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Cover

Mašhad, Kitābhāna-i Āsitān-i Quds-i Raḍawī 300, f. 1v
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, *grec* 1853, f. 186v

human life against human nature, meaning that they seemed to ‘depreciate’ the value of human life (e.g. by willingly accepting martyrdom), and in particular its physical needs and desires, and its social dimensions (i.e. good political citizenship); to the point of appearing misanthropic (pp. 25 and 36) – yet, somewhat absurdly, they believed in the resurrection of the body (p. 324). Second, the Christians believed in a divine life against divine nature: their God is weak, slow and ineffectual in saving humanity (see e.g. pp. 229, 302); jealous (p. 260); did not want to enable man to distinguish between good and bad (p. 261); preferred sinners and neglected the just (p. 267). In claiming that Jesus is God incarnate, the Christians made a human condemned to death an object of cult (134; 282ff). It’s genuinely impossible to be exhaustive in covering the ground Zambon covers, but as anticipated from the start, this is not even the goal here. By highlighting some of the lines of arguments and conclusions that Zambon develops in his wonderful book, this review aims to spark interest in a book that will enrich its readers very much indeed.

AM

D. Nikolaus Hasse, A. Bertolacci (eds.), *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna’s Physics and Cosmology*, De Gruyter, Boston – Berlin 2018 (*Scientia Graeco-Arabica*, 23), 549 pp.

The numerous articles collected in the volume, amounting to thirteen, are the result and development of the papers formerly discussed in June 2013, during an international conference held at Villa Vigoni (Menaggio, Italy). As the title explicitly displays, the volume deals with the reception of Avicennian topics and issues in the field of natural philosophy in three distinct yet connected milieus. This publication shares also its format with a previous one: in 2008, in fact, an analogous conference devoted to the reception of Avicenna’s metaphysical claims took place in Menaggio and a few years later, in 2012, the volume *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna’s Metaphysics* was published (De Gruyter, Boston – Berlin 2012). Moreover, several scholars contributed to each of these conferences as well as to the corresponding volumes, which together share the project of delving critically within the posterity of Avicenna by combining philological inquiry and philosophical analysis.

The main Avicennian sources for the topics at stake are found in quite a few writings, among which stand out the sections of the *Kitāb al-Šifā’* on natural philosophy, devoted to general physics, meteorology, psychology, action and passion and much more, and the late *al-Isārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, which had a stark and remarking fortune in the Arabic East. Other works such as the *Kitāb al-Nağāt* and the *Dānešnāme-ye ‘Alāī* were also known and exploited by several authors or commentators, although not to the same extent as the first two already mentioned. Even if critical of the pristine Avicennian thought, then, al-Ġazālī’s *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* also constitutes another relevant source, preceding the latter and systematic commentaries of the twelfth and thirteenth century, such as Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī’s for the eastern Arabic tradition, and Averroes’ for the western one.

The volume is structured according to the triadic division mentioned in the title, displaying at first six papers devoted to the Arabic context of reception. To the Hebrew Andalusian milieu two works are then reserved, followed at last by five more writings concerned with the production of Latin authors. A total of five papers is also followed by one or more appendices, which either summarise the main arguments formerly discussed (P. Adamson, C. Trifogli) or provide explicit textual material from the Latin authors (A. Lammer, A. Bertolacci, J.-M. Mandosio).

In the first section a further distinction may also be done, given the different fruition that the eastern and western exponents of the Arabic medieval world had of the Avicennian corpus. As a

matter of fact, the *Šifā'* constituted the main source for the western legacy of the Persian author, while the *Išārāt* was paramount in the east. Even if this general trend is well documented, it does not entail with strict necessity that prominent thinkers from both contexts were not acquainted with the other one's sources, as indeed many of the papers highlights effectively. Of the six works that build this first section, five are mainly devoted to the eastern tradition, while only the last one deals with Averroes. Specifically, the first two works by Jon McGinnis and Dimitri Gutas display a transversal approach to a single topic through time, respectively motion and the problematic meaning of a singular expression. In the following three papers, then, the speculation and production of Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī are pivotal, either in themselves (Jules Janssens, Peter Adamson) or as the target for other authors such as Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī to criticise (Andreas Lammer). The fourth and the fifth paper, in particular, are strongly related, since they treat the same topic – time – moving from two different and rival perspectives. At last, the western reception through the figure of Averroes is analysed by Cristina Cerami in a wide and systematic study.

J. McGinnis, "Changing Motion: The Place (and Misplace) of Avicenna's Theory of Motion in the Post-Classical Islamic World" (pp. 7-24) focuses on the work of three authors widely spread in time: Aṭīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 1262/1265), Mullā Ṣadrā (1571-1636) and Faḍl-i Ḥaqq Ḥayrābādī (d. 1861). Specifically, Mullā Ṣadrā wrote a commentary on al-Abharī's *Hidāyat al-ḥikma*, which is an elaboration or a gloss on the first two sections of Avicenna's *Išārāt*; later on, Ḥayrābādī would build his own *al-Ḥadīya al-sa'īdiyya fī-l-ḥikma al-ṭabī'iyya* keeping al-Abharī's work as a model. The deeply connected concepts of 'motion' and 'nature' constitute the theoretical knot of the paper, a knot which, as McGinnis highlights, already manifests a discrepancy within the Avicennian corpus. Unlike the *Šifā'*, in fact, the discussion about nature in the *Išārāt* is kept rather superficial, to the point that some most influential commentators, such as Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, felt the urge to integrate this gap by using materials gathered from the *Šifā'* itself. Given all of this, McGinnis' work shows how al-Abharī, Mullā Ṣadrā and Ḥayrābādī dealt with the concepts of nature and motion together with or against Avicenna's claims, and how the debate became an occasion to integrate other metaphysical notions and logical tools in the discussion, i.e., counter-predication.

D. Gutas' paper "Avicenna's *al-ḥikma al-muta'āliya*. Meaning and Early Reception" (pp. 25-41) addresses the expression from Avicenna's *Išārāt* by which cosmology as a discipline is identified. Even though this phrase occurs only once in the whole work, its fortune has been noteworthy and not always unbiased. In order to clarify its meaning, Gutas starts collating the different translations and interpretations that have been suggested in modern scholarship, and then proceeds to analyse directly two different editions of the relevant Avicennian text (Forget; Zāre'ī). The passage displays several issues, not only textual but syntactical and lexical as well, which can be anyway sorted out effectively, thus allowing the meaning of the expression to be determined. Furthermore, in order to rebuild the history behind this expression and to explain why so many misunderstandings have risen from it, Gutas proceeds to consider the commentaries on the *Išārāt* made by several authors in the first two centuries after Avicenna's death. The inquiry leads to an interesting result, since it seems that the first misconception of *al-ḥikma al-muta'āliya* is found in one of Ṭūsī's (d. 1274) commentaries, where he linked the Avicennian expression with some other features taken from his own philosophical conception, namely the processes of *dawq* and *kašf*. By doing so, states Gutas, Ṭūsī "opened the floodgates of fanciful interpretations that have continued to these very day" (p. 35).

J. Janssens, "Avicennian Elements in Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Discussion of Place, Void and Directions in the *al-Mabāḥiṭ al-mašriqiyya*" (pp. 43-63) opens the series of papers devoted to

Rāzī, punctually analysing the chapters sixteen to twenty-four of his *Mabāḥiṭ*. These nine chapters constitute the main section in which problems and issues related to place, void and directions are approached, and Janssens points out clearly how the arguments and strategies to solve them are highly dependent on Avicenna's own ones. Over and above being an interesting work in itself, the *Mabāḥiṭ* plays a relevant role in the history of the Avicennian eastern tradition, since it was known and used by influent authors such as Mullā Ṣadrā. Moreover, a particularly puzzling aspect of this work is that the *Iṣārāt* is not its primary source: it is instead the *Šifā'*, together with other less known treatises. Specifically, the aforesaid chapters show a strong dependence on the *samā'* II, 5-9 and III, 13 of the *Šifā'*, while the arguments against the existence of the void display also the exploitation of materials from *Dānešnāme* and *Nağāt*.

P. Adamson, "The Existence of Time in Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya*" (pp. 65-99) delves within the first three chapters of the *Maṭālib*, setting the focus on the ontology of time and on its epistemic evidence. In the first section, Adamson shows how Rāzī opposed to twelve different arguments against the existence of time in the external reality, thus refuting any sceptical perspective. Despite being himself a realist about the ontology of time, Rāzī criticises also a theory attributable to Abū Bakr ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī, who claimed the existence of time to be immediately evident. In the third section, Adamson analyses Rāzī's approach to three distinct proofs in favour of the existence of time; among those, the third one, already formulated by al-Ašʿarī (p. 88), seems to be mostly satisfactory to him. Particularly interesting is the presentation and refutation of Avicenna's own proof, blamed for being circular; the main Avicennian sources for that very proof are once again to be found in the *Šifā'* and *Nağāt*, and not in the *Iṣārāt*.

The main subjects of A. Lammer's paper "Time and Mind-Dependence in Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī's *Abkār al-afkār*" (pp. 101-60) are the figure of Āmidī (d. 1233), one of the first influential intellectuals who opposed to Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's conception about Avicenna's thought, and the conception of time exposed in his major work in the field of *kalām*. After the presentation of two distinct philosophical traditions about the existence of time, one ascending to Plato and the other to Aristotle, Lammer reconstructs the solutions endorsed by Āmidī about this topic, a task made challenging by the large amount of textual deficiencies. Many arguments and themes within Āmidī's work are explicitly dependent on Avicenna's *Nağāt* and *Šifā'*, specifically on the *Samā' al-ṭabī'*. While two-thirds of the whole writing are in fact an explanation and presentation of Avicennian claims, its last section displays some originalities. Despite all of this, it is not yet uncontroversial how to interpret Āmidī's own position, given the relative scarcity of literature and critical studies about his work; as a matter of fact, Āmidī may be understood as a follower of Avicenna who develops a constructive and honest criticisms about the master's positions, as an utter opposer, or even as anything between those two extremes.

Cristina Cerami's paper "A Map of Averroes' Criticism against Avicenna: *Physics, De Caelo, De Generatione et corruptione* and *Meteorology*" (pp. 163-240) is entirely devoted to the reception of Avicennian theses in Averroes' commentaries on Aristotle's natural philosophy. In accordance with Amos Bertolacci, Cerami states that the whole philosophical production of Averroes can be understood as included between two opposite poles, Aristotle being the positive one, Avicenna the negative. Moreover, the criticism that Averroes displays on Avicennian theses is almost always harsh and highly polemical, expressing therefore an attitude that requires an explanation. A possible reason is the will of defending the "pure" Aristotelian philosophical account from any other kind of contamination, such as the Platonic or ašḥārite ones. After those preliminary remarks, the paper presents a punctual analysis of the commentaries

on *Physics*, *De Caelo*, *De Generatione et corruptione* and *Meteorology*, providing for each of them a useful table that collates Averroes' writings with Avicenna's. At last, this survey allows Cerami to individuate several invariant and recurrent elements underlying Averroes' criticism, elements which provide an interesting insight about the relationship between the two great Islamic intellectuals.

The second section of the volume is the less extended one and yet the number of intellectuals and philosophers who occur in its two papers – particularly in the second one – is remarkable. It must be said in general that Avicenna had a modest fortune within the Andalusian Hebrew philosophical context, as Fontaine points out (p. 243), because only a few sections of the *Nāḡāt* were translated in Hebrew during the fourteenth century; even Maimonides did not have any direct access to Avicennian sources. An exception to this general trend can be anyway found in the production of the main intellectuals presented by Resianne Fontaine and Gad Freudenthal, that is to say Abraham ibn Daud (ca. 1110-1180) and Samuel ibn Tibbon (d. ca. 1230), both of whom had a fruitful relationship with the natural theories of the great Persian author.

Ha-Emunah ha-ramah is the title of the Hebrew translation of ibn Daud's original *al-'Aqida al-rafi'a* (Toledo, approximately 1160), a lost treatise conceived as an introduction to several philosophical topics. In "Avicennian Sources in Abraham ibn Daud's Natural Philosophy?" (pp. 241-67), R. Fontaine analyses how this work is dependent on Avicennian sources. In several parts of the work, in fact, many perfect parallelisms with the the *Šifā'* and al-Ġazālī's *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* can be found, specifically when Daud deals with the topics of motion, infinity and corporal form. The influence of the *Nāḡāt* is also highlighted, even if it results less structural if compared with that of the other two sources. As already mentioned, such a punctual knowledge of Avicenna's thought is quite a rarity for a Hebrew Andalusian author, therefore Fontaine proceeds to inquiring about how and through what line of transmission Daud met those concepts and writings. An attractive solution, grounded in the studies of other scholars, is to identify Daud himself with Avendauth Israeli: as one of Gundissalinus' collaborators, in fact, Daud could have studied the Avicennian corpus.

G. Freudenthal's paper, "The Medieval Hebrew Reception of Avicenna's Account of the Formation and Perseverance of Dry Land: Between Bold Naturalism and Fideist Literalism" (pp. 269-311), deals with a vast number of Jewish authors. Samuel ibn Tibbon's claims about the emergence of the dry land from the sea, expressed in his major work (*Mā'amar Yiqqawu ha-mayim*), determine a pivotal topic which the subsequent authors had to deal with. The underlying issue raises from the connection of two distinct theories: a fideistic one belonging to the book of Genesis, and Avicenna's naturalistic approach. According to the former, in fact, the dry lands were originally drowned by water and the cause of their emersion is to impute to God's direct will; Avicenna, on the other hand, developed in the *Šifā'* a naturalistic theory according to which the lands undergo an eternal and recurring cycle of flooding and emergence. Moreover, such a claim entailed two crucial issues for the Jewish intellectuals: the eternity of the world and the spontaneous generation of the living creatures. Although both theses is hard to conciliate with the religious doctrine, Tibbon explicitly endorsed both and, as a result, a rich debate developed around his claims. Understanding the way in which later authors dealt with all of this can be therefore much fruitful, since by taking a stance on this position are "demarcated true naturalists, half-hearted naturalists, traditionalists and the fifty shades of grey between them" (p. 306).

Moving to the last section of the volume and therefore to the Latin tradition, the Avicennian sources decrease in number, to the extent that only some natural sections of the *Šifā'* played a relevant

role, and all the other treatises prominent in the Arabic and Hebrew traditions, such as the *Isārāt*, the *Nağāt* and the *Dānešnāme*, remained essentially unknown to the Latin European intellectuals. Among those few available writings, also, the one concerning meteorology had a peculiar development, since it was translated in Latin only in the late thirteenth century and was however understood, even if problematic, as authentically Aristotelian. After the rigorous philological work by Dag Nikolaus Hasse and Andreas Büttner, the following papers all deal with authors active in the thirteenth century; William of Auvergne (d. 1249) is studied by Katrin Fischer, Albert the Great (d. 1280) by Amos Bertolacci, Roger Bacon (d. 1294) by Cecilia Trifogli, and Alfred of Shareshill (d. 1245) by Jean-Marc Mandosio.

D.N. Hasse and A. Büttner, “Notes on Anonymous Twelfth-Century Translations of Philosophical Texts from Arabic into Latin on the Iberian Peninsula” (pp. 313-69) is a philological study, resorting mainly to the techniques of stylistic analysis, manage to assign several anonymous Latin translations of the Avicennian corpus to their plausible authors. A chart with the titles of fifty-two translations is provided at the beginning in order to set the pool of scripts that will be considered later in the paper. Within such a list, the style of the twenty still anonymous writings is punctually analysed, leading to a much satisfactory outcome: only seven works are in fact left unassigned. Of the thirteen translation which gained their own author, also, seven are assigned with certainty, while the remaining six with a good rate of likeability. The last part of the paper provides further confirmation for these results, through the application of computational stylometry criteria to the inquired texts.

K. Fischer, “Avicenna’s Influence on William of Auvergne’s Theory of Efficient Causes” (pp. 371-96) focuses on the first part of William’s *Magisterium divinale et sapientiale*. This *primum magisterium* is made up of three treatises – *De Trinitate*, *De Universo*, *De Anima* – and deals exclusively with philosophical issues unrelated to the Christian Scriptures or authorities. Even if William’s positions are generally critical of Avicenna’s own one, in particular the conception of God as the first efficient cause, Fischer explains to what extent these three works rely on Avicenna’s *Šifā’* as a source, specifically on the *Ilāhiyyāt* and *Kitāb al-nafs*. The first section of the paper deals also with metaphysical themes, namely the concepts of ‘potency’ and ‘possibility’, analysed either in the Avicennian formulation (*quwwa*, *imkān*) as well as in William’s own one (*potentia*, *possibilitas*). The second and last section, then, approaches the issue of causality, setting a specific focus on efficient causes and their classification, in the context of a discussion about the eternity of the world.

In the third paper of the section, “*Averroes ubique Avicennam persequitur*: Albert the Great’s Approach to the *Physics* of the *Šifā’* in the Light of Averroes’ Criticisms” (pp. 397-431), A. Bertolacci shows how Albert managed to mediate between the anti-Avicennian claims exposed by Averroes in the long commentaries on the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, and the pristine Avicennian positions about the same topics. In these two commentaries, Averroes reaches in fact the highest level of criticism against the Avicennian holdings, thus refuting them entirely. Albert too wrote commentaries on the *Physics* and *Metaphysics* and he chose to harmonise the contrast between the two philosophers. In order to do so, the *Doctor Universalis* resorted to different strategies, such as omitting several arguments against Avicenna exposed in the long commentaries or concealing the dissensions by keeping their polemical target implicit. Over and above these rhetoric strategies, some theoretical attempts were pursued as well, for instance the conciliation between the Aristotelian and Avicennian positions related to the doctrine of transcendentals. It is interesting to note that Albert’s commentaries on the *Physics* and *Metaphysics* witness a change within Albert’s own perspective: while in the former work Avicenna appears as “strenuously defended

against Averroes” (p. 416), who is instead criticised for being harshly anti-Avicennian, in the latter the claims get milder: Averroes’ positions are generally endorsed and Avicenna’s difficulties expressed and forgiven.

C. Trifogli, “Avicenna’s *Physics* in Roger Bacon’s *Communia naturalium*” (pp. 433-57) deals with the relationship between Bacon’s and Avicenna’s natural philosophy. In both of his writings devoted entirely to the topic – Commentary on the *Physics*, *Communia naturalium* – in fact, Bacon cites Avicenna explicitly, which is quite a rare case for the thirteenth-century philosophical context. In this paper, Trifogli chooses two major topics in the Aristotelian tradition of natural philosophy, namely nature and substantial change; the analysis developed by Bacon in the *Communia naturalium*, where those topics are approached in direct dependence on Avicenna, constitutes the main subject of the paper. Nature is inquired both in its particular and universal aspect, through a collation of Bacon’s and Avicenna’s texts, and the same methodology is applied to the issue of generation and corruption. Despite the discrepancies and the doctrinal differences between the two authors, in the conclusive remarks Trifogli points out how Bacon, although being an utterly original intellectual, should be also understood as an “Avicennian scholar” (p. 452), one of the few Latin ones.

The main topic in J.-M. Mandosio, “Follower or Opponent of Aristotle? The Critical Reception of Avicenna’s *Meteorology* in the Latin World and the Legacy of Alfred the Englishman” (pp. 459-534) is meteorology, a discipline that played a minor role within the curriculum of natural philosophy, given its focus on the concrete aspects of the physical world. Avicenna devotes to meteorology two sections in the second part of the *Šifā’* only a few chapters of which were translated in Latin, thus obtaining two distinct small writings – *De Mineralibus*, *De Diluviis*. Alfred of Shareshill translated the chapters on minerals and integrated them with Aristotle’s own *Meteorology*, which caused a relevant misunderstanding. Mandosio points also out that Alfred had in general an instrumental conception of Avicenna’s work, according to which he used it to fill gaps not only in Aristotelian writings, but in Platonic ones as well. Although Alfred modified Avicenna’s prose in order to make it closer to Aristotle’s own one, Mandosio reports the interesting case of the colophon of a manuscript which attributes this work explicitly to Avicenna. After a section devoted to the plausible dating of both Alfred’s meteorological translations and commentary, Mandosio selects at last four instances to highlight the disagreement between Aristotle’s and Avicenna’s considered writings.

Each paper is provided with an updated bibliography and the volume is concluded by two useful indexes, namely an “Index of Avicenna’s Works with Passages Cited” (pp. 535-41) and an “Index of Names” (pp. 543-9).

MM