fine philological achievement, yet some more substantial synthesis is needed. Perhaps, after such an otherwise brilliant volume, Costa could tackle the substantive philosophical synthesis in his next undertaking.

Tommaso Gazzarri


The volume under review, a collection edited by Dag N. Hasse and Amos Bertolacci, is the impressive outcome of a conference held in the summer of 2008 in the Villa Vigoni in Menaggio, Italy. It contains fifteen contributions to the study of the Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin reception of some of Avicenna’s metaphysical doctrines.

The first contribution, Jules Janssens’ paper ‘Al-Lawkari’s Reception of Ibn Sinā’s Ḥābīyyāt’, is a colourful example of the various ways in which post-Avicennian works may be exploited to further our understanding of Avicenna’s philosophy and the tradition it initiated.

While Janssens readily admits that al-Lawkari’s work Bayān al-haqq bi-dimān al-sīdq «clearly lacks originality» (23), he demonstrates that a careful reading of it may still not only shed light on the important question of how Avicenna’s more and less immediate disciples made use of, i.e., how they read, understood, and rearranged, their master’s works, but also accidentally forces us to reconsider the attribution of the Fusūl muntazā’a to al-Fārābī, and provides interesting, sometimes even unique, variant readings any future editor of Avicenna’s works ought to consider.

In ‘Essence and Existence in the Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Islamic East’, Robert Wisnovsky goes in search of the precise target of a well-known attack by al-Suhrawardī on the «followers of the Peripatetics» who were criticised for holding the view that existence is something superadded to the quiddity of a thing (zā’id ‘alā l-māḥiya).

One would be tempted to understand this phrase simply as referring to al-Fārābī and Avicenna, as medieval and modern commentators usually did. Yet, Wisnovsky is suspicious and his suspicion eventually pays off. After an impressive ride through major developments concerning the issue of divine attributes as discussed among Mu’tazilī and Sunnī mutakallimūn of the 11th- and 12th-century, Wisnovsky states modestly that his analysis did «increase the likelihood» (46) of his initial hypothesis that al-Suhrawardī did not attack «Avicenna’s own ontology [but] an emerging Avicennian ontology» (29) which later mutakallimūn like Fāh al-Dīn al-Rāzī were beginning to formulate precisely in response to those issues in Sunnī theology.

In his study ‘Fārābī in the Reception of Avicenna’s Metaphysics’, Stephen Menn describes with great precision the primary sources for Avrroes’ critique of Avicenna’s use of mawūḏ («existent», «being») and waḥīd («one»).

These are shown to be two of al-Fārābī’s works: the Kitāb al-Ḥurrūf and the Kitāb al-Wāḥid wa-l-waḥda. Since Avrroes drew extensively on these works of Avicenna’s predecessor, al-Fārābī – somewhat anachronistically – came to play an important role in the reception history of Avicenna’s metaphysics. One of the recurring themes in Menn’s paper is that Avrroes criticises Avicenna’s conception of unity and being by means of argu-
ments and warnings which al-Fārābī had already given and which, had Avicenna been aware of them, would have saved him from what Averroes perceives as grave errors concerning the fundamentals of metaphysics, above all the thinking of being and unity as attributes superadded to the essence of things. Given the importance of Averroes – and arguably of al-Fārābī, too – as a commentator of Aristotle, Menn construes the debate between these Arabic philosophers also as a controversy over Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, especially Δ.6–7 and B.4.

Peter Adamson’s ‘Avicenna and his Commentators on Human and Divine Self-Intellection’ is a wonderful example of the kind of approach to Avicenna that currently seems to be the most rewarding:

He picks an interesting philosophical position advocated by Avicenna in the typically recondite style of his late work *al-Išārāt wa-l-tanbihāt* and demonstrates how Nasīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī’s commentary can unravel and elucidate Avicenna’s condensed wording, while Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s commentary helps, and indeed forces, us to challenge and to reassess Avicenna’s line of argument. While Aristotle once again has been the point of departure for the whole discussion of self-intellection, Adamson succeeds in showing that the way Avicenna reworks and expands upon his sources opens up entirely new and fertile ground for the philosophical activity in the centuries to come. While it is nothing new that al-Rāzī and al-Ṭūsī are among the most important thinkers of this Avicennian tradition, there are still only few pieces like Adamson’s which demonstrate this fact and show that their works provide enough material for the historians of philosophy for decades to come.

Heidrun Eichner’s contribution ‘Essence and Existence – Thirteenth-Century Perspectives in Arabic-Islamic Philosophy and Theology’ reaffirms the importance of al-Rāzī in the post-Avicennian Milieu.

She describes his work *al-Mulāḥhas fi l-hikmā* as «one of the most influential works in the Arabic reception of Avicennian philosophy from the late thirteenth century onwards» (123) and outlines how it was received and critically discussed in the writings of Aṭīr al-Dīn al-Abhārī and Nağm al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī al-Kātībī. The most fascinating part of Eichner’s contribution, however, is the seventeen page long appendix of translations from Arabic manuscripts. These translations form the basis for her preceding outline and illustrate the evolution and the increasing complexity of argument among these thinkers. Of course, one would have loved to have these translations together with a transcript of the Arabic text (at least, however, one would have expected to see folio numbers inserted into the translations).

The first of Mauro Zonta’s two contributions is a brief sketch of evident traces of ‘Avicenna’s Metaphysics in the Medieval Hebrew Philosophical Tradition’.

Jewish philosophers not only display an indirect familiarity with Avicenna’s philosophy through an acquaintance with al-Gazālī’s *Maqāsid al-falāsīfa*, but also show direct knowledge of Avicenna’s *al-Sīfāʿ* and *al-Nāʿāt*, which can be detected in the works of Moses ha-Levi and, above all, Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera. Interestingly, Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, once more, seems to have played a part, albeit to a limited extent, in the propagation of Avicennian philosophy.

In his second paper, Zonta reexamines a number of possible quotations from Avicenna’s *al-Hikmā al-maṣāriqīya* found in four works by Avner of Burgos.

The very same passages have recently been discussed in an article by Ryan Szpiech who traced these quotations back to Ibn Tufayl’s *Hayy ibn Yaqẓān*. Zonta adds two of his own ideas about *al-Hikmā al-maṣāriqīya*. First, he suggests that both Ibn Tufayl and Avner of Burgos drew upon a common source, namely Avicenna’s *al-Hikmā al-maṣāriqīya*. Zonta thereby suggests a solution which allows him to acknowledge Szpiech’s results and, at the
same time, to draw a different conclusion. Second, he emphasises the possibility of an influence through Indian philosophy mediated by Avicenna’s contemporary al-Birûnî. All in all, Zonta’s two ideas do not seem to clear up but to further cloud the already murky waters of al-Hikma al-mašriqiyya. While his suggestions are certainly not entirely impossible, Zonta does not offer much that could make them seem probable.

In ‘Abraham Ibn Daud and Avicenna on Evil’, Resianne Fontaine remarks on striking similarities between these two philosophers in their general depiction of evil as a deficiency and privation and in the identification of matter as the source of evil.

This does not come as a surprise, for in his main work ha-Emunah ha-ramah, Ibn Daud made no pretence of his aim to provide what he calls «true philosophy», i.e., «philosophy as taught by Alfarabi and, in particular, Avicenna» (160). Yet, Fontaine effectively works out a number of differences which illustrate Ibn Daud’s clear and deliberate departure from Avicenna’s position, above all his insistence that evil may not even in an accidental sense have its origin in God, as Avicenna had allowed. This, in turn, entails that Ibn Daud defended human freedom more rigorously than Avicenna had done. As in the end both philosophers are shown to disagree about providence, we are convinced that «Ibn Daud’s treatment of the topic is far from a slavish copy of that of Avicenna» (165).

Amos Bertolacci’s piece ‘On the Latin Reception of Avicenna’s Metaphysics before Albertus Magnus’ seeks to dismiss two hitherto prevalent assumptions about the chronology and extent of the Latin reception of Avicenna’s Philosophia prima, the first claiming that the reception took its beginning just about the same time when the second maintains its decline.

Bertolacci suggests to replace these mutually exclusive and singularly dissatisfying assumptions by the continuous story of an «uninterrupted line of interpreters» (201) even before Albertus Magnus. The first phase of this story takes place between the time of the translation of Avicenna’s work around 1150–1175 and the early 13th century – a time in which Aristotle’s Metaphysics was not yet widely distributed in its Latin translation so that the Philosophia prima could «perform[,] the role of [a] ‘vicarious’ canonical text» on metaphysics (202). In the second phase, up until 1240, Avicenna was esteemed as the primary exposer of Aristotle’s Metaphysics, which by then had gained prominence. In the third phase, Avicenna’s work is more and more replaced as the central guide to the Aristotelian text by Averroes’ Long Commentary. Bertolacci continues to analyse the first phase in greater detail. The overall account of his story is lucid, interesting, and extremely rich.

In ‘Avicenna’s ‘Giver of Forms’ in Latin Philosophy’, Dag N. Hasse differentiates between two aspects Avicenna attributes to the lowest celestial intellect: the epistemological role of providing the intelligible forms to the mind and the ontological role of emanating substantial forms to the prepared matter.

The former idea is usually referred to as the «active intellect», whereas the second came to be known as the «giver of forms». It is remarkable, Hasse writes, that «[t]he two Avicennian concepts ... saw a very different Latin reception [in] that the dator formarum concept was unsuccessful even within the Franciscan tradition that favoured Avicennian epistemology» (227). As is shown, the critical stance of many scholastics was influenced by Averroes who groups al-Fārābī and Avicenna together with Plato, and refutes their purportedly shared doctrine of the giver of forms. Hasse presents some cases which show a positive reaction even to Avicenna’s ontological doctrine in Latin literature: William of Auvergne, John Buridan, Marsilio Ficino, and Tiberio Russiliano. Finally, Hasse focuses on the difficult and complex views of Albertus Magnus, who in several of his works offers different accounts but generally remains closer to Avicenna than is sometimes maintained...
Another worthwhile contribution to the volume is Kara Richardson’s ‘Avicenna and Aquinas on Form and Generation’.

Richardson intends to show that Aquinas’ critique of Avicenna’s account of substantial generation is based on a ‘coarse reading’ of Avicenna (268) which led Aquinas to wrongly attribute to his Muslim predecessor what she calls the ‘Infusion Model of substantial generation’, i.e., the view that the coming to be of a new substance is due to an incorporeal agent which produces and bestows the substantial form onto the matter once the matter has been properly prepared to receive this form. While her interesting analysis of central passages from Avicenna’s Physics, Metaphysics, and On Generation and Corruption effectively shows that they do ‘not entail an Infusion Model of generation’ (264), she is less successful in establishing that these passages do in fact preclude such a model, not to say that they suggest the alternative ‘Eduction Model’. Moreover, it is not clear why Avicenna’s ‘account of form, matter and their relationship conflicts with the Infusion Model’, as Richardson claims (258) but fails to substantiate.

Pasquale Porro’s study of ‘Immateriality and Separation in Avicenna and Aquinas’ is one of the strongest contributions in the Latin section of the volume under review.

Starting with Aristotle’s remarks on the subject matter of metaphysics and their interpretations in the commentary tradition, Porro examines the distinction between separation and abstraction, and that between a positive and a negative type of immateriality, of which especially the former has been ‘considered the keystone of Aquinas’ metaphysics’ by modern interpreters (287). Porro, however, doubts the actual relevance of this distinction. Instead he intends to shift the attention to the direct sources for Aquinas’ conception of metaphysics and theology in al-Fārābī and especially in Avicenna’s al-Iḥāyāt. Porro shows how Aquinas, in his commentary on the Metaphysics and Super Boethium De Trinitate, read, used, and modelled these distinctions in order to make room for «Christian theology as a distinct speculative science» (301).

Gabriele Galluzzo’s paper ‘Avicenna’s Doctrine of Essence and Aquinas’s View on Individuation’ takes up a presumed contradiction in Aquinas’s conception of essence.

He first investigates Aquinas’ claims that, in themselves, essences are neither universal nor particular, but when they exist in the mind they are universal, whereas they exist as particularised in the extra-mental reality of concrete objects. On this point, Aquinas demonstrates his adherence to Avicenna’s position in al-Iḥāyāt (and, as one might like to add, al-Madḥal). Secondly, however, it is shown that Aquinas also endorses the view that essences are particularised by a principle of individuation which is extrinsic to the essences themselves. Consequently, when we analyse the essence of a given species, we strip away that principle of individuation – what remains is one abstracted essence which is common to all the individuals of the species. Consequently, when we analyse the essence of a given species, we strip away that principle of individuation – what remains is one abstracted essence which is common to all the individuals of the species. Consequently, there appears to be a severe contradiction in Aquinas’ conception of essence. However, Galluzzo notes, we cannot strip away the principle of individuation from the essence of a thing, because in the concrete, they necessarily exist together. Rather, we can distinguish between essence and its principle of individuation by means of modal considerations. It is by virtue of modal properties that Aquinas divides between these two aspects of concrete existents, even though they are not actually separate. On that reading, Aquinas can uphold Avicenna’s claim that essences are actually universal or common only in the intellect but are modally common in the extra-mental reality.
In his study ‘On the Latin Reception of Avicenna’s Theory of Individuation’, Martin Pickavé observes a strange feature of Avicenna’s Latin *fortuna*.

Several thinkers of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century begin to regard Avicenna as a proponent of the view that things are individuated by their individual combination of accidents, and ultimately by the accident of location, whereas their earlier colleagues «correctly ascribe[ed] to Avicenna the doctrine that objects are primarily individuated by matter» (347). As the source of this divide, Pickavé identifies Henry of Ghent who in his *Quodlibet* V, question 8, merely for «rhetorical» and «pedagogical» reasons (352f) grouped together various theories which more or less used accidents in order to account for the individuation of things. Since accidents indeed have a bearing – even though only a minor one – on Avicenna’s theory of individuation, Avicenna has been placed right next to those thinkers who fully endorsed the theory of accidental individuation, namely Porphyry and Boethius. In effect, Avicenna was subsequently interpreted as agreeing with his late ancient forebears. Pickavé’s story is fascinating and well told, even though he could have dwelt a little more on Henry of Ghent’s «rhetorical» and «pedagogical» reasons, which seems to be a quite crucial chapter in the narrative, but he makes up for it with a nice seven page long appendix of selected passages from various primary texts.

In his paper ‘Scotus and Avicenna on What it is to Be a Thing’, Giorgio Pini acknowledges the strong influence Avicenna’s doctrines exerted on John Duns Scotus, but at the same time he seeks to remind us that «Scotus’ debt towards Avicenna is considerable but not exceptional» (366), for it is once again Henry of Ghent who serves as a catalyst for both criticism and development of Avicennian doctrines in the Latin West.

Pini further notes that in studying the influence of Avicenna we must heed the fact that Avicenna’s Latin successors are often driven by «concerns that were extraneous to Avicenna’s original viewpoint» (366). He exemplifies both of his points by an analysis of Aquinas’, Henry’s, and Scotus’ interpretations of Avicenna’s descriptions of «being» (*mawgūd, ens*) and «thing» (*šay’, res*) in *al-Ilāhiyat* 1.5. How different Scotus’ concerns were from Avicenna’s comes to the fore especially in the third part of the paper in which Pini very interestingly describes how Scotus conceives of the epistemologies of Aristotle and Avicenna in the light of the fall of man.

This volume edited by Dag N. Hasse and Amos Bertolacci did not in the slightest miss its «explicit aim to facilitate the comparison between the reception processes in distinct cultures and times, thus contributing to our knowledge both of Avicenna’s metaphysics itself, through the lenses of his medieval readers, and of its culturally complex reception history» (4). It is a very fine collection which leaves one hoping for the publication of similar volumes devoted to the reception of other aspects of Avicenna’s metaphysics or even other areas of Avicenna’s philosophy in the future. The only aspect of this publication with quite some room for improvement is De Gruyter’s typesetting.

München

Andreas Lammer