



Riccardo Strobino, *Avicenna's Theory of Science. Logic, Metaphysics, Epistemology*. Oakland, University of California Press 2021. 456 S.

Besprochen von Fedor Benevich:
Edinburgh, fedor.benevich@ed.ac.uk

Recent years have shown that studies on Avicenna (d. 1037), probably the most influential philosopher in the Islamic world, have finally reached the level where scholars are writing extensive monographs devoted to the individual areas of Avicenna's philosophy. Avicenna's *opus magnum*, the 'Book of the Healing', consists of several parts: 'Metaphysics'; 'Natural Philosophy'; 'Isagoge'; 'Categories'; 'Demonstration'; etc. The recent monographs on Avicenna's philosophy naturally use this division of the 'Book of the Healing', with each monograph focusing on a specific part (for instance, Amos BERTOLACCI, 'The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics in Avicenna's Kitāb al-Šifā'; Andreas LAMMER, 'The Elements of Avicenna's Physics'; Alexander KALBARZCYK, 'Predication and Ontology: Studies and Texts on Avicennian and Post-Avicennian Readings of Aristotle's "Categories"'; Silvia DI VINCENZO, 'Avicenna, "The Healing, Logic: Isagoge"'). STROBINO's 'Avicenna's Theory of Science' is a long-awaited contribution to this series of monographs, this time with a focus on the 'Book of Demonstration'.

The book offers an unprecedented analysis of Avicenna's innovations and elaborations on the Aristotelian theory of demonstrative reasoning. For the first time, it presents in detail how Avicenna develops his own theory of science based on the Aristotelian 'Posterior Analytics'. One of the main theses of the book is that Avicenna's innovations were driven by his goal of making the Aristotelian theory of science applicable to the real-life scientific reasoning (331). STROBINO shows how Avicenna, with this aim in mind, attempts to create a consistent and comprehensive system of scientific reasoning by filling the systematic gaps in the Aristotelian logic of science, or explaining it further.

A reader with a background in contemporary analytic philosophy should be careful not to expect from ‘Avicenna’s Theory of Science’ a contribution to the philosophy of science or epistemology in their modern, analytical sense. Rather, the book deals with the “logic of scientific discourse” (331). STROBINO offers an extremely accurate and comprehensive account of the main notions, nuanced distinctions, and formalisations developed by Avicenna to account for every possible step and element of demonstrative reasoning used in the scientific discourse; but the book does not deal with the questions of the role and validity of science as such, which are characteristic of analytic philosophy of science and epistemology. A more detailed summary of the contents of STROBINO’s book can be found in the “Introduction” (7 f.).

As the author contends himself, “this is not an easy book to read” (6). Still, given its fundamental importance for studies of medieval philosophy, it is definitely worth trying! The author usefully summarises Avicenna’s materials in the diagrams (listed on xi). All potential readers are very much advised to use these diagrams if they struggle to keep in mind various nuanced divisions developed by Avicenna in his ‘Book of Demonstration’. Likewise, while the author focuses on a faithful presentation of innovations and refinements found in Avicenna’s logic of science in the main text of ‘Avicenna’s Theory of Science’, the reader should not overlook the footnotes, as they often contain very useful explanations and critical analysis of Avicenna’s theory, helpful for understanding its contents.

There is no doubt that ‘Avicenna’s Theory of Science’ will become the go-to book for specialists and students in medieval philosophy who are interested in the development of Aristotelian logic and epistemology. The book will be the starting point for any future research in those areas of philosophy in the Islamic world. One possible way to develop the foundations laid down in it is to contextualise Avicenna’s innovations presented in the book against the Baghdad School of philosophy and its contributions to Aristotelian logic in the 10th century CE. Likewise, the book will certainly incentivise new research on post-Avicennian philosophy, for instance, with respect to the question of whether later Islamic philosophers accepted the centrality of the ideal of demonstration promoted by Avicenna, according to STROBINO’s ‘Avicenna’s Theory of Science’.