

An Essay Review of ***In the Age of Averroes Arabic Philosophy in the Sixth/Twelfth Century***, edited by Peter Adamson, (Warburg Institute Colloquia, 16), (London: The Warburg Institute & Turin: Nino Aragno Editore, 2011), 288 pp., ISBN: 978-0-85481-154-0, £60.00 (pb)

Jules Louis Janssens

*Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven-Belgium &
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris-France*

This volume concludes a series of three books devoted to Arabic philosophy. The first volume, published in 2007, addressed the sources and the reception of classical Arabic philosophy, and the second volume considered Arabic philosophy in the fourth/tenth century.¹ It is immediately striking that the eleventh century, which, in line with the project, undoubtedly had to be qualified as the age of Ibn Sīnā, has been skipped. At first sight, there seems to be little philosophy during this time besides Ibn Sīnā himself and his so-called immediate disciples. Among the latter, however, one detects important differences in the way they address their master's legacy. Moreover, the eleventh century is the period in which Ibn Sīnā's philosophy entered Ash'arite theology, perhaps already in al-Juwaynī's thought and certainly in al-Ghazālī's. Much of what comes to the fore in the present volume results from or has some basis in these facts. Let me add that in Muslim Andalusia during this century, one finds such a major thinker as Ibn Ḥazm, who, although above all a theologian, considered philosophical ideas and, inter alia, refers to al-Kindī. Hence, it is regrettable that no attention has been paid to

¹ See Peter Adamson (ed.), *Classical Arabic Philosophy: Sources and Reception*, respectively *In the Age of al-Fārābī: Arabic Philosophy in the Fourth/Tenth Century* (Warburg Institute Colloquia, 11; resp. 12), (London: The Warburg Institute & Turin: Nino Aragno Editore, 2007; resp. 2008).

this period. This said, the project as such has offered many new perspectives regarding classical Arabic philosophy, and the present volume is no exception. In particular, this volume shows the vivacity of philosophy, especially in Ibn Sīnā's view, in the twelfth century. As Peter Adamson, the editor, states in the introduction, the twelfth century may be characterized as a second formative period.

The volume contains no less than thirteen contributions. The first two, by Dimitri Gutas and N. Peter Joosse, consider 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī. The first of these examines the autobiography that appears at the end of the *Kitāb al-naṣīḥatayn*. Based on the text as preserved in the unique manuscript (MS Bursa, Bursa Yazma ve Eski Basma Eserler Library, Hüseyin Çelebi, 823), Gutas offers a translation of the most significant passages together with a profound analysis. He shows how vivid philosophy was at the time of 'Abd al-Laṭīf and how the latter became increasingly disappointed by Ibn Sīnā's philosophy. Moreover, he stresses that 'Abd al-Laṭīf regarded al-Ghazālī as a philosopher and follower of Ibn Sīnā. Finally, he emphasizes that for 'Abd al-Laṭīf, authentic philosophy, as distinguished from Ibn Sīnā's, is in no way a source of deprivation; on the contrary, it is essentially the desire to imitate God – the *omoiosis theōo* of classical Greek thought. Of particular importance is Gutas' demonstration of how 'Abd al-Laṭīf's autobiography (autobiographies) is (are) inspired by Ibn Sīnā's. In this respect, I wonder whether the evocation of a certain al-Nāṣilī (as an incompetent teacher of his youth) in the autobiography, as given in Ibn Abī 'Uṣaybi'a, is not a conscious deformation of al-Nāṣilī, who was the ungifted teacher of the young Ibn Sīnā in logic. As for Joosse, he notes that 'Abd al-Laṭīf never described himself as a physician and that Ibn al-Qifṭī stressed that he had no knowledge of medicine. Joosse provides evidence that 'Abd al-Laṭīf was probably never a practicing physician but was only theoretically interested in the science of medicine, especially epistemological questions related to medicine. He also shows the presence of many medical *topoi* in 'Abd al-Laṭīf's *Kitāb al-naṣīḥatayn*. Let me note that if 'Abd al-Laṭīf preferred theoretical to practical medicine, in all likelihood, he was influenced by Ibn Sīnā. This may also be the case with his understanding of 'experience.'

In the third chapter, Frank Griffel considers three authors who represent three directions in the reception of Ibn Sīnā's thought: al-Lawkarī (d. after 503/1109), al-Ghazālī, and Abū l-Barakāt al-

Baghdādī (d. ca. 560/1165). The first is a representative of orthodox Avicennism, the second represents a kalām critique of Avicennism, and the third represents a criticism of Avicennism independent of *kalām*. Regarding al-Lawkarī, Griffel notes that, despite his dependence on Ibn Sīnā, he offers a metaphysical project and a theological project that are different from the latter's and that have been inspired by Bahmanyār. However, one has the impression that this affirmation is largely based on what al-Lawkarī says in the introduction to the third part of his *Bayān* as well as on a survey of the basic structure of that section. However, a more detailed analysis reveals that al-Lawkarī, in contrast to Bahmanyār, remains faithful to the basic opinions of Ibn Sīnā.² As for al-Ghazālī, Griffel insists that he adopted elements of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy and that he studied his works closely as well as those of other philosophers, such as al-Fārābī and Miskawayh. As I have shown in several studies, al-Ghazālī's use of many Avicennian texts is obvious. Hence, I can only agree with Griffel's well-nuanced position. However, I cannot see how the reading of the *Maqāṣid* can prepare students for the study of the *Tabāfut*, as Griffel claims, (p. 55) because some differences exist in the basic vocabulary (the *Maqāṣid* being mainly based on the *Dānesh-Nāmeḥ* and the *Tabāfut* on the *Shifā'*). Finally, with respect to Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī, Griffel detects, on the one hand, a strong commitment to the Aristotelian tradition in his division of the sciences and, on the other hand, a radical rupture with that tradition as far as his teachings are concerned. He emphasizes Abū l-Barakāt's notion of *i'tibār* (rendered 'careful consideration' by Griffel). Griffel believes that this notion is at least partly a conscious response to al-Ghazālī's accusation of *taqlīd* against the *falāsifa*. This is an interesting observation, but it is clearly in need of further investigation (as is the question of Abū l-Barakāt's possible knowledge of Ghazālian works).

In the following chapter, Ayman Shihadeh systematically examines the difficult issue of the exact status of al-Ghazālī's *Maqāṣid*. After giving a serious *status quaestionis*, he critically addresses the MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ar. 5328, which was

² See my "al-Lawkarī's Reception of Ibn Sīnā's Ilāhiyyāt," in Dag Nikolaus Hasse and Amos Bertolacci (eds), *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Receptions of Avicenna's Metaphysics*, (Scientia Graeco-Arabica, 7), (Berlin & Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 2-26.

catalogued by Arthur Arberry as a copy of al-Qazwīnī's *Hikmat al-ʿayn*. Based on the style of *naskh* in which the text was copied, Shihadeh estimates that the manuscript probably originated from sixth/twelfth century Syria or Iraq. Although the style may offer a significant indication, a final judgment regarding the dating is not possible without physical examination of the manuscript (as Shihadeh himself recognizes). However, Shihadeh indisputably shows that the manuscript is a copy of al-Ghazālī's *Maqāṣid*, although it lacks the preface, the general introduction to the logical section, and the reference to the *Tabāfut* at the end. Shihadeh offers arguments in favor of the idea that these were conscious omissions to decontextualize the text. According to Shihadeh, the omission of the preface in the Latin translation must be perceived from a similar perspective. But what proves that the Latin translator(s) disposed of the *Tabāfut* or other Ghazālian writings? As for the Arabic manuscript, why is it preserved in a single copy? If someone wanted to decontextualize al-Ghazālī's text, would he not have made many copies and distributed them extensively? Let me note, moreover, that the two cases of so-called non-commitment to philosophy on the side of al-Ghazālī – at the end of the logical section, where he says that he has reported and rendered comprehensible the topics of logic, and at the beginning of the metaphysical section, where he refers to 'their' custom of treating physics before metaphysics – are, in my view, not very convincing. The former of the two can be understood as suggesting that al-Ghazālī has provided a basic survey of logic without including personal remarks (which could stem even from a philosopher), whereas the latter is clearly dependent on Ibn Sīnā's general Preface to the *Dānesh-Nāmeḥ*, where he states that, contrary to the usual way, he will allow the exposé of metaphysics to precede that of physics (hence, the word 'their' in the *Maqāṣid* could refer to 'traditional philosophers'). This does not mean that I claim that al-Ghazālī was secretly a philosopher. In my view, at the time he wrote the work (and I continue to believe that this was when he was a young scholar in the school of al-Juwaynī), he was attracted to philosophy and wrote this student's thesis (being a member of a *kalām*-school, of course, he did keep a minimum distance). However, I admit that more research is needed to settle the true nature and dating of the *Maqāṣid* more definitely. This chapter provides an important impulse for further research, not least by its discovery of a 'new' manuscript.

Of a completely different nature is the fifth contribution, in which Sylvie Nony investigates Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī's theory of the void and the possibility of motion in it. She notes the mathematical approach of physical motion in Abū l-Barakāt (although not as far as Newton's) and indicates Philoponus as the ultimate source of inspiration. Moreover, Nony insists that for Abū l-Barakāt, the measure or the form of an object does not influence its speed, and she points out the particular role that natural inclination plays for him in the acceleration of a free-falling body. Finally, she notes the major difference between Ibn Sīnā's notion of inclination, *mayl*, and that of Abū l-Barakāt. This is a most interesting paper that places Abū l-Barakāt's innovative ideas in historical context and avoids anachronisms. Nevertheless, one wonders whether some tensions – of which Nony is clearly aware – may be more significant than is suggested by this paper.

The next two contributions deal with al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191). In the first, Heidrun Eichner explains al-Suhrawardī's well-known notion of 'knowledge by presence' (*'ilm ḥuḍūrī*) in the context of contemporary critical appropriations of Ibn Sīnā's epistemology. Among the latter, the great Ash'arite theologian Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) figures preeminently. Eichner shows that Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (in his *al-Mulakḥḥaṣṣ fī l-ḥikma* and his *al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyya*) criticizes Ibn Sīnā for failing to explain how awareness leads to intellection and discusses *inter alia* his notion of *idrāk* ('apprehension,' according to Eichner's translation). As to al-Suhrawardī, Eichner insists that he derived his concept of 'knowledge by presence' from an 'Aristotelian' epistemology, which, in his view, provides a unified theory that includes apperception as well as perception and apprehension of external things. Of major importance is Eichner's observation that the term *ḥuḍūr* forms part of the 'peripatetic' theory as al-Suhrawardī portrays it, as a function of an increasing abstraction from matter; in his Illuminationist epistemology, in contrast, it is replaced by the term *ẓubūr*, which is a function of luminosity. Also significant is her observation that al-Suhrawardī accepts Ibn Sīnā's system of the internal senses, but much more than the latter concentrates on the relationships between soul and body and animal and rational soul. All of these observations are undoubtedly valuable and at least worthy of attention, but one wonders what the 'exact' relevance of Fakhr al-Dīn's theory is for the theory of al-Suhrawardī. As far as I can see, they both certainly deal in

a critical way with Ibn Sīnā's epistemology, but it is obvious that they do so in quite different ways. Let me add that an unfortunate mistake occurs in the translation of the quotation on p. 127 under point (1). It is evident that one must read, "This is the case when he [i.e., Ibn Sīnā] explains the fact that the Creator is intellect, intellecting, and intellected *does not* [add] require a multiplicity in His self."³ Jaris Kaukua, in his turn, concentrates on the way in which al-Suhrawardī uses Ibn Sīnā's concept of self-awareness. He convincingly shows that this usage occurs in a critical way, partly by way of fusion with the concept of self-awareness in the Plotinus Arabus. Contrary to Ibn Sīnā, al-Suhrawardī conceives of God's self-awareness in the same sense as that of humans, although he accepts a difference in degree – namely, a degree of luminosity. To substantiate his view, Kaukua highlights passages from book 2 of al-Suhrawardī's major writing, *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*. Although Kaukua is familiar with the translation by Walbridge and Ziai, he prefers to offer his own translation.⁴ Unfortunately, he introduces a mistake by omitting the negation involved in the Arabic *lā yagħful*⁵ on p. 146 (quotation in § 114) when he translates, "Nothing that has a self of which it is unaware is dusky," whereas Walbridge and Ziai say, "Nothing that has an essence of which it is *not* (my emphasis) unconscious is dusky" in full accordance with the Arabic. On other occasions, one would have expected a more profound correction, as, for example, on p. 152 (quotation in § 137). The Arabic expression *takbaṣṣuṣubā bi-nūr al-nūr* (a scribal error for *al-anwār*?) is rendered by Kaukua as 'the fact that it is being particularized by being the Light of Lights,' which constitutes a slight rewording of Walbridge-Ziai's "its particularization as the Light of Light [*sic*]," but the preposition '*bi*' is rendered in both cases in an unusual way. With Corbin, I would read "its

³ I had no access to the Beirut 1990 edition, but in the anonymous edition, reprinted at Qum 1411 H, p. 324, the negation *lā* is clearly present. Moreover, from the doctrinal point of view, it is undoubtable that it is required given Ibn Sīnā's emphasis on the unity of the divine essence.

⁴ See al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination: A New Critical Edition of the Text of Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq (with English Translation, Notes, Commentary, and Introduction by John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai)*, (Islamic Translation Series), (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1999).

particularization through the Light of Lights.”⁵

Despite being prominent in the title of the volume, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) is only discussed in two contributions. In the first, Deborah Black addresses his doctrine of sensation. She underlines Averroes’ adherence to the intentionality thesis (related to the Aristotelian ‘logos’ doctrine, based on *De Anima*, II, 12, 424 a 28) during his lifetime. However, Black points out important changes between his (earlier) epitomes and his (later) middle and longer commentaries regarding the foundations and implications of that thesis. In this respect, Black remarks that the ‘contraries principle’ (i.e., the capacity to be affected simultaneously by contraries) occupies a crucial place in the interpretation of the epitomes but loses much of its significance in the later commentaries. However, a new aporia arises, namely that of the ‘sensus agens,’ the agent sense. This is a rich and stimulating study, but one wonders whether Ibn Rushd always had direct access to Aristotle’s text or, on the contrary, was exclusively dependent on commentaries like those by Alexander of Aphrodisias and Ibn Bājja. The second contribution concerns a metaphysical issue, the idea of substantial form. Matteo di Giovanni clarifies that Ibn Rushd defends a holistic interpretation of Aristotle’s hylemorphism. Accepting a unity of species and form (expressed in different ways), Ibn Rushd adheres to the idea that part of the species picks out part of the form. Let me stress that di Giovanni judiciously notes that Ibn Rushd has sometimes been (mis)led by the Arabic translation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*; that he, contrary to Ibn Sīnā, does not accept that body, considered a corporeal form, is also a substantial form; that he considers the elements ‘dimidiate’ forms in the composite substance (thereby making ‘matter’ a label for levels of form); and that he, contrary to Aquinas, does not conceive flesh and bones as the ‘matter’ of man. In his conclusion, di Giovanni, with due prudence, finally argues that there is no necessary connection between the compositional nature of substantial form and the more radical thesis of the plurality of forms. This last remark is not devoid of interest, but it is clearly in need of further elaboration. One can

⁵ Shihāboddīn Yaḥya Sohravardī, Shaykh al-Isḥrāq, *Le livre de la sagesse orientale [Kitāb Ḥikmat al-Isḥrāq]: Commentaires de Qoṭboddīn Shīrāzī et de Mollā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī* (Traduction et notes par Henri Corbin, établies et introduites par Christian Jambet (Islam spirituel); (Folio Essais), Lagrasse: Verdier, 1986), 119-120: “sa particularisation par la Lumière des Lumières.”

only hope that the author will address this point more systematically in a subsequent publication.

In the tenth contribution, Tanelli Kukkonen pays detailed attention to Ibn Ṭufayl's psychology. According to Kukkonen, Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is a 'Bildungsroman,' which contains faculty psychology as an essential building block and offers an extended meditation on the microcosm-macrocosm metaphor. Regarding Ibn Ṭufayl's conception of the 'spirit' (*rūḥ*), it is noted that its seat is specified, from an explicitly cardiocentric perspective, as the heart, and it enters only (by way of emanation, which seems limited to animate beings but is said to have effects on the level of elements) in suitably prepared matter, even if it is due to the dispensation of a divine spirit. Furthermore, it is noted that it possesses unity in both the numerical and the specific senses; that the animal spirit is the form of the hylemorphic composite living being (the body being merely instrumental); and that the more complex this form is, the more alive it is (this better fits the Avicennian than the Fārābian line of emanation, as does the idea that every single thing shares in the attribute of createdness). As for the human soul, it reveals itself to be a separate, immaterial substance that is destined to eternal life (based on Aristotle's *ergon* argument in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which had been elaborated by Miskawayh). It is worthwhile to add that Kukkonen detects in Ibn Ṭufayl the will to puzzle out the true meaning of Galen's teaching. This is a well-balanced study. Let me just note that the intermediary state of some souls in the hereafter may have been inspired by Ibn Sīnā (see, for example, his *Metaphysics*, IX, 7). However, which works of Ibn Sīnā were effectively disposed of by Ibn Ṭufayl remains to be determined and remains a major desideratum for study (similar and intimately related to the reception of Ibn Sīnā's works in Andalusia, especially in Muslim Andalusia).

The last three contributions address three special topics. The first, commonly elaborated by Resianne Fontaine and Steven Harvey, concentrates on Ibn Daud's *Ha-Emunah ba-Ramah, the Exalted Faith*, published in 1161 (hence, before the emergence of Averroism in Jewish thought). Ibn Daud conceived the book as an introduction for novice philosophers, and he sought to establish harmony between tradition and 'true philosophy,' the best representatives of which were al-Fārābī and, above all, Ibn Sīnā. Remarkably, Ibn Daud

is the first Jewish author to systematically introduce the notion of 'Necessary Existent,' in the discussion of God's existence and unity. Thus, he shows great concern with sound reasoning, in line with Aristotle and the Muslim *falāsifa*. The authors believe that Ibn Sīnā constituted his major source of inspiration with respect to the notion of the 'Necessary Existent' (used primarily in a causal sense) and the metaphysical proof for God's existence (based on the distinction between necessary and possible being). The authors also stress that Ibn Daud used the Avicennian idea of an intermediary creation for his own purpose, the establishment of human freedom. Unfortunately, they do not specify to which Avicennian texts Ibn Daud had access. In a final section, they provide a brief survey of the (limited) reception of Ibn Daud's thought in later Jewish philosophy. The second of these contributions is about philosophical Sufism. In this chapter, Anna Akasoy examines the reception of and the opposition to Andalusian Sufism. She begins with a *fatwā* by Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) against Ibn Tūmart (d. 524/1130), in which he suggests that both Ibn Tūmart and Ibn Sabʿīn (d. 669/1270) deny God's attributes insofar as they share with Ibn Sīnā the notion of 'absolute existence' (*wujūd muṭlaq*). In what follows (using other writings of Ibn Taymiyya), Akasoy attempts to explain how Ibn Taymiyya arrived at this judgment, emphasizing the inclusion of Ibn Sabʿīn, who, linked with Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), is considered by Ibn Taymiyya an exponent of a philosophical Sufism that maintained the doctrine of the unity of being and subscribed to the concept of *aʿyān thābita* (not translated by the author, but meaning something like 'established beings'). However, she concludes that no definite answer is available and that the precise relationship between *falsafa* and *taṣawwuf* among these 'Sufi philosophers' requires further research. Given that none of the Sufis concerned seems to have characterized himself as a 'philosopher,' Akasoy brings in evidence from (mainly fourteenth-century) biographical sources (concerning Ibn Sabʿīn and ʿAfīf al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī [d. 690/1291]) that this description, in all likelihood, originated in a polemical context in a later period. She concludes that three ways can be distinguished in which philosophy and mysticism were combined: (1) a combination of philosophical theory, ascetic practice, and Sufi doctrines (al-Ghazālī as portrayed by al-Subkī); (2) a coherent esoteric neoplatonic philosophy with Shīʿite undertones (inspired by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ with Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī as mediators); and (3) use of the terminology and/or

concepts of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics, particularly in connection with being (in this respect, the author evokes the above-mentioned problem of the presence of Ibn Sīnā's works in the Muslim West). Akasoy sketches an important issue and brings in many interesting materials. However, most of these materials concern the thirteenth century. In a volume devoted to the twelfth century, it would have been more appropriate to examine the possible presence of philosophical elements in Ibn 'Arabī's thought, which largely forms the basis of Andalusian Sufism. Nevertheless, her contribution has great relevance. This is also the case with the last contribution, by Gregor Schwarb. It offers a detailed survey of twelfth-century Mu'tazilism, both in the Islamic world (Sunnī, Shī'ite, and Zaydī) and the Jewish world. It is overwhelmingly an historical study. Unfortunately, little is said about the specific doctrines involved. From a philosophical point of view, the most significant remark concerns Ibn al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī's (d. 536/1141) *Tuḥfa* as a strong reaction against the spectacular ascendancy of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy. Also philosophically interesting are indications of the influence of some of these Mu'tazilite thinkers on later scholars, such as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī.

Let me conclude by saying that despite possible minor criticisms, the present book offers many new materials and provides scholars who are interested in medieval Arabic thought (as well as Jewish and Latin thought) many insights as well as many indications for further research. It is worthy of attention and forms a nice closure to a series of three volumes devoted to different periods of Arabic thought. I can only express my admiration and gratitude toward Peter Adamson, who not only organized three colloquia but also edited the three volumes (related to the colloquia, but not limited to the presentations given).