

## **An Evaluation on Ibrahim Madkur's Critical Text Edition of Ibn Sina's Ash-Shifa'**

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### **Abstract**

Ibn Sina (d. 428/1037), also known as Avicenna, is one of the most outstanding Muslim scholars. *Kitab Ash-Shifa'* (the Book of Healing) is one of his magnum opuses, contributing significantly to science and philosophy. However, there is no original manuscript of *ash-Shifa'*, the one written by the author or by his secretary, Abu-'Ubayd al-Juzjani (d. 463/1070). Therefore, this article is devoted to evaluating the textual edition of Ibn Sina's *ash-Shifa'*, specifically *Kitab al-Hayawan*, which is one of *ash-Shifa'* themes, edited by Ibrahim Madkur and published in Cairo. Furthermore, this article seeks to answer how the Cairo edition of Ibn Sina's *ash-Shifa'* was critically edited. It evaluates how Madkur conducted editorial principles to get as close as possible to the Ibn Sina's words and meaning.

**Keywords:** *Ash-Shifa'*, Ibn Sina, text edition, manuscripts, Ibrahim Madkur.

### **Introduction**

Ibn Sina is one of the prominent scholars in the Muslim scientific world. In the West, he is well known as Avicenna. As a polymath, he wrote many books in a broad range of sciences. *Al-Qanun fi at-Tibb* (the Canon of Medicine) and *Kitab Ash-Shifa'* (the Book of Healing) are considered to be his magnum opuses. While the former is his most remarkable work on medicine, the latter is his monumental contribution to science and philosophy. *Kitab Ash-Shifa'* is concerned with four main subjects: logic (*al-mantiq*), natural sciences (*at-tab'iyyat*), mathematics (*ar-Riyadiyyat*), and metaphysics or theology (*al-Ilahiyat*).

Since there is no original manuscript of *ash-Shifa'*, the one written by the author or his secretary, it is necessary to establish a stemma. Jan Just Witkam states that stemma is a way to approach the so-called "lost manuscript of the author," or it is the way back into history, the path along which the philologist tries to find his

author, or expressed more carefully to the archetype.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, by considering the stemmatic approach and using Rosenthal's methods and principles of textual criticism,<sup>2</sup> this article is devoted to evaluating the textual edition of Ibn Sina's *ash-Shifa'*, specifically *Kitab al-Hayawan* which is one of *ash-Shifa'* themes. The book was edited by Ibrahim Madkur and published in Cairo. The Cairo edition of *ash-Shifa'*, consists of twenty-two volumes and was published from 1952 to 1983. Therefore, this article seeks to address the question of how the Cairo edition of Ibn Sina's *ash-Shifa'* was critically edited. It argues that Madkur has carried out a series of critical and academic editorial processes to bring *ash-Shifa'* closer to the original language and intent of the author.

### Ibn Sina's Life

The account of Ibn Sina's life can be acquired from his autobiography and from his biography, which was written by his disciple and secretary, Abu-'Ubayd al-Juzjani (d. 1070). Ibn Sina, whose complete name was Abu 'Ali al-Husayn bin 'Abdullah ibn al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Sina al-Balkhi al-Bukhari, had documented his life until 30 years of his age and then al-Juzjani continued writing the biography until the death of his master.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Sina was born in 370/980 in Afshana, a village near Bukhara, and died in 428/1037 in Hamadan. His native language was Persian, and his father, an official of the Samanid dynasty, had provided him with an outstanding education in Bukhara.<sup>4</sup>

Ibn Sina was a fast learner. Although he had no teacher in natural sciences and medicine, many physicians were working under his direction when he was only sixteen. At the age of eighteen, he had mastered all known branches of sciences in his time. Goichon states that since the 'amir of Khurasan was cured of a severe illness by Ibn Sina, he was allowed to use the splendid library of the Samanid princes. When he was twenty-one, he wrote his philosophical book. He preferred to follow his own philosophical intuition and acknowledged only Abu Naṣr al-Farabi (d. 950) as a significant influence on his intellectual career. He also mastered Aristotle's thoughts, which he criticized later, from al-Farabi's book.<sup>5</sup>

Ibn Sina's works differ from Aristotle's. Ibn Sina's independence of mind led him to present his own personally worked-out thought rather than repeating

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<sup>1</sup> Jan Just Witkam, 1988. *Manuscripts of the Middle East 3*. Ter Lugt Press, Leiden, 88.

<sup>2</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship*. (Analecta Orientalia, 24.) Rome, Pontificum Institutum Biblicum, 1947.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Juzjani continued the account down to Ibn Sina death, including details about his manner of work and study much as the master himself had sought. Look at L.E. Goodman, *Avicenna*, Routledge, New York, 12.

<sup>4</sup> A. M. Goichon, 1971, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, Vol. III, 941.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 941; H. Landolt, 1998, *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, Routledge, London, Vol. 1, 373.

the works of others. Aristotle's logic seemed to him insufficient because it could not be applied in a way that was sufficiently close to life. Ibn Sina is placed in the Neo-Platonist and Augustinian traditions.<sup>6</sup>

Ibn Sina was appointed as a minister several times. His advice was always listened to by the prince. In addition, the prince not only consulted him on medical matters but also on political issues. Because of his close relationship with the prince, he became an object of envy. He was sometimes even persecuted by his enemies. He was never safe and was frequently compelled to move. He wrote his books on horseback and even in prison. His only reference for writing was his memory.<sup>7</sup> During the expedition of the prince 'Ala' al-Dawla, Ibn Sina died and was buried at Hamadan in 428/1037. A monument was built to commemorate a thousand years of his birth.<sup>8</sup>

### Ibn Sina's Works

Ibn Sina composed works and essays on theology, philosophy, medicine, astronomy and natural science. His universal reputation was mainly due to his two great works, *Kitab ash-Shifa'* and *al-Qanun fi at-Tibb*. In these two works, he summarized and systematically expounded all the scientific results of his age.<sup>9</sup>

G. C. Anawati lists 276 works of Ibn Sina, including text noted as doubtful and some apocryphal works, in his bibliography (1950), while Madavi lists 131 authentic, and 110 doubtful works in 1954.<sup>10</sup> Ibn Sina's philosophical works have come down to us in a mutilated condition, whereas *ash-Shifa'* is complete. Ibrahim Madkur states that there are more than 100 manuscripts of *ash-Shifa'*, but the complete manuscripts are not more than 10.<sup>11</sup> The translation of *ash-Shifa'* was done at a moment when Aristotle was narrowly known, and that was only through the "posterior analytics" (*analytica posteriora*), Aristotle's terms from his *Organon*.

Ibn Sina has been known primarily as a philosopher and a physician, but actually, he contributed also to the advancement of all the sciences that were

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<sup>6</sup> Jon McGinnis in the introduction of *Interpreting Avicenna's Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islam*, 2004, E.J. Brill, Leiden, xii; In his *ash-Shifa'*, Ibn Sina contradicted Aristotle. See Fr. Rosenthal, 1947, *The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship*, Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, Roma, 50.

<sup>7</sup> A. M. Goichon, 1971. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, Vol. III, 941; For his autonomous works, see also Franz Rosenthal, *ibid*, 41.

<sup>8</sup> Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte Der Arabischen Litteratur (GAL)* in Arabic Edition: *Tarikh al-Adab al-'Araby*, translated by Mahmud Fahmi Hijazi, 1995. Vol. 5. al-Hai'ah al-Mi'sriyyah al-'Ammah lil-Kutub, 12.

<sup>9</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, *A Short History of Arabic Literature*, Deccan, 74.

<sup>10</sup> A. M. Goichon, 1971, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, Vol. III, 941.

<sup>11</sup> Ibrahim Madkūr in preface of Ibn Sina. 1952. *Ash-Shifa'*. *Al-Mantiq 1: al-Madkhal*. Ed. A. Qanwani, Mahmud al-Khudairi, Fuad al-Ihwani. Mathba`ah al-Amiriyah. Cairo, 39.

accessible in his day. His works can be traced following al-Juzjani indications and based on internal evidence:

- *Ar-Risalah al-Adwiyah fi al-Ma'ad* (The Letter of Medicine in the Hereafter)
- *Al' Arus* (The Wedding)
- *Fi Asrar aṣ-Ṣalat* (The Secret of Prayer)
- *Fi Haqa'iq 'Ilm at-Tauhid* (The Fact of Theology)
- *Fi Taṣdiq an-Nubuwwah* (The Proof of the Prophet)
- *Hikmat al-Maut* (The Philosophy of Death)
- *Ar-Risalah fi Ahwal an-Nafs* (The Letter in Conditions of the Soul)
- *Maqalah fi an-Nafs* (A paper about the Soul)
- *Al-Mabda' wa al-Ma'ad* (The Beginning and the Hereafter)
- *Kitab an-Najat* (The Book of Salvation)
- *Al-Qanun fi at-Tibb* (the Canon of Medicine)
- *Kitab ash-Shifa'* (the book of Healing)

Ibn Sina's medical and scientific works, both text and translations into Latin, Hebrew, Persian and modern European languages, have been published since 1497 AD.<sup>12</sup> His two masterpieces, *ash-Shifa'* and *Al-Qanun fi at-Tibb*, made him an undisputed master in medicine, natural sciences and philosophy. From the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the teaching and practice of medicine were based on him.

#### The Text Edition of *Kitab ash-Shifa'*

*Ash-Shifa'* is divided into four major themes, namely: *al-Mantiq* (logic), *at-Tabi'iyat* (nature), *ar-Riyadiyat* (mathematic), and *al-Ilahiyat* (theology). Each of the four major themes is divided again into smaller topics:

- Al-Mantiq* : *al-Khitabah* (speech), *ash-Shi'r* (poem).
- At-Tabi'iyat* : *al-Harakah wa at-Taghyir* (movement and changing), *'Ilm an-Nafs* (psychology), *al-Hayawan* (animals), *an-Nabat* (plants), *al-Jiulujia* (geology).
- Ar-Riyadiyat* : *al-Handasah* (mechanical engineering), *al-Hisab* (calculation), *al-Musiqi* (music), *'Ilm al-Hai'ah* (form).
- Al-Ilahiyat* : *al-Falsafah al-Ula* (philosophy), *as-Siyasah* (politic), *al-Akhlaq* (morals).

*Al-Hayawan* is the eighth volume of *ash-Shifa'*. It is the ultimate theme in *ash-Shifa'*. Generally, it explores outlooks and histories of animals, parts of animals, and the survival of animals. From the structure of the chapters that Ibn Sina wrote, it seems that he followed Aristotle's work of "Animals". Aristotle divided his "Animals" book into: *Historie des Animaux*, *Les Parties des Animaux*, and *De la*

<sup>12</sup> A. M. Goichon, 1971, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, Vol. III, 945.

*Generation des Animaux*.<sup>13</sup> In response to this statement, Madkur states that Ibn Sina's *al-Hayawan* is quite different from Aristotle's *Animals*.<sup>14</sup> The content of Ibn Sina's *al-Hayawan* stresses more on human body analysis than Aristotle's *Animals*.

The description of the manuscripts which are used by Madkur and the ways he established the text edition of *ash-Shifa'* are written in the preface of the first volume of *ash-Shifa'*. Meanwhile, in the prefaces of the other volumes, Madkur only depicts the contents of each volume. For instance, in the preface of the eighth volume of *ash-Shifa'*, *al-Hayawan*, Madkur makes a note on the introduction to biology. Furthermore, he compares Aristotle's biology and Ibn Sina's biology as well as their books of *al-Hayawan*. It is because Ibn Sina's *al-Hayawan* is accused of plagiarism from Aristotle's. Madkur emphasizes that the two books are different. The prefaces of *ash-Shifa'* written by Madkur are adequate to be preliminary information of *ash-Shifa'*.

In addition, there is no bibliography in this edition. However, Madkur, in the prefaces of *ash-Shifa'*, quotes some books and puts them in footnotes. Introductions and indexes are provided in each volume. The introductions are written both in Arabic and French. The indexes are divided into the index of names, index of terms, and term of isagogic.

### Ash-Shifa' Manuscripts

There is no original manuscript of *ash-Shifa'*, written by the author was found by Ibrahim Madkur.<sup>15</sup> What we can see today are *ash-Shifa'* manuscripts written a couple of hundred years after the death of Ibn Sina. The manuscripts (MSS) of *ash-Shifa'* were found in Cairo, Istanbul, Tehran, London, Paris, Leiden and Berlin. The British Museum's manuscript of *ash-Shifa'* is the first manuscript which was found by Ibrahim Madkur, the editor of *ash-Shifa'*.<sup>16</sup>

Madkur combined and compared the manuscripts of Egypt, Istanbul and London as the basis for his edition. The following is the MSS used by Madkur. In each manuscript, he puts signs, locations where the manuscripts were found, titles

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<sup>13</sup> Ibrahim Madkūr in preface of Ibn Sina. 1970. *Ash-Shifa'. Aṭṭabī'iyat 8: al-Hayawan*. Ed. Abd al-Halim Muntasir, Said Zaid, and Abdullah Ismail. Mathba'ah al-Haiah al-Mishriyyah al-Ammah li at-Ta'lif wa an-Nasyr, Cairo, ۶.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, ف.

<sup>15</sup> The case of *ash-Shifa'* manuscripts is seems similar to the case of *Irshad al-Qaṣid ila Asna al-Maqaṣid* (The guidance for him who aspires to the highest aims) of Ibn al-Akfani which is edited by Witkam. See Jan Just Witkam, 1988. *Manuscripts of the Middle East 3*. Ter Lugt Press, Leiden, 94.

<sup>16</sup> Ibrahim Madkūr in preface of Ibn Sina, 1952, *Ash-Shifa'. Al-Manṭiq 1: al-Madkhal*, Ed. A. Qanwani, Mahmud al-Khudairi, Fuad al-Ihwani. Maṭba'ah al-Amriyyah, Cairo, 67.

of the manuscripts, and copyists of the manuscripts, as well as the time and place when and where the manuscripts were copied:<sup>17</sup>

1. Bakhit, with the sign (↵), and Bakhit (hamish), with the formula (خ), is located in al-Azhar Library, Egypt. Written in various scripts, the MSS entitled “*Kitab ash-Shifa’ li Abi ‘Ali ibn Sina Mukmil wa Mutmim la Nazira Lahu*” (The Book of Healing of Abi ‘Ali ibn Sina which is complete and final and which has no equal). Syaikh Bakhit owned the MSS, but then he endowed them to people of knowledge in 1328 (Hijri). The name of the copyist, the place and the time of the copy are unknown. Perhaps, it is from the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Hijri). In the footnotes of Bakhit manuscript, there are some remarks from the copyist himself. The remarks were taken from another manuscript which is so-called Bakhit (hamish) MS.
2. Dar al-Kutub, with the sign (↵), is located in Dar al-Kutub, Egypt. The MS entitled “*Kitab ash-Shifa’ lish-Shaikh Abu ‘Ali Sina*” (The Book of Healing of Shaikh Abu ‘Ali Sina). The owner of the MS is unknown. The name of the copyist is mentioned, but the place and time of the copy are not mentioned. Perhaps, it is from the 11<sup>th</sup> century (Hijri).
3. Dar al-Kutub (A), with the sign (↵), is located in Dar al-Kutub, Egypt. The owner of the MS is unknown. It is from Dar al-Kutub copy and copied by various copyists. The MS refers to 1337 (Hijri), and copied from another copy which refers to 992 (Hijri).
4. Sulaimaniyah, with the sign (↵), is located in Damada. The MS entitled “*Awwal fi Shifa’ Ibn Sina fi Qism al-Mantiqiyat*” (The first of Healing of Abi ‘Ali ibn Sina in the Logic subject). There are many owners of this MS. However, the name and place of the copyist are unknown. It refers to 834 (Hijri).
5. ‘Asyir, with the sign (ع), is located in ‘Asyir’s collection. The MS is entitled “*al-Awwal min ash-Shifa’ li Abi ‘Ali*” (The first of Healing of Abi ‘Ali). The MS was owned by ‘Abd Qadir Muṣṭafa ‘Ashir. The copyist’s name is mentioned, but the place of the copy is not mentioned. The MS refers to 680 (Hijri).
6. ‘Ali Amiri, with the sign (ع), is located in Ali Amiri’s collection. The MS entitled “*Kitab Mantiq ash-Shifa’ li Abi ‘Ali ibn Sina*” (The book of Logic of Healing by Abi ‘Ali ibn Sina). It refers to 674 (Hijri). However, the name and place of the copyist are unknown.
7. British Museum, with the sign (ع), is located in British Museum, The United Kingdom. The MS was owned by a man who confessed as

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 68-74.

- 'Aṣim ibn Ibrahim ibn Haidir. The copyist's name, the place and the time of the copy are unknown. Perhaps, it is from the 11<sup>th</sup> century (*Hijri*).
8. Nur 'Uthmaniyah, with the sign (ن), is located in Nur 'Uthmaniyah collection. The copyist's name, the place and the time of the copy are unknown. Perhaps, it is from the 10<sup>th</sup> century (*Hijri*).
  9. India Office, with the sign (ا), is located in the India office. It is written that the owner is Ibn Sina. The MS was copied by a copyist in Kashmir in 1148 (*Hijri*), and copied from another copyist that is from 891 (*Hijri*).
  10. Yani Jami', with the sign (ي), is located in Yani Jami''s collection. The MS (the side of the MS) is entitled "Kitab Mantiq ash-Shifa'" (The book of Logic of Healing). The name and place of the copyist are unknown. The MS refers to 628 (*Hijri*).

In addition, Madkur puts notes on measures, types of calligraphy, colours of ink, opening sentences, closing sentences, and conditions of each manuscript. He provides comprehensive information about the conditions of manuscripts which he uses.

Carl Brockelmann in his masterpiece, *Geschichte Der Arabischen Litteratur* (GAL), mentions some similar manuscript locations as what Madkur mentions.<sup>18</sup> Both of them find *ash-Shifa'* manuscripts in Leiden, Berlin, India Office, British Museum, Yani Jami', Istanbul, Tehran, and Paris. In addition, Brockelmann mentions some other places which Madkur does not. They are Manchester, Ergin, Peshaur, Aligarh, Meshad, Buhar, Rampur, Bankibur, As. Soc or *alJam'iyah al-Asiwiyyah*.<sup>19</sup> Surprisingly, Madkur does not refer to Brockelmann's GAL as a hint to finding the manuscripts. He prefers to use Qanwati's book of *Mu'allifat Ibn Sina* as his reference.

Fuat Sezgin also mentions *ash-Shifa'* and Ibn Sina many times in his *Geschichte Des Arabischen Schrifttums* (GAS). However, he writes specifically about Ibn Sina only twice in his GAS, firstly, when he puts Ibn Sina in a group of

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<sup>18</sup> Carl Brockelmann, 1943, *Geschichte Der Arabischen Litteratur* (GAL), E. J. Brill, Leiden, Supplement 1, 815.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, see also Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte Der Arabischen Litteratur* (GAL) in Arabic Edition: *Tarikh al-Adab al-'Araby*, translated by Mahmud Fahmi Hijazi, 1995, Vol. 5. al-Hai'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-'Āmmah lil-Kutub, Cairo, 18-19.

*Arabische meteorologen* (Arab meteorologists),<sup>20</sup> and secondly when he includes him in a group of *Arabische astronomen* (Arab Astronomers).<sup>21</sup>

### Collation and Editorial Principle

Ibrahim Madkur, as previously mentioned, uses three manuscripts as the primary source of his editorial text. In choosing the manuscripts, he makes a sequence of manuscript validity. He states that the MS of Bakhit is the most valid manuscript he found since it has complete volume and undoubted data. The MS of Sulaimaniyah is the second valid manuscript he uses. The least valid manuscript is the MS of Dar al-Kutub (A). The sequence is based on the time when the manuscripts were written. It is also based on the clearness of the scripts, which are the easiest to read.

Furthermore, in the preface of *ash-Shifa'*, Madkur states that he combines and compares the several manuscripts in order to get the united ideas of *ash-Shifa'*. For this aim, he uses the following ways:<sup>22</sup>

1. Selecting the manuscript by looking at an accurate and safe meaning.
2. Selecting the manuscript by looking at Ibn Sina's style of writing and dictions.
3. Selecting the manuscript which strengthens other works of Ibn Sina.
4. Selecting the manuscript whose content is the most important.

When Madkur finds dissimilar texts among the manuscripts, he writes the differences in footnotes. He conducts the above ways to select the most valid text, and then he writes other texts or variant readings as footnotes by mentioning the abbreviation of manuscripts as the sources. For example, when he finds the dissimilar words *عند المح ط*, *غذاء أملح ط*, *غذاء المح س*, *غذاء المح د*, *غذا المح د*, he chooses one of them which is *عند المح* (within the egg yolk).<sup>23</sup> The phrases actually have a similar meaning, "the nutrition of or within the egg yolk". Therefore, Madkur put the unchosen words of these variant readings in the footnotes. The letters *د*, *س* and *ط* at the end of each variant reading are the abbreviations of the MS places or signs

<sup>20</sup> Fuat Sezgin, 1979, *Geschichte Des Arabischen Schrifttums* (GAS), E. J. Brill, Leiden, Band VII, 292.

<sup>21</sup> Sezgin states that Ibn Sina wrote 10 books in this field of science. Fuat Sezgin, *Ibid.* Band VI, 276.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>23</sup> Ibrahim Madkūr in Ibn Sina's *Ash-Shifa'*. *Aṭ-Ṭabi'iyat 8: al-Ḥayawan*, 1970, Ed. Abd al-Halim Muntasir, Said Zaid, and Abdullah Ismail. Mathba'ah al-Hai'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-'Ammah li at-Ta'lif wa an-Nashr, Cairo, 81.



of each MS. On each page, Madkur puts the numbering of lines to make word searching easier.

### Conclusion

This article evaluates Ibrahim Madkur's critical text edition of *ash-Shifa'*, a highly influential book not only in the Islamic world but also in the West. In editing the book, Madkur faced some challenges. To cope with the issues, Madkur conducted editorial principles to get as close as possible to the Ibn Sina's words and meaning. He collected at least ten *ash-Shifa'* manuscripts and made the sequence validity of the manuscripts. The sequence is based not only on the ages of the manuscripts but also on the clarity of the scripts. Out of the ten manuscripts, he chose Egypt, Istanbul and London manuscripts as the basis of his edition. Overall, Madkur has conducted academic and critical principles in establishing the text edition of *Kitab ash-Shifa'*.

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