

JULES L. JANSSENS, *AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON IBN SĪNĀ. SECOND SUPPLEMENT (1995-2009)*, ARIZONA CENTER FOR MEDIEVAL STUDIES, TEMPLE AZ 2017 (MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE TEXTS AND STUDIES, 439), XVI + 736 PP., ISBN 9780866984874

JOSEP PUIG MONTADA  
COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY, MADRID



In the East and the West the work of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) has been highly valued for centuries and scholarship has been productive, especially in recent years. Adequate tools are required to process the large amount of information and bibliographies are the most common instrument for this. But very often, bibliographies do not advise the researcher about the contents and possible value of the publication, and so there is great need for bibliographies containing notes on each edition or study, and on the import of the publication.

Jules Janssens first published an annotated bibliography on Avicenna in 1991 with Leuven University Press (358 p.), scrutinizing the period 1970–1989. In 1999, the same publisher printed the first supplement comprising the years 1990–1994 (218 p.). In only five years, scholarly activity had grown so much that a supplement was already needed.

The reviewed book has 736 pages and 1970 entries to cover another fifteen years of Avicennian editions and studies. Janssens has organized it in seventeen chapters and complemented it with the necessary indexes.

Chapter I deals with editions and translations of Avicenna's works, which are the essential tools for any research.

Section I. (« Works, Editions and Translations »), A. (« Major Philosophical Works »), 2. (« *al-Shifā'* ») concerns the *Shifā'*, i.e. Avicenna's encyclopedia of the sciences as they are needed for the health of the soul, which, together with the *Qānūn*, for the health of the body, constitutes his main work. The *Shifā'* was first printed in Tehran in 1303–1305/1886–1887, in two volumes, and the edition has been reprinted; at times, the edition was retyped, and the publisher incorrectly presented it as a brand-new edition. Muḥammad 'Uthmān, for instance, claimed to have prepared a new edition of the logical parts of the *Shifā'* (Cairo 2008) on a manuscript basis, but he actually reproduced the Tehran text, which had been reprinted again in Tehran in 1405/1984, as Janssens shows (p. 4). The Metaphysics of the *Shifā'* has drawn most attention, and here again Janssens helps us to distinguish between real and fake editions. For instance, 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-

Sā'ih published the *Ilāhiyāt* (Cairo 2009), claiming that it was a new edition and that he had used unnamed Iranian manuscripts. Janssens proves that this is a copy of an Iranian edition by Ḥasanzādeh al-Āmolī (Qom 1375H/1417HQ/1997), who indeed relied on manuscripts, although his work does not abide by academic standards (Janssens, p. 5).

Section I.A.2.D. deals with Avicenna Latinus. For medieval and Renaissance scholars, the Latin translations of Avicenna are the gateway to the reception of his philosophy and medicine. In this respect, Janssens records the publication of the *Liber primus naturalium. Tractatus secundus. De motu et de consimilibus* (Brussels 2006), the latest volume of the project *Avicenna Latinus* (p. 36). The Belgian project aims at the critical edition of the Latin versions of the *Shifā'*. It was initiated by Simone van Riet who edited the first eight volumes, in addition to a ninth volume contributed by Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, dedicated to the manuscript tradition. Simon van Riet passed away when she was working on the tenth volume and Janssens is now carrying the main responsibility for it, taking care of the edition of the treatise on motion (and place and time), corresponding to the second part of Avicenna's division of the *Naturalia* ('Natural Matters'). Of course, the section on Latin translations comprises many other entries, some of them related to the Belgian project.

Section I.A.3. considers other major philosophical writings. Janssens has been able to describe editions, many of them in Iran, whose existence is difficult to discover or to check. The section includes translations – in this respect, I would like to point to the references the author makes to the Syriac tradition of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt* ('Indications and Admonitions') (p. 61).

*Al-Nukat wa-l-Fawā'id* ('Notes and Observations') is a recapitulation of Avicenna's philosophical doctrines. Janssens deals with the issue of its authorship and concludes that it is an apocryphal work – a view that is not shared by all scholars. The information given (p. 69–70) focuses on all the aspects of the *al-Nukat*, a lesser-known work that deserves more attention.

Section I.B. is dedicated to Avicenna's major medical writings. Avicenna's medicine was influential on the East and the West for centuries. We find details about editions and translations of his *Canon* and other works; I would like to point out those related to the Hebrew tradition, such as the research done by L. Ferre Cano and Chaim Rabin (p. 77–78).

Section I.C. treats Avicenna's minor works. Avicenna's philosophy seems to be unrelated to Islamic issues, but the impression is wrong since he had a concern for the Qur'an and its interpretation that resulted in various writings. Janssens has done research on Avicenna's Qur'anic commentaries and the reader will find information on sources and scholarship at p. 124–128. Here, Janssens has included a chapter of *Varia*. The reader will find there the *Mi'rāj Nāme-ye Abū 'Alī*

*Sīnā* ('The Book of Ascent') ascribed to Avicenna and the scholarly debate on its authorship (p. 138–140).

The bulk of the bibliography is dedicated to published research on Avicenna, his disciples, and his aftermath. Because of the global interest in Avicenna, the massive amount of secondary literature makes its examination very difficult and time-consuming. Janssens's bibliography helps the scholar to focus on the articles and books relevant to research because he has gathered almost everything written on Avicenna, including bibliographies. Each item in the catalogue is followed by an abstract and a critical comment.

Chapters II–V comprise general studies. The inclusion of Avicenna in general studies of many philosophical topics and in various languages confirms the outstanding position he holds in the history of philosophy (see, in particular, Chapter V, p. 159–186).

Chapter VI deals with logic, noetics, and philosophy of science. Although Avicenna's metaphysics has been the main subject of interest for a long time, also other branches of knowledge attract the researchers. Concerning logic and the division of the sciences, I would like to refer to the discussion on intuitive knowledge and on abstraction analyzed in several contributions (e.g. Peter Adamson, Syamsuddin Arif, Dimitri Gutas, Dag N. Hasse, Gabriel Lahood, Jon McGinnis, Parviz Morewedge, Rahmat Allāh Rezāyī, et al.).

Chapter VIII focuses on psychology, pedagogy, and anthropology. The Avicennian doctrine of the soul has had great significance. Mehdi Aminrazavi, Attie Filho, Deborah Black, Sayyid M.A. Dībajī, Carla DiMartino, Robert E. Hall, Alfred Ivry, Jari Kaukua, Michael Marmura, Meryem Sebtī, among others, have written on the matter and Janssens gives an accurate account of their contributions. A few other scholars have written on the political philosophy of Avicenna. These include Miklos Mároth, Abu l-Fazl Shakūrī and Olga Lizzini, and the reader is properly informed.

No doubt metaphysics (Chapter X) is the philosophical discipline in which Avicenna far outstrips his predecessors, to the point of being considered the founder of 'ontology' (Gerard Verbeke). Articles by Allan Bäck, Amos Bertolacci, M. Cruz Hernández, Tiana Koutzarova, Michael Marmura, Parviz Morewedge, J. Puerta Vílchez, Giuseppe Roccaro, Robert Wisnovsky, et al. focus on this subject and there could be even more, so important has been Avicenna's position.

Avicenna's mysticism (Chapter XI) is an issue that has been discussed for a long time and Janssens lists the various contributions to the discussion (p. 351–376). I would like to point to Abdelali Elamrani-Jamal and his interpretation of the contemplative vision in the *Ishārāt*, the well-known criticism of Dimitri Gutas, and the syncretical article of Rafael Ramón on Avicenna as the link between East and West.

Chapters XII-XIV of Janssens's bibliography extend to the sources of Avicenna, his relationship to other Arab thinkers, and to his influence on the West. We learn about the research of Amos Bertolacci, Marienza Benedetto and Cristina D'Ancona concerning the reception of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Abraham D. Stone elucidates the influence of Simplicius as does Robert Wisnovsky with the Neoplatonists.

Chapter XIII deals with Avicenna and other Arab philosophers. I would like to mention Ahmed H. al-Rahim's contribution on Avicenna's disciples, that by Alnoor Dhanani on the relationship between Avicenna and 'Abd al-Jabbār, Gerhard Endress's study on the chains of transmission, and several others on Avicenna's influence upon other Islamic thinkers. A relevant point is the controversial relationship with al-Ghazzālī, on which we find articles by Frank Griffel, Jules Janssens, and others.

In Chapter XIV, the author expounds the influences of Avicenna upon the West (Medieval, Modern, and Contemporary), upon Jewish thought, and Syriac and Byzantine philosophers. As expected, the section devoted to Avicenna's impact on the Latin philosophers of the Middle Ages is the largest (p. 489-572). Most of the studies are dedicated to Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, but one finds also contributions on Meister Eckhart, William of Auvergne, Duns Scotus, Henry of Ghent, Dominicus Gundissalinus, Dietrich von Freiberg, Henry Bate, and Roger Bacon. Among the many scholars, Dag N. Hasse should be mentioned for his meticulous studies on the influence of Arabic and Islamic philosophy on the Latin West, and that of Avicenna in particular.

Chapter XV focuses on natural sciences and Chapter XVI on medicine. Many oriental authors have recently contributed to the study of these aspects and Janssens gives us an account of their publications, many of which in Persian or Turkish. The bibliography covering publications in Oriental languages is a major strength of Janssens's project and one wishes it could be larger.

The publication is available in hard-copy, although it would be much more useful in an electronic form. The reader may not necessarily agree with all the judgments, but the bibliographical data are correct and the summaries fully reliable, making the book a required instrument for research not only on Avicenna but also on Islamic philosophy.