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This study presents a series of scholarly inquiries initially presented during a symposium held at Villa Vigoni in 2008. As delineated by the editors, the particular doctrines of Avicenna (d. 428/1037) scrutinized within this compendium were chosen in a manner that could be construed as somewhat casual. Notably, certain aspects as integral components of metaphysical discourse, such as the proof of God's existence and the theory of substance and accident, have only been addressed to a certain level. Consequently, the essays in this volume would principally captivate scholars who focus on two predominant domains: the distinction between essence and existence, and the concept of the Necessary Existent by Himself. It is worth emphasizing that these articles serve as a remarkable testimony to the exceptional philosophical ingenuity inherent in Avicenna's doctrines, alongside their historical interpretation, within both the Hebraic and Latin cultural milieus.

The articles under examination have been selected because of their remarkable assertions. Although the remaining articles are no less significant, the whole volume of contributions necessitates a focused treatment, rendering a comprehensive analysis of each unfeasible in this review.

In his article titled "Al-Lawkarī's Reception of Ibn Sīnā's Ilāhiyyāt", Jules Jannens directs his primary focus towards the argument that al-Lawkarī (d.

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517/1123) endeavours to present a comprehensive and synthetic overview Ibn Sīnā's *al-Ilāhiyyāt*. Jannens remarks that al-Lawkarī's exposition of metaphysical principles appears to introduce a discernible divergence from Ibn Sīnā's, potentially diluting the cohesive essence of metaphysics. This, according to Jannens, impacts the previously unbroken nexus connecting universal science and theology. Nevertheless, it could be argued that Jannens inadvertently overlooks a pivotal facet of al-Lawkarī's exposition: He constitutes an autonomous testament within the Peripatetic tradition. Hence, it becomes unnecessary for al-Lawkarī to unquestioningly adhere to or faithfully mirror Ibn Sīnā's construct, nor to replicate the precise configuration of metaphysical underpinnings.

A noteworthy contribution titled "Essence and Existence in the Eleventh and Twelfth Century Islamic East: A Sketch", authored by Robert Wisnovsky, merits attention. Wisnovsky highlights that within his work, *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) undertakes a critical examination of the doctrinal position that suggests existence is something super-added to the quiddity of things in the concrete, extramental world. This doctrine is attributed by al-Suhrawardī to those he designates as adherents of the Peripatetic tradition. Contrary to this, al-Suhrawardī contends that existence fundamentally pertains to the domain of intellectual abstraction. While Wisnovsky accepts that certain passages in Avicenna's corpus, such as the renowned excerpt from *Ta'liqāt*, where Avicenna asserts, "The existence of each category is extrinsic to its quiddity and super-added to it, whereas quiddity of the Necessary Existent is its thatness.", may be interpreted as aligning with the theory critiqued by al-Suhrawardī, he nonetheless casts doubt upon Avicenna's definitive adherence to this supposition. To Wisnovsky's knowledge, this is because Avicenna never explicitly committed himself to the thesis that existence is something super-added to the quiddity. Wisnovsky, however, propounds that such a perspective might be better construed as an indictment of the ontological framework endorsed by later theologians like Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (ö. 606/1210) and 'Umar Khayyām (ö. 526/1132), rather than an accurate reflection of Avicenna's own ontology.

Nevertheless, for two reasons, it would be hard to accept Wisnovsky's assertion. Firstly, al-Rāzī disapproves of the notion of existence being externally appended to the quiddity of entities. He categorizes this notion as a kind of sophistry often espoused by radical skeptics who outrightly repudiate the concept of existence. Notably, al-Rāzī proceeds to censure these skeptics for their injudicious

stance. Secondly, it is pertinent to acknowledge that the chronological proximity of Khayyām and al-Suhrawardī is striking: They were almost contemporaries. The temporal gap between these two scholars spans a mere few decades, casting some doubt upon the swiftness with which Khayyām’s ideas purportedly disseminated during this period. Further weakening Wisnovsky’s assertion is the conspicuous absence of discernible traces of Khayyām’s ideas within foundational kalāmīc treatises such as *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, and *al-Muḥaṣṣal*.

Stephen Menn, in his study, presents quite an intriguing proposition: “It may seem peculiar to describe al-Fārābī as part of the reception-history of Avicenna’s metaphysics, given that al-Fārābī died before Avicenna was born”, an assertion that might indeed appear paradoxical. This unorthodox notion, expounded upon in Menn’s article titled “al-Fārābī in the Reception of Avicenna’s Metaphysics: Averroes (d. 595/1198) against Avicenna on Being and Unity,” is meticulously advanced to assume a defensible stance. Menn ardently contends that al-Fārābī, despite temporal disparities, assumes a pivotal role within this reception-history due to the deliberate incorporation orchestrated by Averroes. It is noteworthy that Averroes, renowned for his forthright critique of Avicenna’s endeavour to recalibrate the contours of Peripatetic metaphysics, becomes the architect of al-Fārābī’s (ö. 339/950) participation within this historical continuum. Avicenna’s scope encompasses an earnest reconfiguration of Peripatetic metaphysical thought, meticulously orchestrating its logical sequence to underscore the coherent development of central ontological principles. In this line of thinking, the theological conclusions are meticulously dependent upon methodically substantiated ontological concepts rather than being rooted in physical demonstrations, as posited by Avicenna.

In Averroes’s assessment, the endeavours undertaken by Avicenna are perceived to have introduced a noticeable degeneration in the demonstrative excellence of Aristotle’s arguments. Consequently, the Peripatetic school found itself more susceptible to the criticisms advanced by Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). Menn’s scholarly elucidation advances the notion that Averroes positions al-Fārābī and Avicenna in certain domains, subsequently subjecting both scholars to his critical scrutiny for their deviations from the foundational tenets expounded by Aristotle and his ancient interpreters. Notably, however, Menn expounds that Averroes navigates an intriguing intellectual trajectory: he aligns himself with al-Fārābī on pivotal ontological matters, effectively adopting a standpoint contrary to Avicenna’s. Remarkably, Averroes posits that al-Fārābī preemptively identified the fallacies

subsequently propagated by Avicenna, thereby endowing al-Fārābī with a distinct analytical wisdom and prompting a standpoint that underscores Averroes' alignment with al-Fārābī's insights.

Menn's scholarship unfolds through meticulous examination of key doctrinal concepts such as *mawjūd* (existent being), *wujūd* (existence), and unity, as espoused within the theoretical frameworks delineated by al-Fārābī, Avicenna, and Aristotle. These incisive analyses are conducted to substantiate his contentions, thereby forming the crux of his argumentative endeavours. Despite occasional instances of excessive elaboration, rendering some segments challenging to navigate, these analyses exhibit a commendable degree of organizational coherence, effectively buttressing the assertions posited by Menn. It becomes apparent that Averroes's reproachful contentions aimed at Avicenna are often underpinned by rationales that trace their lineage not to Aristotle but rather to the philosophical framework articulated by al-Fārābī.

However, an aspect noticeably absent within Menn's exposition pertains to the analytical examination of the role assumed by the *mutakallimūn* in Avicenna's endeavour to recalibrate the contours of Peripatetic metaphysics, a recalibration that Averroes vehemently critiques Avicenna for deliberately straying from the demonstrative method espoused by Aristotle, becoming deeply enmeshed within the influence of the *mutakallimūn*. Averroes's criticism is notably severe, as he vehemently critiques Avicenna for manifesting a pronounced susceptibility to the influence of the *mutakallimūn*. This susceptibility, according to Averroes, engenders a propensity toward the formulation of rhetorical arguments within the realm of metaphysics in lieu of the rigorous demonstrative method emblematic of the Aristotelian tradition.

Peter Adamson undertakes an intricate exploration of a challenging subject within Avicennian psychology: Human and Divine Self Intellection. In his adept analysis, Adamson accurately unveils Ibn Sīnā's augmentation of Aristotle's assertions on this very subject, buttressing them with intricate and novel arguments. Adamson illuminates that, having passages from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in his mind, Avicenna ingeniously interweaves his own elaborate arguments, thereby carving out a distinctive intellectual terrain.

Evidently, one illustrative divergence lies in Avicenna's assertion that any intelligible entity existing in its self-subsistent state must inherently possess the attribute of being a subject of intellection. This tenet, although not articulated within

Aristotle's oeuvre, attains crystalline clarity within Avicenna's elucidations. Hence, a cogent inference may be drawn, positing that Ibn Sinā endows the proposition of self-intellection with a more intricate rationale, shedding light on its nuances and intricacies. Moreover, Avicenna presents a more pronounced exposition regarding the constraining role of materiality, a facet alluded to in Aristotle's *De Anima* (III.4).

Adamson's scholarship also underscores the inherent value of comparing Avicenna's treatises with those of his principal commentators, namely al-Rāzī and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274). In this regard, Adamson meticulously probes the commentaries of these scholars, illuminating how they contribute to the enrichment of Avicenna's discourse. Noteworthy is al-Rāzī's augmentation of Avicenna's treatise, wherein he meticulously highlights the interconnectivity between distinct segments of *The Pointers* (*al-Ishārāt*), unraveling the intricate nexus between Avicennian argumentation and parallel disputes in the subsequent Islamic theology.

In his article titled "On the Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics before Albertus Magnus: An Attempt at Periodization" Amos Bertolacci claims that thus far, the studies have focused mainly on the Latin perception of Avicenna's psychology in the *Kitāb al-Nafs* of *al-Shifā'*. Bertolacci also points out that investigations into the transmission of Avicenna's metaphysical tenets remain incipient and, consequently, the multipart panorama derived from these inquiries remains fragmented. His present contribution fills the lacuna wherein he endeavours to furnish a comprehensive tripartite periodization delineating the progression of the *Philosophia prima's* dissemination within the corpus of Latin philosophy preceding the mid-thirteenth century. Notably, this explication is accompanied by an intricate exposition that meticulously unpacks the nuances within these three distinct periods. Furthermore, Bertolacci furnishes a comprehensive elucidation of the evidentiary corpus attesting to the initial proliferation of Avicenna's metaphysical constructs within the academic milieu of the University of Paris. This pioneering dissemination occurred in proximity to the temporal employ by William of Auvergne (d. 1249). Additionally, a concise yet illuminating overview of the prominent scholars who thrived within the University of Paris during this epoch is also presented, thereby contextualizing the intellectual milieu that bore witness to the diffusion of Avicenna's metaphysical doctrines.

The co-editor Dag Nikolaus Hasse, in his research titled "Avicenna's 'Giver of Forms' in Latin Philosophy, Especially in the Works of Albertus Magnus," under-

takes a nuanced analysis of how Avicenna's theory of *datum formarum* is interpreted within the philosophical framework of Albertus Magnus (d. 1280). Before this examination, Hasse provides a succinct panoramic overview of the trajectory the concept has traversed within the Latin intellectual milieu. Subsequently, he delves into the realm of rare affirmative receptions accorded to this concept, briefly discussing the stances of noteworthy figures such as William of Auvergne, John Buridan (d. 1358), Marsilio Ficino (d. 1499), and Tiberio Russiliano (d. 1560). Notably, a more comprehensive investigation is conducted into the perspective of Albertus Magnus, extensively unraveling his engagement with the subject matter.

Hasse's ultimate deduction posits that Albertus Magnus did not unequivocally adopt the theory of *eductio formarum* as propounded by Averroes, thereby deviating from prevalent assumptions. While it remains evident that Albertus Magnus articulates discernible distinctions from both Plato (d. 347 B.C.) and Avicenna, and offers critiques of the *datum formarum* theory, his philosophical stance maintains a proximate alignment with Avicenna. The framework about likely reasons for Albertus's accommodation of Avicenna's *datum formarum* theory is notably insightful and thought-provoking, adding depth to the discourse.

However, the article could potentially be enhanced by providing a more intricate exposition regarding the precise reasons underlying Albertus Magnus's selective incorporation of Averroes's *eductio formarum* theory. Additionally, a deeper exploration could shed light on the extent to which Albertus was influenced by Averroes's theoretical paradigm, thereby enriching the scholarly elucidation offered by Hasse.

In another article, Giorgio Pini undertakes a comprehensive exploration of the conceptions of 'to be a thing' as expounded by both Scotus (d. 1308) and Avicenna. Pini's analysis is particularly centered on a specific case, namely Scotus's interpretation of a renowned passage extracted from the Fifth Chapter of the First Book of Avicenna's *Metaphysics*. This chapter signifies Avicenna's assertion of fundamental claims regarding the notions of "thing" and "being" as the primal notions within human cognitive reception. In a meticulously structured manner, Pini divides his discourse into three distinct sections.

The inaugural segment directs attention towards the perspectives elucidated by Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) and Henry of Ghent (d. 1293), as they grapple with the exegesis of Avicenna's assertions concerning the meaning of 'being a thing'.

Proceeding further, the focus is redirected onto Scotus's viewpoint, which Pini posits as a developmental progression intertwined with a critical stance in relation to Henry of Ghent's position. The final segment concludes in a comprehensive culmination, marked by an examination of the pivotal role accorded to the concept of "thing" within the realm of cognition. Notably, Pini acknowledges the unequivocal influence exerted by Avicenna upon Scotus, albeit stipulating that the characterization of this influence necessitates a delineation of the interpretive mechanisms through which Avicenna's concepts were apprehended. Thus, Central to Pini's analysis is how Avicenna's concepts were construed and the multifaceted dynamics that underpin this interpretive process. He argues that Scotus's main interest was to understand how things are really in the world, and Avicenna's arsenal served as valuable tools to navigate this foundational inquiry. Importantly, since Scotus regarded Avicenna as a harmonious adjunct to Aristotle's intellectual legacy, he benefited from Avicenna's metaphysical explication to remarkable effect. Even instances where Avicenna's exposition appeared incomplete, such as his omission of the narrative of Adam's fall, yielded its own analytical fruits. This deficiency prompted Avicenna to assign heightened prominence to the concepts of "thing" and "being" as objects of intellectual contemplation. In this vein, Scotus contends that these foundational concepts are instrumental in facilitating the reconstruction of the ontological framework, thereby enabling a more accurate comprehension of reality within the constraints of contemporary understanding.

In conclusion, this compilation stands as a commendable and substantive contribution to the study of the distinction between essence and existence, as well as the concept of the Necessary Existent by Himself within Ibn Sinā's metaphysical framework. Notably, its cohesiveness defies the norm often associated with essay collections, as the majority of contributions harmoniously reinforce and augment one another. The uniformly high standard of scholarship evidenced across all papers, encompassing diverse methodologies and perspectives, is noteworthy. Furthermore, the meticulous attention to research, coupled with an extensive bibliographical foundation, attests to the rigor invested in the editing process. In succinct terms, this volume assumes an exceptional stature, constituting a pivotal assemblage of studies that notably propels our comprehension of Ibn Sinā's metaphysics to new heights. Significantly, it extends its influence across three distinct cultural realms - Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin - thereby encompassing a multifaceted understanding of Ibn Sinā's philosophical legacy.