūn, al-Mu’taṣim, al-Wāthiq, and al-Mutawakkil, and was for some time the teacher of Ḥunayn b. Ishāq. His production includes an extensive treatise on pathology, the *Kitāb al-kamāl wa-l-tamām* (The complete and perfect book) and several works on pharmacology and specific ailments¹³. The upper left side of the page is densely written and fairly damaged. Among the books listed here, three titles of Aristotelian works are clearly detectable: a discourse on the soul (*Maqāla fī al-nafs*) can be identified as Aristotle’s *De Anima*, the *Metaphysics* (*Kitāb mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a*), and the fifth book of the *Physics* (*al-khāmīs min al-Simā‘ al-Ṭabī‘ī*)¹⁴. The right side column also preserves the title of *Kitāb al-irshād* (Book of the guidance), which could be identified with the *Kitāb al-irshād li-maṣāliḥ al-anfus wa-l-aṣṣād* (The book of the guidance for the welfare of souls and bodies), a medical compendium begun in the sixth/twelfth century by Abū l-Makārim Hibat Allāh b. Zayn al-Dīn b. Jumay‘ al-Isrā’īlī and completed after his death by his students. Ibn Jumay‘ al-Isrā’īlī was chief physician in the court of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, and a contemporary of Maimonides in the medical duties at the Ayyūbid court¹⁵. The library of the wise master also

13. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah, ‘*Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*’, ed. and trans. E. Savage-Smith, S. Swain, G. J. van Gelder, 3 vols. in 5 (Leiden 2020), section 8.26, online: https://doi.org/10.1163/37704_0668IbnAbiUsaibia.Tabaqatalatib-ba.lhom-ed-arar1 (accessed 16 March 2024); E. Savage-Smith, ‘Ibn Māsawayh, Yūḥannā’, *EP*, online: http://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30635 (accessed December 2023); see also M. Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine* (Edinburgh 1978), 41–42.

14. On the Arabic *De Anima*, see ‘A. Badawī, *Aristutalis fī n-nafs* (Cairo 1954); and A. Ivry, ‘The Arabic Text of Aristotle’s *De anima* and Its Translator’, *Oriens* 36 (2001), 59–77. On the *Metaphysics*, see Aristotle, ‘*Maqāla al-Lām min Kitāb Mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a li-Aristū*’, ed. ‘A. Badawī, in *Aristū ‘inda l-‘Arab* (Cairo 1947), 1–11; and C. D’Ancona and G. Serra, *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodizia nella tradizione araba* (Padova 2002), 19–74. I am thankful to Sébastien Moureau for the identification of the last title and for the identification of other titles in this manuscript. I have not been able to decipher and identify the other works mentioned in this portion of manuscript due to material damage and its unclear script.

15. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah, ‘*Uyūn al-anbā’*’, section 14.2; D. Nicolae, ‘Ibn Jumay‘’, in *EP*, online: http://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30847 (accessed December 2023); and M. Meyerhof, ‘Mediaeval Jewish physicians in the Near East, from Arabic sources’, *Isis* 28 (1938), 432–60.

included medical classics, as the mention of Hippocrates' *Fuṣūl Abū-qrāt* (Medical aphorisms) at line 6 shows¹⁶. The medical focus of this booklist is further confirmed by the mention at line 9 of the *Firdaws al-Ḥikma* (a medical encyclopedia composed by 'Alī b. Sahl b. Rabban al-Ṭabarī in the third/ninth century) by the anonymous mention of a *Kitāb al-i'timād* (Reliable book, or Book of confidence) at line 10, and of a *Kitāb al-i'tidāl fī quwā al-adwiya* (Book on the balancing of the faculty of medicines) at line 12. Both titles could be identified as medical works by Abū Ja'far Aḥmad b. al-Jazzār al-Qayrawanī, the fourth-/tenth-century physician more notoriously credited with the authorship of the *Kitāb zād al-musāfir wa-qūt al-ḥādir* (Provisions for the traveler and nourishment for the sedentary), a medical treatise that gained widespread fortune in its Latin translation as *Viaticum*¹⁷. At line 11, reference is made to an *al-i'tilā* (Ascension/Elevation), but this title is not enough for a univoque identification of this work. Further below, at line 13, the list appears to deviate from medicine with the mention of a *Kitāb al-ḥakīm* by a certain al-Māwardī, whose identification is bound to remain conjectural: there was an author with the same *nisba*, namely 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, who became chief judge (*qāḍī*) of Baghdad during the first half of the fifth/eleventh century and penned several extensive political treatises. If this is the case, the title *Kitāb al-ḥakīm* mentioned in the fragment could be an abbreviation of *Kitāb al-aḥkām al-sultāniyya wa-l-wilāyāt al-dīniyya* (The ordinances of government), in which he

16. Our understanding of the Arabic reception of Hippocratic Aphorisms has benefited from the recent research project lead by Peter Pormann at the University of Manchester. See P. Pormann, *The Cambridge Companion to Hippocrates* (Cambridge 2018), in particular, ch. 15: 340-61; P. Pormann and K. Karimullah, «The Arabic Commentaries on the Hippocratic Aphorisms: Introduction», in *Oriens: Journal of the International Society for Oriental Research* 45 (2017), 1-52; P. Pormann and P. Joosse, «Commentaries on the Hippocratic Aphorisms in the Arabic Tradition: The Example of Melancholy», in *Epidemics in Context: Greek Commentaries on Hippocrates in the Arabic Tradition* (Berlin 2012), 211-49; T. Mimura, «Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq and the Text of the Hippocratic Aphorisms», *Galenos* 10 (2017), 67-71. A brief and useful note on the Hebrew tradition of Hippocrates' *Medical Aphorisms* with a list of extant manuscripts can be found in J. Jacobs and M. Schloessinger, «Hippocrates», in *Jewish Encyclopaedia* (1903), 6:403-4. See also L. Ferre, «The Medical Work of Hunayn ben Ishaq (Johannitus) in Hebrew Translation», *Korot* 11 (1995), 42-53.

17. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, '*Uyūn al-anbā*', section 13.3; G. Bos (ed. and trans.), *Ibn al-Jazzār's Zād al-Musāfir wa-Qūt al-Ḥādir, Provisions for the Traveller and Nourishment for the Sedentary* (Leiden 2015).

defined the functions of the caliphate during a time in which these functions tended to be obfuscated¹⁸. Line 15 appears to preserve the mention of a grammatical work, if the tentative reading *al-Muqaddima fī al-naḥw* (The introduction to grammar) is correct. Further below, at line 16, a faint trace of ink in the fragment can be read as the title of Muḥammad b. Zakarīyā' al-Rāzī's *Kitāb al-ḥāwī*, the extensive notebook of the fourth-/tenth-century polymath; this appeared after it was revised by his students and it became a medical classic in Europe as *Liber Continens*¹⁹. However, the fragment does not appear to mention any medical book by Ibn Sīnā that would have found a natural collocation in the list, but rather one of his more advanced philosophical works, the *Kitāb al-ishārāt* (generally known by the longer title *Kitāb al-ishārāt wa-l-tanbīḥāt* (The book of pointers and remainders, at line 18). The presence of this suggestive philosophical work may provide contextual evidence for the philosophical interests of the wise master, who also owned the portion of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* mentioned at line 19. The *Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīḥāt* is a peculiar work of Ibn Sīnā, since the exposition of its topics – logic, physics, and metaphysics – is intentionally concealed from the understanding of laymen by the use of allusion and obscurities²⁰. From the titles of the books in this list that are still readable, it is possible to note that we are looking at a significant collection of medical classics and a remarkable bibliographic source for the time. Although the focus and main strength of the library described by this list is clearly medical, some philosophical works are notably present: the *Ishārāt* by Ibn Sīnā, the Aristotelian works, and the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* provide a philosophically char-

18. C. Brockelmann, «Al-Māwardī», in *EP*, online: http://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0713 (accessed December 2023); 'A. b. M. al-Māwardī, *Kitāb al-aḥkām al-sultāniyya wa-al-wilāyāt al-dīniyya* (Beirut 1996).

19. Muḥammad b. Zakariyya al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-ḥāwī fī l-ṭibb* (*Continens of Rhazes*): *An Encyclopaedia of Medicine* (Hyderabad 1955-); M. Meyerhof, «Thirity-Three Clinical Observations by Rhazes [from the Ḥāwī]», in *Isis* 23 (1935), 321-56.

20. Ibn Sīnā, *Le livre des théorèmes et des avertissements*, ed. J. Forget (Leiden 1892); M. Zāre'ī, *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīḥāt li-l-Shaykh al-Ra'īs Ibn Sīnā* (Qum 2002); Ibn Sīnā (Avicenne), *Livre des directives et remarques*, trans. A. M. Goichon [French] (Paris 1951); *Ibn Sīnā, Remarks and Admonitions. Part One: Logic*, trans. S. C. Inati [English] (Toronto 1984); *Ibn Sīnā and Mysticism: Remarks and Admonitions: Part Four*, trans. S. C. Inati [English] (London 1996); *Ibn Sina's Remarks and Admonitions: Physics and Metaphysics*, trans. S. C. Inati [English] (New York 2014).

ged context for the medical materials in the list and suggest the wide interests of the owner of this library and possibly his sympathy for a non-mainstream approach to some philosophical themes.

The *Epistles* of the Brethren of Purity are also mentioned in another list of books found in a very small (6×6 cm) Genizah²¹ fragment preserved at Cambridge University Library. Fragment T-S AS 181.79 (Fig. 1) is written on paper, is blank on verso, and preserves only 6 lines of Arabic text on recto. The nature of this fragment is difficult to establish, since there is no mention of the aim of this list, nor is there any clue to the ownership of the books. The first line preser-

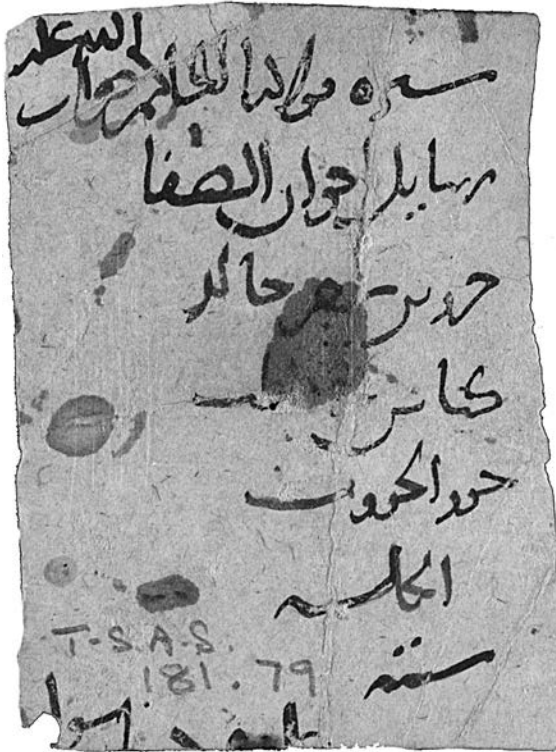


Fig. 1. Cambridge University Library, T-S AS 181.79 recto.

21. All images of Genizah fragments in this article were reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. I would like to thank Benjamin Outhwaite and Melonie Schmierer-Lee for their kind help in retrieving images of the fragments.

ves the title *Sīra Mawlānā l-Ḥākim* followed by a scribbled formula of blessing. The *Mawlānā l-Ḥākim*, whose biography is mentioned here, may be identified as Abū ‘Alī Maṣṣūr, also known as al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (d. 411/1021), the sixth Fāṭimid caliph and sixteenth Ismā‘īlī Imām. The Druze sect notoriously considered al-Ḥākim as a manifestation of God and put his figure at the center of their beliefs. His support for the education of Ismā‘īlī propagandists was fostered by the establishment of the *dār al-‘ilm* in Cairo, a center for the study of the Qur’ān, *ḥadīth*, logic, astronomy, and philosophy²². The mention of the *Sīra* of al-Ḥākim is followed by the mention of the *Epistles* of the Brethren of Purity or rather of a portion of the encyclopedia (the line reads: *min Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’*). A possible interpretation of the third line of the fragment as “two parts of the *poem by Khālīd*” (*juṣ’ayn shi’r Khālīd*) would reinforce the characterization of the cultural context of this booklist as a *bāṭinī* one. This Khālīd could be identified with the Umayyad prince Khālīd b. Yazīd b. Mu’āwīya, who died at the beginning of the second/eighth century, and to whom are attributed several alchemical works in both prose and verse²³. Given the aforementioned titles in this list, a very likely reading of the title at line 5 is *ju’z al-ḥurūf* (“the section on letters”). Although the identification of this entry with any known work is impossible, its title may add a lettristic tinge to a fragment that clearly shows how materials of a *bāṭinī* persuasion circulated in the world that left its trace in the Cairo Genizah.

22. The bibliography on al-Ḥākim, his rule, and his religious importance is vast, see the rich entry and the bibliography in P. E. Walker, «al-Ḥākim Bi-Amr Allāh», in *EP*, online: http://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30213 (accessed December 2023).

23. For an overarching assessment of the figure of Khālīd b. Yazīd, see R. Forster, «Khālīd b. Yazīd», in *EP*, online: http://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_35436 (accessed December 2023). On Khālīd as an initiator of the translation of alchemical texts, see the passages in al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist* (Leipzig 1871-72), 2:353, trans. B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture* (New York and London 1970), 850-51. On Khālīd as an alchemist, see J. Ruska, *Arabischen Alchemisten. I. Chālīd ibn Jazīd ibn Mu’āwīja* (Heidelberg 1924); and M. Ullmann, «Ḥālīd ibn Yazīd und die Alchemie: Eine Legende», *Der Islam* 55 (1978), 181-218. The most complete study of Khālīd’s alchemy to date is M. Dapsens, «The Alchemical Works of Khālīd b. Yazīd b. Mu’āwīya (d. c. 85/704)», *Asiatische Studien* 72.2 (2021), 327-427. See also the forthcoming M. Dapsens, *Arabice hoc elixir nuncupatur. Les Masā’il Khālīd li-Maryān-us al-rāhib dans leurs versions arabe et latine* (Florence forthcoming).

Fragments of the Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'

While the mentions of the *Rasā'il* in booklists appears to show their circulation, or at least the knowledge of their existence, in the community reflected by the Genizah papers, the retrieval of a number of fragments preserving the actual text of portions of the *Epistles* both in Arabic and Judeo-Arabic is a clearer sign that this work found interested readers among the Jews of medieval Cairo. In the following section, I focus on three of these manuscripts: an extensive fragment – at least for Genizah standards – of a Judeo-Arabic rendition of the epistles on the natural sciences; a single Judeo-Arabic leaf with a portion of the 35th *Epistle On the Intellect and the Intelligibles*; and a single-leaf Arabic fragment preserving a section of the treatment of music by the Ikhwān.

Cambridge University Library T-S Ar.29.54 and T-S Ar.43.289 became disjoined either in the Genizah chamber itself, or in some phase between their retrieval, conservation, encapsulation, and labeling. In any case, they belong to the same manuscript and preserve separate passages of the *Rasā'il* devoted to the natural sciences. The paper folios all measure approximately 19×12.5 cm and are densely written in a very neat and angular handwriting, which may hint, palaeographically, at a production of this copy in the sixth/twelfth or seventh/thirteenth century in the eastern Mediterranean area. The single leaf catalogued together with the multi-page fragment, T-S Ar.43.289 (P1)²⁴, preserves the end of the fourth, the fifth, and the beginning of the sixth *fuṣūl* of the 19th *Epistle*, the fifth epistle of the division on the natural sciences. The topics of these sections are the

24. Genizah fragments in the Cambridge Genizah Collections are labeled on the bottom right corner of their recto with a yellow (or more rarely white) tag showing their classmark. In the case of single-leaf manuscripts, this makes the identification of their recto and verso straightforward. In the case of bifolia, the label is found on the bottom right corner of the verso of the second leaf, so that the recto of the first page is the adjacent page on the left in the same opening. In the case of multiple bifolia, the provisional order of pages proposed by the cataloguers is signaled by a page number (e.g., P1, P2, P3) on a smaller white label. In what follows, I refer to pages of fragments according to this system: e.g., P2 2 recto indicates the recto of the second page of the second fragment in a multiple-leaf manuscript: this is the page that is found behind the one labeled with the fragment's classmark.

formation of hills and mountains from argils and sands that proliferate at the bottom of the seas, the connection of the different seas through visible gulfs and invisible passages and veins, the nature of internal lakes, and the causes of the agitation of the seas. It must be noted that the fragment was mislabeled: the recto and verso identified by the labels do not reflect the progression of the text of the *Epistles* and should be inverted. Fragment T-S Ar.29.54, where, like in the previous fragment, recto and verso have been inverted in the labeling phase, preserves a portion of the sixth *faṣl* of the 19th *Epistle*, where the discussion of the causes of the movements of the seas in relation to the movements of the Moon and the discussion on mountains are found. The bifolium T-S Ar.43.289 (P2) contains the longest portion of text of the *Rasā'il*, a Judeo-Arabic rendition of parts of the 21st *Epistle*, the seventh of the division on natural science, devoted to plants. The labeling on the fragment is again misleading. With regard to the text, the order of reading should be: P2 2 recto to P2 2 verso-[lacuna]-P2 1 recto to P2 1 verso. The fact that only the recto and verso of the two folios of this bifolium preserve a continuous text and the text does not run continuously throughout the two folios shows, first, that this fragment was part of a quire composed of multiple bifolia and, second, that this was not the central page of the quire. The fragment contains the end of the first *faṣl*, where kinds of plants are assessed according to the proportion of their parts; the complete second *faṣl*, where the topic is the variety of soils and environments in which plants can grow; the very beginning of the third *faṣl*, on spring as the season of growth for most plants; and a portion from the second half of the same *faṣl* devoted mainly to a very detailed description of the palm tree and the fig tree. A further point of interest in this manuscript, when considered as a whole, is the sporadic presence of Arabic words in Arabic script in the context of a Judeo-Arabic text: this feature occurs throughout the fragments of the 21st *Epistle* and points to the presence of an Arabic *Vorlage*: the Judeo-Arabic copyist may have struggled to understand some of the Arabic words and decided to reproduce their *ductus* without attempting a transcription in Hebrew script. In order to evaluate this Judeo-Arabic version of sections of the 19th *Epistle* and the 21st *Epistle* of the Ikhwān against the recently edited Arabic text, my diplomatic edition of the extant fragments can be found in the appen-

dix to this article²⁵. This cluster of fragments, with its extent and its codicological features, shows that the *Rasā'il* – or at least the epistles on the natural sciences – were copied and circulated among the Jews of medieval Cairo.

More evidence to back the previous statement is available. The Judeo-Arabic single-leaf fragment T-S Ar.43.286 is a paper manuscript measuring 14.10×9.3 cm. The 11 lines of text on recto and 12 on verso are written in a neat but unprofessional-looking handwriting²⁶. The presence of deleted words on verso may point to a private destination of this copy or to its being a draft. Given the lack of any further means of dating it, the fragment should be ascribed to the “classical Genizah period”. The Judeo-Arabic text preserved in this fragment is a short portion of the 34th *Epistle*, on the intellect and the intellegibles, the fourth of the division on the soul and the intellect. The Judeo-Arabic fragment, in particular, preserves the passage from the section on the human soul that discusses the relationship between the sensible images, the imaginative faculty, and the rational faculty, and includes the vivid description of a man who visits a new city: his senses take in the forms, the colors, the shapes, and sounds of the city and its inhabitants; these sensible images are impressed on the soul and will be retrieved from there when, once far from the city, the man wishes to recall them. The text itself does not present significant variants from the recent Oxonian edition²⁷.

Although the Cairene Jewish readership may have favored the Hebrew script, the first contact with the *Epistles*, and likewise with most of the Arabic philosophical and scientific production, must have happened through the circulation of Arabic manuscripts in Arabic script that Jewish scholars, physician, and notables in general obtained from their Muslim colleagues.

This may have been the case of fragment T-S Ar.41.23, a single leaf fragment on paper penned in a professional ‘Abbāsid bookhand;

25. The text of the fragment corresponds to the edition by C. Baffioni, *On the Natural Sciences: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 15-21* (Oxford 2013), 262-71, 434-47, 464-49.

26. The labeling of recto and verso of the fragment is incorrect: what is now identified as recto should be considered the verso.

27. P. Walker, D. Simonowitz, I. S. Poonawala, G. de Callatay (ed. and trans.), *Sciences of the Soul and Intellect. Part I: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 32-36* (Oxford 2016), 121-22.

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this fragment appears to point to the early origin of this witness, possibly the fifth/eleventh century²⁸. The fragment preserves a very accomplished copy of a portion of *Epistle 5*, the one devoted to music, and in particular its seventh chapter²⁹. In this chapter the Brethren expound on the basic elements of music and rhythmic principles: music is made up of melodies and melodies are made up of notes, which are composed of rhythmically arranged attacks. The Brethren argue that knowledge of prosody is a prerequisite for the musician, since it allows the understanding of the basic sequences of long and short sounds in both poetry and music, and of the basic rhythmic patterns. In the passage of this chapter preserved in the Genizah fragment, the Brethren summarize the aim of their encyclopedia:

to demonstrate to the practitioners of each art the oneness of the sublime Creator in relation to that art, so that they may understand more readily and be provided with clearer arguments and more cogent proofs... and also to show the manner in which existing things come into being one from another, with the permission of the Creator...³⁰

After this general statement, the focus returns to music and in particular to the sequences of attacks and pauses that make up the “light” (*khafīf*) and the “heavy” (*thaqīl*) rhythms. Among Genizah fragments, the retrieval of this folio from an early Arabic copy of the *Rasā’il* hints further at the multiple ways in which Arabic *bāṭinī* ideas and materials could penetrate the environment of the medieval Jewish Cariane community, through Judeo-Arabic renditions of Arabic texts – as seen above – but also through the direct acquisition and introduction of Arabic manuscripts on these topics. Fragments of the *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* corroborate the impression given by the booklists presented in the first part of this paper: Cairo Genizah fragments preserve evidence of the diffusion of *bāṭinī* works and ideas in the medieval eastern Mediterranean area.

28. In the evaluation of this fragment, I have benefited from Lucia Raggetti’s skilled palaeographic eye and academic generosity.

29. O. Wright, *On Music: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistle 5* (Oxford 2011), 56–58.

30. Wright, *On Music*, 106.

Jābirian Materials in the Genizah

Other rather unexplored sources that have already shown promising results and could contribute to our image of the circulation of *bāṭinī* ideas and influences are the fragments pertaining to the alchemical corpus of the Genizah³¹. This corpus, which currently consists of approximately 110 fragments, surely cannot be compared, in extent, with the abundance of medical fragments – which are around 2,000 only in the Cambridge collections – but it is particularly interesting when projected against the scarcity of sources on alchemy among medieval Jews and the desideratum for further critical work on the topic³². The alchemical fragments of the Genizah draw a portrait of engagement in both alchemical theories and practices, with a significant inclination toward the latter. More than half of the fragments record recipes, and more than 80 percent do not mention alchemical authorities nor titles of alchemical books, a possible sign of the more widespread appreciation for practical rather than theoretical alchemy among Cairene Jews. Also, in the case of alchemy, the fragments are distributed unevenly among the languages represented in the col-

31. Work toward the establishment of this corpus is still underway. The first core of manuscripts was identified by Gideon Bohak during his complete survey of Cambridge University Library's holdings on magic, and generously passed on to me. During my long-term research associateship with the Genizah Research Unit and thanks to the help of the Unit's experts, I managed to expand the corpus. I am working on an edition and translation of a selection of these alchemical fragments. For an introductory study, see G. Ferrario, «Fragments of Alchemy from a Cairene Synagogue: Context, Codicology, and Contents of the Alchemical Corpus of the Cairo Genizah», *Ambix* 71, no. 2 (2024), 141-71.

32. Although a certain privileged connection between Judaism and alchemy is described in ancient alchemical sources, the assessment regarding Jewish alchemical production, in particular during the Middle Ages, in R. Patai, *The Jewish Alchemists: A History and Source Book* (Princeton 1994) appears to be overstated; see in this regard G. Freudenthal, «Review of Patai, R. *The Jewish Alchemists: A History and Source Book*», *Isis* 86 (1995), 318-19; and Y. T. Langermann, «Review of Patai, R. *The Jewish Alchemists: A History and Source Book*», *JAOS* 116 (1996), 792-93. Recent surveys on medieval Jewish alchemy and alchemists include G. Ferrario, «The Jews and Alchemy: Notes for a Problematic Approach», in *Chymia: Science and Nature in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Newcastle upon Tyne 2010), 19-30; G. Freudenthal, «Alchemy in Medieval Jewish Cultures: A Noted Absence», in *Science in Medieval Jewish Cultures* (Cambridge and New York 2011), 343-58; G. Ferrario, «Alchemy in the Jewish Context», in *A Cultural History of Chemistry*, vol. 2: *Middle Ages* (London 2022), 2:87-91.

lection, with a predominance of Judeo-Arabic, the language of the vast majority of the fragments, followed by Arabic, and then Hebrew materials. A handful of alchemical fragments are written in a mixture of these three languages. Caution should always be applied when attempting to draw conclusions from materials found in the Genizah; technically, the Genizah does not offer the portrait of a society, but rather the portrait of the detritus of a society, through writings that were deemed useless and thrown away at a certain point of their existence. Perfectly sound and bound books surely circulated among the Jews of Fustāṭ, but these volumes may not have become disjointed and may have continued their lives outside and possibly far from the Genizah chamber. The small number of alchemical fragments that mention alchemical and philosophical authorities are a useful lens through which it is possible to note the diffusion of materials linked to the name of the notorious alchemist Jābir b. Ḥayyān, a vehicle for the transmission of *bāṭinī* ideas³³.

A significant fragment needs to be reconstructed by joining two torn pieces of manuscript that ended up in two different divisions of the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collections: T-S Ar.44.4 and T-S NS 31.6. The two fragments were briefly mentioned by Paul Fenton in 1997 as preserving a *fihris*t of alchemical literature, a description that

33. The most important works on the Jābirian corpus, its philosophical sources, and ramifications include P. Kraus, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān: Essai sur l'histoire des idées scientifique dans l'Islam*, vol. 1: *Textes Choises* (Paris and Cairo 1935); P. Kraus, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān, contribution à l'histoire des idées scientifiques dans l'Islam*, vol. 2: *Jābir et la science grecque* (Cairo 1942); and P. Kraus, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān, contribution à l'histoire des idées scientifiques dans l'Islam*, vol. 1: *Le corpus des écrits jābiriens* (Cairo 1943). See also P. Lory, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān, Dix traités d'alchimie. Les dix premiers traités du Livre des soixante-dix* (Paris 1983). The historical reality and chronological collocation of Jābir b. Ḥayyān has been at the center of a lively scholarly debate. Kraus maintains that «Jābir» should be considered a collective name for a group of third-/ninth-century scholars with Shī'ī inclinations. Although Kraus' hypothesis has been criticized (e.g., by S. Nomanul Haq, *Names, Natures and Things: The Alchemist Jābir ibn Ḥayyān and his Kitāb al-Aḥjār (Book of Stones)*, [New York 1994], 3-32, who maintains the existence of a single alchemist called Jābir, who flourished in the second/eighth century and composed all the books that bear his name), it remains still the most solid. Important new findings that further problematize the question of Jābir's biography and historicity appear in T. Delva, «The Abbasid Activist Ḥayyān al-ʿAṭṭār as the Father of Jābir b. Ḥayyān: An Influential Hypothesis Revisited», *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 4.1 (2017), 35-61. The most recent and complete assessment of Jābir is R. Forster, «Jābir B. Ḥayyān», in *EP*, online: http://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_32665 (accessed December 2023).

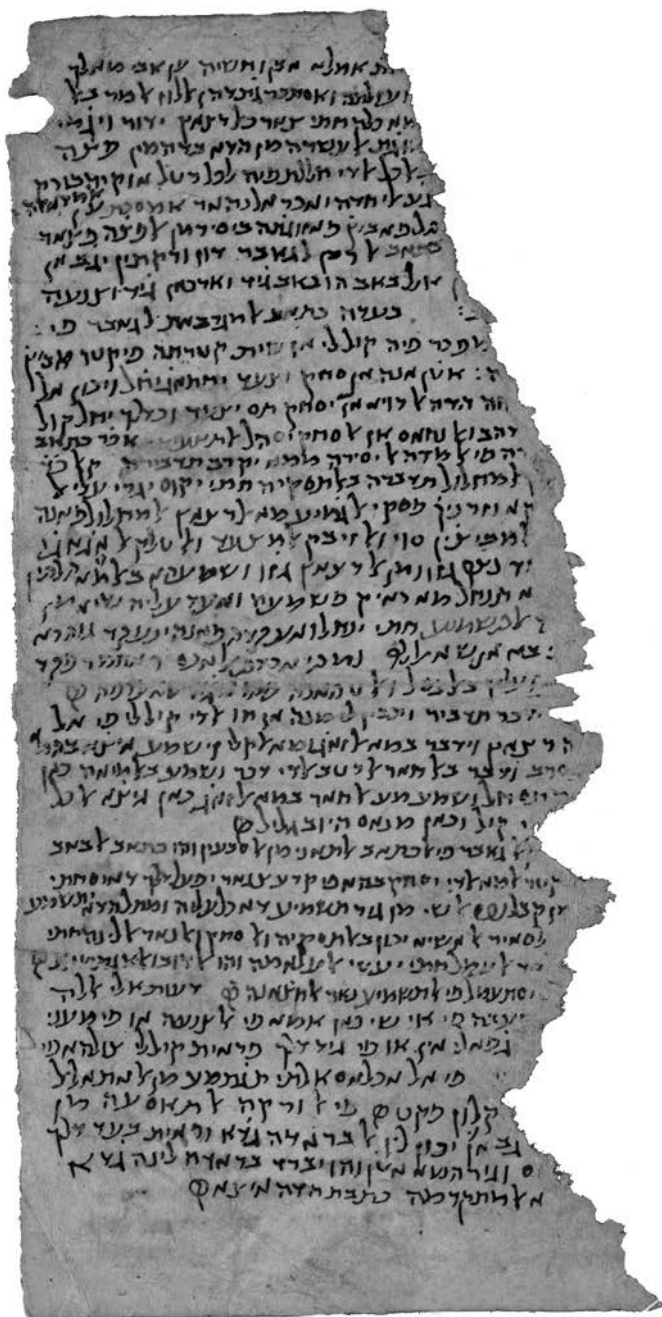


Fig. 3. Cambridge University Library, T-S Ar.44.4 recto.



Fig. 4. Cambridge University Library, T-S NS 31.6 verso.

only partially fits the content of the fragments³⁴. The codicological features of the two torn halves of this fragment are the first clues that they were part of the same page: both fragments are on similar paper; both measure approximately 22 × 10 cm and both have 40 lines on one side (recto for T-S Ar.44.4 and verso for T-S NS 31.6, which has been mislabelled) and 42 on the other; both are written in a very minute but clear Judeo-Arabic hand from the “classical Genizah period”. Once the two fragments are joined along the tear, the lines match and their contents form an extensive portion of an alchemical work. Unfortunately, due to physical damage to the manuscript, the text cannot be completely deciphered. The fragment describes a series of alchemical operations, starting with recipes on silver, its cleaning, ways to increase its volume, and techniques for dyeing other metals in order to transmute them into silver. In this regard, its content is not different from other dozens of alchemical works found in the Genizah. It stands out because the practical operations are interspersed with bibliographic indications of alchemical books and authorities and, at times, it comments on the physical features of those books or their contents. Line 1 mentions Ibn Waḥshiyya without reference to a title³⁵. Line 8 mentions a *Kitāb al-rukn li-Jābir* (The book of the basis or The book of the pillar by Jābir), which is the seventh book of the *Kutub al-mi’a wa-l-ithnā ‘ashara* (The one hundred and twelve books)³⁶. After the title, the text adds a very interesting note: *dūn waraqtayn* (“without two leaves”), a remark that may indicate the presence of a physical copy of this Jābirian work at the disposal of the writer of this passage. On lines 10 and 15, the *Kitāb mujarradāt* is mentioned as a source for an operation involving the dissolution of mercury, salt, and alkali salt. The Jābirian *Kitāb al-mujarradāt* (Book of abstractions) is the 56th book of the One hundred and twelve books³⁷. Jābir himself described its content in chapter 33 of his *Kitāb*

34. P. Fenton, «Judaean-Arabic Mystical Writings of the XIIIth-XIVth Centuries», in *Judaean-Arabic Studies: Proceedings of the Founding Conference of the Society for Judaean-Arabic Studies* (Amsterdam 1997), 88 n. 3.

35. On the intriguing figure of Ibn Waḥshiyya and his works, see the overview in J. Hämeen-Anttila, «Ibn Waḥshiyya», in *EP*, online: http://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_32287 (accessed December 2023); and M. Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam* (Leiden 1972), 209, 440-43.

36. Kraus, *Contribution*, 1:17.

37. Kraus, *Contribution*, 1:30.

al-khawāṣṣ, saying that “all the operations of the One hundred and twelve books are condensed in this single work, in which Jābir listed five thousand operations [sic] and which constitutes the basis and the accomplishment of all the One hundred and twelve books”³⁸. At line 14, the title of another Jābirian work is mentioned: the *Kitāb al-riyāḍ* (The book of the garden or The book of the flowerbed)³⁹. Further below, at line 29, we find a reference to *al-Kitāb al-thānī min al-Sabʿīn wa-huwa Kitāb al-bāb* (The second book of the *Book of seventy*, which is the book of the door)⁴⁰. These numerous references imply that a vast selection of the Jābirian corpus was somehow available to the person who wrote this text. Moreover, the explicit mention of their precise location in the traditional collections of treatises attributed to Jābir naturally presupposes that such collections had already assumed their traditional shape by the time this fragment was written; this was an organization and order that was also well known among the Jewish “alchemists” of medieval Cairo⁴¹. A further phrase, at line 38, may hint even more about the compiler’s familiarity with a physical volume of the works by Jābir. The title of the work referred to here is unfortunately unreadable due to the bad rubbing of the ink at the bottom of T-S NS 31.6, but, when the text moves to the better-preserved half of T-S Ar.44.4, the phrase: *fī al-waraq al-tāsiʿa min* (“in the ninth page of”), can be read as a clear reference to an actual copy of a book.

In order to provide more evidence of the availability of Jābirian material to the Jewish readership of medieval Egypt, mention should be made of the recent discovery and possible identification of fragment T.S Ar.35.104⁴². Made up of three bifolia for a total of twelve pages, the manuscript stands out as possibly the most extensive fragment of the Genizah alchemical corpus. Penned by a very crude and

38. Kraus, *Essay sur l'histoire*, 1:324-25. The *Kitāb al-khawāṣṣ* is also found in Kraus’ catalogue, see Kraus, *Contribution*, 1:33.

39. Kraus, *Contribution*, 1:37.

40. Kraus, *Contribution*, 1:45.

41. By using the word «alchemist» here I am not implying that the writer of this fragment was a practicing alchemist. I use the term for brevity, implying the interest of the writer of these pages in alchemy, be it in its theory, practice, or both, since the content of this fragment aptly addresses both *theorica* and *practica*.

42. See G. Ferrario, «Alchemy in the Cairo Genizah: The Nachlass of an Untidy Jewish Alchemist», *Asiatische Studien* 75.2 (2021), where I discuss this fragment in the context of other manuscripts copied by the same hand.

irregular hand – surely not by a trained scribe – it preserves what at first sight appears to be a long list of Jābirian works. As an example, P1 1 recto mentions in order the titles of the ten *Kutub al-muṣaḥḥaḥāt* (Books of the rectifications) by Jābir⁴³:

The first is *The Rectifications of Pythagoras*, the second is *The Rectifications of Socrates*, the third is *The Rectifications of Plato*, the fourth is *The Rectifications of Aristotle*, the fifth is *The Rectifications of Aristotle*⁴⁴, the sixth is *The Rectifications of Arkājālīs*⁴⁵, the seventh is *The Rectifications of Homer*, the eighth is *The Rectifications of Democritus*, the ninth is *The Rectifications of Ḥarbī*, the tenth is *Our Rectifications by us*.

And P2 verso appears to establish a sequence in which Jābirian books should be read:

The *Book of the Transmutation*⁴⁶ is in ten parts; this is a noble and very extensive book, in which sciences that I have never [explained] thoroughly before are presented and through which man reaches the goal in this art as well as in all the things, the sciences and philosophy, if God (glorified and exalted be He) wills. *The Book of the Guidance*⁴⁷ is in one part and it must be read afterwards, if God (glorified and exalted be He) wills. My *Epistle to Maṣṣūr b. Aḥmad b. Barmak*⁴⁸, is in one part and must be read after that, if God (glorified and exalted be He) wills, and He grants success. My *Epistle to Jaʿfar b. Khālīd b. Yaḥyā b. Barmak*⁴⁹ is in two parts and they must be read afterwards, if God wills...

43. The ten *Kutub al-muṣaḥḥaḥāt* are catalogued in Kraus, *Contribution*, 1:64–67.

44. This name, written in Arabic script in the fragment, could be read as «Aristajālīs» or, rather less likely, as «Aristaḥālis», or «Aristakhālis». This appears as a duplication of the mention of Aristotle that the Jewish copyist did not identify as such. For the same confusion in the *Fihrist*, see al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 2:194 n. 1.

45. Kraus, *Contribution*, 1:66 lists two titles, *Kitāb muṣaḥḥaḥāt Arshijānas* and *Kitāb muṣaḥḥaḥāt Arkāghānīs*, as the Rectifications of Archigenes.

46. Kraus, *Contribution*, 1:38, 98.

47. Kraus *Contribution*, 1:38. The title could be read as *Kitāb al-hudā* (The book of the guidance) or *Kitāb al-hadā* (The book of the offering); the two readings are mentioned by Kraus, who adds that the fifth book of the Jābirian *Seventy Books* also has the same title.

48. Kraus, *Contribution*, 1:39 mentions a *Kitāb talyīn al-ḥijāra ilā Maṣṣūr b. Aḥmad al-Barmakī* (The book on the softening of stones for Maṣṣūr b. Aḥmad al-Barmakī), which could be identified with the book in the list.

49. Kraus *Contribution*, 1:39 mentions a *Kitāb aghrād al-ṣanʿa ilā Jaʿfar b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī* (The book on the aims of the art for Jaʿfar b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī) which could be identified with the book in the list.

The two passages translated above may suffice to represent the content of the whole fragment, which can be described roughly as an annotated list of titles of Jābirian treatises and epistles, of their usefulness, but – most interestingly – also as a guide to the order in which they should be read. Indeed, this Judeo-Arabic text very often uses the expression *wa-yanbaghī an yuqra’ ba’dahu* (“and it needs to be read after it”) and similar phrases that aim at tracing a progressive learning path through the vast Jābirian production. In a sense, this fragment offers a remedy for Jābir’s infamous *tabdīd al-‘ilm* (“scattering of knowledge”), a principle that requires the presentation of the alchemical “secrets” to take place not in a linear and progressive way, but rather by disseminating them throughout various works and hence concealing their sequential understanding. Once ascertained that this list of book does not reproduce al-Nadīm’s *fihrist* of Jābirian treatises, it appears very likely that the identification of this fragment as the only (although fragmentary) known extant copy of Jābir’s *Kitāb tartīb qirā’at kutubinā* (The book on the order of reading of our books), which is mentioned in the second book of the Jābirian *Book of seventy* and is listed by Kraus as lost, appears very likely. Another possible identification of this fragment could point to either Jābir’s *al-Fihrist al-kabīr* (The great index), that would include a list of all of the works of the alchemist, or the *al-Fihrist al-ṣaghīr* (The small index) that would only be devoted to his works on the alchemical art⁵⁰. These two catalogues are considered lost by Kraus, who argues that these indexes were not only lists of titles, but also determined the relationships between the different parts of the corpus – a feature that may well describe the content of fragment T-S Ar.35.104⁵¹.

Both the alchemical fragments discussed above appear to point at the circulation, presence, and thorough familiarity with the alchemical corpus attributed to Jābir b. Ḥayyān, whose works may have functioned as an enticing point of entry of *bāṭinī* ideas into the intellectual horizon of the society that left its writings in the Genizah of the Ben Ezra Synagogue.

50. Al-Nadīm, *Kitāb*, 1:355; Kraus, *Contribution*, 3-4.

51. Kraus, *Contribution*, 1:3 notes that Jābir mentions the existence of these catalogues in his *Kitāb uṣṭuqus al-uss*, in the *Kitāb al-kabīr*, in the *Kitāb al-sab‘īn*, in the *Kitāb al-‘awālīm*, in the *Kitāb al-mizān al-ṣaghīr* and in the *Kitāb al-naqd*.

Conclusion

The examples presented in this very limited survey suggest that Genizah material can be a fruitful source of evidence to reconstruct the ways *bāṭinī* ideas and texts circulated in the Mediterranean world. The relevance of the Genizah is connected to the prime role of Cairo as the center of medieval Judaism between the fourth/tenth and the seventh/thirteenth centuries. Geographically positioned in the middle of the routes between eastern Jewish centers (like Jerusalem and the rabbinical academies in Iraq) and the Jewish centers on the Mediterranean coast and al-Andalus, Cairo was a mandatory stop for traveling intellectuals and a crucible of innovations. As far as *bāṭinī* ideas and texts are concerned, Genizah materials have the potential of revealing their modes of transmission from the Islamic East to al-Andalus and, vice versa, of shedding light on the texts and ideas Jews brought out of al-Andalus during the Almohad (al-Muwaḥḥidūn) period, when a large number of Jewish intellectuals left the Iberian Peninsula for other areas of the Islamic world and for Europe. Incidentally, Cairo was also a center of trade, being suitably positioned as a commercial hinge between the Mediterranean and the Indian trade routes. As we know, texts and ideas travel with people, not by themselves. The presence of a significant trace left by *bāṭinī* ideas and works in the Genizah calls for more research in this direction. In many respects, the Genizah is still a rich and understudied treasure trove of information not only about Cairene Judaism, but about all aspects of life and of intellectual exchanges and influences in the medieval Mediterranean world.

APPENDIX

1) Diplomatic edition of T-S Ar.43.289 and T-S Ar.29.54, Cambridge University Library, a fragmentary Judeo-Arabic version of *Epistle 19* and *Epistle 21* of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'⁵².

T-S Ar.43.289 (P1) verso

262	בחר גבאל ותלאל ורואבי כמה תנבת מן הבוב	I
	אלריאח פי אלברארי דעאץ אלרמאל. ואעלם יאכי	
263	באנה כלמא אנצמת קעור אלבחאר מן הזה אלגבאל	
	ואלתלאל אלתי דכרנא אנהא תנבת פאן אלמא ירתפע	
5	ויטלב אלתסאע וינבסט עלי סואחלהא נחו אלברארי	
	ואלקפאר פיגטיהא לאמא פלא יזאל דלך דאימא	
	בטול אלזמאן חתי תציר מואדע אלברארי בחאר	
	ומואצע אלבחאר יבסא וקפאר וזהכדא לא יזאל	
	אלגבאל תתכסר ותתחטם פתציר חצא ורמלא	
10	ואחגארא ותחמלהא אלאודיה ואלאנהאר בגדריאנהא	
	נחו אלבחאר ותנעקד הנאך כמה וצפנא חתי תנכפץ	
	אלגבאל אלשאמכה חתי תסתוי בוגה אלארץ [264] והכדא	
	לא יזאל דלך אלטין ואלרמאל תנבסט פי קעור אל	
	בחר ותתלבד ותנבת מנהא אלתלאל ואלרואבי	
15	ואלגבאל וינצב ען דלך אלמכאן אלמא חתי תטהר	
	תלך אלגבאל ותנכשף תלך אלתלאל ותציר גזאיר	
	וברארי ויציר מא יבקי מן אלמא פי והדאתהא	
	וקעורהא בחיראת או אגאמא וגדראן וינבת	
	חולהא אלקצב فالדחול ולא תזאל אלסיול תחמל	
20	אלי הנאך אלטין ואלרמאל ואלוחול חתי תגף תלך	
	אלמואדע ותנבת הנאך אלשאגאר ואלעשב	
	والعكرش ותציר מואדע ללסבאע ואלוחוש תם	
	יקצדהא אלנאס לטלב אלמנאפע	

52. Numbers between square brackets in the text of the edition indicate the corresponding pages in the edition of the Arabic texts in Baffioni, *Natural Sciences*.

T-S Ar.43.289 (P1) recto

אלמראפק מן אלחטב ואלציז וגירהמא ויסכנהא אלנאס I
 ותציר מואצע ללזרע אלגרס ואלבלדאן [265] ואלקרי ואלמדן
 ואעלם יאכי אידך אללה ואיאנא ברוח מנה באן הדה
 אלבחאר אלתי דכרנאהא באנהא מסתנקעאת עלי וגה
 5 אלארץ ובינהא גבל שאמכה והי כאלמסניאת להא
 פהי מתסלה בעצהא בבעץ אמא בחלגאן בינהא
 עלי טהר אלארץ ואמא במנאפד להא וכרוק פי באטן
 אלארץ ואן פי וסט הדה אלבחאר גזאיר כתירה
 צגאר וכבאר פמנהא עאמרה באלנאס ופיהא מזארע
 וקרי ומדן וממאלך ומנהא ברארי וקפאר ופיהא IO
 גבאל ואגאם [266] ופיהא סבאע ווחוש ואנעאם ואנואע
 מן אלחיואנאת לא יעלם כתריתהא אלא אללה עז וגל ואן
 פי וסט תלך אלגזאיר בחירת צגאר וכבאר ונאהאר
 וגדראן ואגאם פמנהא מא מיאההא עדבה אלמיאה
 ומנהא מאלחה שדידה אלמלוחה ומנהא שדידה I 5
 אלמראה ומנהא בעיד קערהא גליט מאוהא
 שדיד אמואגהא ומנהא דון תלך מכתלפה אלואנהא
 ואחואלהא ואוצאפהא אכתלאפא כתירא מתפאותא
 לא יחצי עדדהא אלא אללה תבארך ותגלי וסנדר
 20 טרפא מן עלל דלך ליעלם חקיקה מא קלנא
 וצחה מא וצפנא פאמא עלה היגאן אלבחאר
 וארתפאע מיאההא ומדודהא עלי [267] סואחלהא
 ושדה תלאטם אמואגהא והבוב

T-S Ar.29.54 verso

אלריאח וקת היגאנהא אלי אלגהאת אלה" פי אוקאת מכתלפה I
 מן אלשתא ואלציף ואלרביע ואלכריף ואואיל אלשהור
 ואואכרהא וסאעאת אלליל ואלנהאר פהו מן אגל אן מיאההא
 אדא חמית פי קראהא וסכנת לטפת ותחללת וטלבת
 5 מכאנא אוסע ממא כאן קבל פדאפע בעץ אגזאיהא
 בעצא אלי אלגהאת אלכמס פוקא ושרקא וגרבא וגנובא
 ושמאלא ללאטסאע פיכון פי אלוקת אלואחד עלי
 סואחלהא ריאח מכתלפה מן גהאת מכתלפה ואמא
 עלה היגאנהא פי וקת דון וקת פהו בחסב אשכאל
 10 אלפלך ומטארח שעאעאת אלכואכב עלי [268] סטוח תלך
 אלבחאר מן אלאפאק ואלאותאד אלד" ואתצאלאת אלקמר
 בהא ענד חלולה פי מנאזלה אלכ"ח כמא הו מדכור

פי כתב אחכאם אלנגום ואמא עלה מדוד בעץ
 אלבחאר פי וקת טלועאת אלקמר ומגיבה דון גירהא
 15 מן אלבחאר פהי מן אגל אן תלך אלבחאר פי קראהא
 צכור צלבה ואחגאר צלדה פאדא אשרק אלקמר עלי
 סטוח תלך אלבחאר וצלת מטארח שעאעאתה אלי
 תלך אלצכור ואלאחגאר אלתי פי קראהא תם אנעכסת
 מן הנאך באלשעאעאת ראגעה פסכנת תלך אל
 20 מיאה וחמית ולטפת וטלבת מכאנא אוסע
 וארתפעת אלי פוק ודפע בעצהא בעצא ותמוגת
 אלי סואחלהא ופאצת עלי סתותהא ותראגעת ותרדדת
 תלך אלאנהאר אלתי כאנת תנצב אליהא אלי כלף
 ראגעה [269] וארתפעת מיאה אלאנהאר ותדאפעת
 25 ראגעה אלי כלף ולא יזאל דלך דאבה אמא דאם

T-S Ar.29.54 recto

אלקמר מרתפעת אלי ותד אלסמא פאדא תנאהא
 1 ואקבל ינחט סכן ענד דלך גליאן תלך אלמיאה וברדת
 ואנצמת תלך אלאגזא וגלטת ורגעת אלי קראהא
 וגרת אלאנהאר עלי עאדאתהא פלא יזאל דלך דאהבא
 5 אלי אן יבלג אלקמר אלי אפק תלך אלבחאר אלגרבי
 מנהא תם יבתדי אלמד במתל עאדתה והו פי אפק
 אלמשרק ולא יזאל דלך דאבה חתי יבלג אלקמר אלי
 ותד אלארץ פינתהי אבד אלמד ירגע אלי אן יבלג אל
 קמר אלי אפקה אלשרקי מן אלראס וכל דלך בתקדיר
 10 אלעזיז אלעלים פאן קיל פלם לא יכון אלמד [270] ואלגזר
 ענד טלוע אלשמס ואשראקהא עלי סתוח תלך
 אלבחאר פקד בינא דלך פי רסלה אלעלל ואלמעלולאת
 פאערפהא מן הנאך אן שא אללה ואמא עלה אכלתאף
 תצאריף אלריאח פי אלגהאת אלסת פי אוקאת אלליל
 15 ואלנהאר ואלשתא ואלציף פקד דכרנאהא פי רסלה
 אלאתאר אלעלויה ואמא אלגבאל אלתי דכרנא אנהא
 כאלמסניאת ללבחאר والبرندات להא פהי ראסיה
 פי אלארץ וצולהא שאמכה פי אלגו ורוסהא שאהקה
 פי אלהוא ארתפאעהא ממדתה עלי וגה אלארץ
 20 באטואלהא מא בין פראסך פמנהא מא הו מן אל
 משרק אלי אלמגרב ומנהא מא הו מן אלגנוב אלי
 אלשמאל ומנהא מא הו פי נכבאות הדה אלגהאת
 מדכורה [271] פי רסאלה جغرافيا בעץ אוצאפהא
 ואעלם יאכי באן מן הדה אלגבאל

T-S Ar.43.289 (P2) 2 recto

- I [432] ממא לא תמרה להא או מן אלורקה להא ולא סמג להא
 אעלם באן מן אלאשגאר אלתאמה מא הי אתם ואכמל
 מן בעץ ותתפאצל פי דלך מן גהאת עדה פמנהא מא הי
 מן גהה אצולהא ודלך אן מנהא מא יקום עלי אצולהא
 5 ותרתפע פי אלהוא ותתפרע פי אלגהאת כשגרה אלתין
 ואלתות ואלגוז וגירה ומנה מא תרתפע פי אלהוא
 מנתצבא מפרדא כשגרה אלנכל ואלסרו ואלקנא ואלסאג
 וגירה והכדא חכם [433] ערוקהא פי אלארץ פאן מנה מא
 תנזל ערוקה פי אלארץ כאלאותאד מנתצבה ומנהא מא
 ידב פי אלגהאת עלי אלאסתקאמה ומנה מא ינעטף
 10 וינפרג וילתף ומנהא מא יגאור בעצהא בעצא ומעהא מא
 יגאוד בעצהא באצא פי מנאבתהא ותזדחם
 מא תנפדר לא תנבת תחתהא גירה ומן אלנבאת ואל
 שגר מא ורקתה ותמרתה מתנאסבין פי אלכבר מתל
 15 אלואן ואלשכל ואלמס כאלאתרג ואלנארנג ואללימון ואל
 כמתרי ואלתפאח ומא שאכלהא ומן אלנבאת אלשגר
 מא תמרה וחבתה גיר מנאסב לורקה פי אלכבר ואל
 שגר אלרמאן ואלתין ואלענב ואלגוד ואלנכל וגירה ממא
 ישאכלהא ודלך [434] אן שגרה אלאתרג מדחרג אלשכל
 20 תמרהא אכדר אללון לין אללמס מנאסבא לורקה ואלנארנג
 מסתדיר אלשכל מנסבא לורקה שגרתה ואלכמתרי
 מכרוט אלשכל כדלך ורקה שגרתה ואלתפאח מסתדיר
 אלשכל וכדלך ורקה שגרתה פאמא תמרה אלרמאן
 פגיר מתנאסב פי אלכבר וכדלך אלתין ואלענב
 25 וגירהמא עלי הדא אלקיאס

T-S Ar.43.289 (P2) 2 verso

- I חכם חבוב אלנבאת [435] ובזורהא מנה מא הו מנאסב
 מא הי גיר מנאסב כל דלך לעלל ואסבאב ומראתב
פצל פי ביאן אגנאס אלנבאת מן גהה אלאמאכן
 אעלם יאכי באן מן אלנבאת מא ינבת פי אלברארי ואלקפאר
 5 ומנהא מא ינבת עלי רווס אלגבאל ומנהא עלי שטוט
 אלאנהאר וסואחל אלבחאר ומנהא פי אלאגאם ואלגיאץ
 ומנה מא יזרעונהא אלנאס או יגרסונהא פי אלקרי
 אלסואדאת ופי אלבסאתין ואלאקרהה ואעלם יאכי אן
 אכתר אלנבאת ינבת עלי וגה אלארץ אלא אלקליל מנהא
 10 פאנה ינבת בחית אלמא קצב אלסכר ואלארז ואלנילופר

ואנואע מן אלעכס ומן אלנבאת מא ינבת עלי [436] וגה
 אלמא כאלטחלב ומנהא מא *ينفسخ* עלי אלשגר ואלנבאת
 כאלכשותא ומנהא מא ינבת עלי וגה אלצכור ככצר
 אלוהר ומן אלנבאת מא לא ינבת אלא פי אלבלדאן אלדפיה
 ומנהא פי אלבלדאן אלבארדה ומנהא מא לא ינבת
 אלא פי אלתרבה אלטיבה ומנהא מא לא ינבת אלא פי אל
 רמאל ובין אלחצא [437] ואלאחגאר ואלצכור ואלארצין אל
 יאבסה ומנהא מא לא ינבת אלא פי אלארצין אלסכנה
 الشورجة **פצל פי אכתלאף אלנבאת מן גהה אלזמאן**
 ואעלם יאכי באן אכתר אלעשב ואלכלא ואלחשאישי
 תנבת פי איאם אלרביע לאעתדאל אלזמאן וטיב
 אלהוא וכתרה אלאמטאר אלמתקדמה פי אלשתא
 ואמא אלדי ינבת מנהא פי אלפצול אלתלתה פהי
 קלילה פמנהא מא יזרעהא

T-S Ar.43.289 (P2) i recto

[464] אלארתפאע מסתדיר אלאצל מסדס *مجارح* אלשעב
 מסתטיל אלאוראק מזדוג מקאבל ריכו אלגרם מתכלכל
 תרכיב אלגסם מחשו כללהא *بزيير* ריכו מלתף חולה
 עלי אצול סעפה ליפאת [465] מנסוגה מורבה טבקא ג'
 להא עלה כתירה עדד ערוק הזה אלשגרה והי אנמא
 תגדב בהא אלקוה אלטביעיה אלגאדבה אלמואד אלכתירה
 ותלך לשדה חאגה הזה אלגנס מן אלנבאת אלי אלמואד
 אלכתירה לכתר גתתהא ועטם גרמהא וטול קאמתהא
 וכתרה עדד סעפאתהא ואוראקהא לכימא תסתעמל
 אלטביעיה תלך אלמואד בעצהא פי גרם ערוקהא טולא
 וערצא ועמקא ובעצהא יסתעמל פי גרמה אסולהא
 טולא וערצא ועמקא ובעצהא פי גרם סעפהא מתל דלך
 ובעצהא פי גרם [466] אוראקהא ובעדהא פי ליפהא ובעצהא פי
 כרוג אכמאם טלעהא ובעצהא פי כרוג קצבאן קנואנהא
 ובעצהא פי גרם נואה תמרתהא ובעצהא פי לחם תמרתהא
 ודבסהא ושירגהא ואמא אלעלה פי אן געל תרכיב
 גרם אצלה רכצא רכוא מתכלכלא לכימא יסהל
 עלי אלקוה אלטביעיה גדב תלך אלמואד מן אספלהא [467] אלי
 אעאליהא ורוס אגדאעהא ופרוע סעפהא ואוראקהא
 פלו כאן גרם אצלהא צלבא מתכאתפא כתירא
 כסאיר אלאשגאר אלטואל כאלסאג ואלדלב ואלסרו
 לעסר עלי אלקוה אלטביעיה גדב תלך אלמואד
 אלי הנאך ולכתרה עדד

T-S Ar.43.289 (P2) I verso

ערוק שגר אלנכל עלה אכרי ודלך אן אסל גרסה למא I
 כאן מרכבא כאנהא כיוטאת מגמועה מתדאכלה
 געל לכל [468] כיט מנהא ערקא ממדא פי אלארץ ימתן
 בהא אלמואד אלי דלך אלכית מפרדא ליסהל עלי אלטביעה
 תקסם תלך אלמואד עלי תלך אלקצבאן מן אול אלאמר 5
 ולמא כאן תרכיב שגר אלנכל עלי מא דכרנא מן אלרכאווה
 ואלתכלכל לפת עליהא אלטביעה סעפאת מן אלליף עלי
 אצול מכארג סעפאתהא מן אגדאעהא כאנהא מנאזל
 מסתדידה עלי וסט גבאל מתשמר כל דלך לכימא ימסך
 אצול תלך אלסעפאת עלי גדועהא ולא ינפסל ענהא 10
 ענד הב אלריאח אלעאצפה ולא תנצדע תלך אלאגדאע
 מן אעאליהא עלי אסאפלהא ענד מילאנהא ימנה ויסרה
 ענד תחרך אלריח להא ואמא אלסבב אלדי מן אגלה
 געל עלי אלטלע אלגלאף לכימא יחפטה ויצונה מן אלאפאת
 אלעארצה מן אלברד ואלחר אלמפרט ואלקטר אלשדיד 15
 [469] ואלריאח ואלעואצף ואלגבאר ומא שאכל דלך מן הדה אל
 אשיא אלמצרה להא לאנהא רטבה נדיה רכצה רכזה
 פאדא אסתחכמת ואשתדת ואנשקת תלך אלאכמאם
 ואלגלף ענהא וטהרת לנסים אלהוא וחרארה אלגו
 לתרבו ותסמן וינצגהא חרארה אלשמס ותציר 20
 בסרא או רטבא גניא הצימא תם תגף לתציר
 תמרא או דבסא ואמא אלסחאח אחריריה
 אלנסג אלתי עלי [...]

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ABSTRACT

Gabriele Ferrario, *In a Hidden Place: Traces of Bāṭīnism in the Fragments of the Cairo Genizah*

The fragments retrieved from the Genizah of the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo represent a treasure trove of sources on medieval Judaism and the medieval Mediterranean world at large. A survey of the fragments reveals the circulation of *bāṭīnī* texts and ideas in the Genizah: book lists preserve mentions of the *Epistles* of the Brethren of Purity, which are also found in a handful of partial copies in both Arabic and the Judeo-Arabic language. These fragments, together with two alchemical manuscripts that preserve several titles of the works of Jābir b. Ḥayyān, are discussed in this article as evidence of the circulation of *bāṭīnī* ideas among the Jews of medieval Cairo. An edition of a partial Judeo-Arabic version of the natural philosophical epistles of the Brethren of Purity is presented in the appendix.

Gabriele Ferrario

Università di Bologna
gabriele.ferrario@unibo.it