

the coverage ends with the Iraqi campaign of April, 2003. But what is equally difficult is the choice of topics to cover and of the material to illustrate them when the past becomes the present. The *Atlas*' coverage of the modern Muslim diaspora (pp. 161–177, 180–183) is as right as it is predictable, but the inclusion of a couple of once-over-lightly pages on the “Islamic Arts” (pp. 172–173), seems pointless here, as does the space devoted to “Muslim Cinema” (pp. 188–189) and “Internet Use” (pp. 190–191). Two pages on “World Terrorism 2003” (pp. 184–185, with a terrifying photo of the exploding World Trade Center that says far more than the text) was another impossible task, and the accompanying map (pp. 186–187), which said everything and so nothing, was not terribly helpful, and that for “Architectural and Archeological Sites,” with its jumble of icons (and its inexplicable omission of the Cordoba *Mezquita*) was even less so.

There is a great deal of learning and even elegance packed into the essays and graphics of the *Historical Atlas of Islam*, and at an affordable price. But there is matter too that provoked at least one reader's squinting and puzzlement, particularly in the maps. Essay writing is a more advanced art than cartography, I suppose, but that same reader at least has a piece of advice for future Idrisis: bigger, bolder and better, please, and yes, sometimes less *is* more. And good luck with Palestine and the Levant.

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The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy

Edited by Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor

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Studies on Arabic philosophy in the West have a very long history. This history goes back to the beginning of the twelfth century C.E. with the translation of scientific and philosophical works produced in the Islamic world from Arabic to Latin. It is commonly agreed that the first history of Arabic philosophy in Western languages written by a scholar of Arabic and based on relatively original sources is T. J. de Boer's *Geschichte der Philosophie im Islam*

published in 1901 (Stuttgart: F. Frommans Verlag.) In more than one century since the appearance of De Boer's work, the most influential and most widely read histories of Arabic philosophy written by Muslim or non-Muslim scholars in European languages and based on primary sources (either in the original or in translation) are, in chronological order: Henry Corbin's *Histoire de la philosophie islamique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964. English translation: *History of Islamic Philosophy*, London and New York: Kegan Paul, 1993), Majid Fakhry's *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (London, 1970; second edition: Columbia, N. Y., 1984) and the two-volume *History of Islamic Philosophy* edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London and New York: Routledge, 1996). Unfortunately, the misunderstandings and misinterpretations that the approaches of these works to Arabic philosophy contain affected the perception of Arabic philosophy not only in the West, but also in the Islamic world, where those books were immediately translated.

It is impossible not to see the difference in approach to Arabic philosophy between *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* and its predecessors. *The Companion* has nineteen chapters, which can be divided into four main sections. The first eleven chapters examine Arabic philosophy from a historical aspect and are devoted to particular thinkers. The next five chapters thematically scrutinize general fields of philosophy, classified according to the late ancient philosophical syllabus transmitted to the Arabic tradition, namely Logic, Ethics (including Political Philosophy), Natural Philosophy, Psychology and Metaphysics. Chapters 17 and 18, which may be regarded as the third main section of the book, explain the influence of Arabic philosophy on medieval Jewish and Christian philosophies, respectively, and the last section tries to present a picture of post-classical Arabic philosophy.

According to the introduction of the editors, this *Companion* takes account chiefly of three kinds of complexity that confront any student of the classical period: (i) the nature of the philosophical corpus received in the Arabic-speaking world; (ii) the nature of Arabic philosophy in the classical or formative period, from the ninth to the twelfth centuries C.E.; and (iii) the classical period as a foundation for a continuous indigenous tradition of post-classical philosophy (p. 2).

Regarding the first complexity, the editors draw attention to the importance of the translation movement in the eighth to tenth centuries C.E. The translation movement, which provided translations of a vast range of Greek scientific and philosophical works into Arabic and was supported ideologically and economically by the 'Abbāsīd caliphs, was, according to the editors, the single most important impetus and determinant for the Arabic philosophical tradition. The importance of the translation movement explains

simultaneously the reasons why this *Companion* was called “Arabic” and not “Islamic.” The editors mention three reasons for this choice. Apart from the fact that only a few philosophers were ethnically Arabs — an outstanding exception being al-Kindī — this tradition began with the translation of Greek works into Arabic. Besides, this tradition did not involve merely Muslim thinkers; many of those who had a part in it were Christians, Jews, and even pagans. The third and final reason is that the eminent philosophers in the classical period, such as al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), were chiefly engaged in the understanding and interpretation of texts made available by the translation movement.

The classical period of Arabic philosophy, according to the *Companion*, can be analyzed properly only through the original system of Avicenna, the greatest philosopher of this tradition. As a key figure, he not only influenced everything that came after him in the tradition of Arabic philosophy, but he also used Neo-Platonic ideas in his interpretation of Aristotle and directly treated issues from the *kalām* tradition as well. Almost every chapter in the *Companion* shares this approach (the single exception being Chapter 13 on Ethics and Political Philosophy, written by Charles E. Butterworth, which focuses upon al-Fārābī.) It is impossible to find major emphasis on Avicenna in the aforementioned histories of Arabic philosophy, and this is the distinguishing feature of the work under review. The importance given to Avicenna resulted in devoting a double-length chapter to his thought in the *Companion*. However, this chapter on Avicenna is not as comprehensive as one would expect from this kind of introductory work. The chapter, written by Robert Wisnovsky, is essentially a summary of his work, *Avicenna’s Metaphysics in Context* (London: Duckworth, 2003). Although Wisnovsky skillfully discusses three main problems in the philosophy of Avicenna, namely, the nature of the soul and its relationship with body, the distinction between essence and existence, and the necessary of existence in itself, showing the roots of these concepts in the Neo-Platonic and *kalām* traditions, he does not mention Avicenna’s theory of the rational soul, which has a central place in his philosophical system. Furthermore, the chapter should have discussed the following issues: (i) the works of Avicenna, (ii) the dispute over *al-bikma al-mashriqiyya* (Eastern philosophy) and therefore, Avicenna’s attitude toward Aristotle’s philosophy, and (iii) Avicenna’s legacy through his immediate students, such as Bahmanyār, Juzjānī and Lawkarī.

Besides, in the case of the classical period of Arabic philosophy, although the *Companion* devoted a separate chapter to the Ismā‘īlīs (Chapter 5) in spite of the fact that the philosophical importance and effect of their thoughts on the mainstream philosophical tradition in the Islamic world is disputable, it is very

difficult to understand why the *Companion* preferred to mention Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (The Brethren of Purity) only in one paragraph in the Chapter 5, instead of devoting a separate chapter to it. The Brethren of Purity certainly deserves to be examined in a more detailed way, when its philosophical views are compared with so-called Ismā'īlī philosophers discussed in the *Companion*.

The third point constitutes the framework of the *Companion*, which is the nature of Arabic philosophy in the post-classical period, and is studied through the perspective of Avicenna's heritage in the Islamic world. According to this picture, post-classical Arabic philosophy also means post-Avicennian tradition in the Sunnī and Shī'ī parts of the Islamic world. This period, which the editors are unwilling to admit was the "Golden Age" of Arabic philosophy, is dominated by Avicenna's philosophy and characterized by critiques leveled at it either from an Aristotelian point of view, such as that of Averroes, or from the *kalām* point of view, such as that of al-Ghazālī, or from an Illuminationist point of view, such as those of Suhrawardī and Mullā Sadrā. But, in the *Companion*, the lion's share was given to the Illuminationist tradition, and the development of Arabic philosophy, particularly in the Sunnī world, was not taken into consideration. The last chapter, which takes the historical narrative of the *Companion* down to the present, is concerned almost exclusively with the philosophies of Suhrawardī and Mullā Sadrā, that is, the continuation of Arabic philosophy in the Shī'ī world after Avicenna. In spite of the absence or scarcity of secondary literature on philosophical developments in the Sunnī world in the post-Avicennian period, in order to encourage future studies, the philosophical activities in the Ottoman and Mogul empires, and the famous philosophical books that were studied in traditional schools, the madrasas, should have at least been touched upon briefly.

Furthermore, the list of major philosophers in the Arabic tradition, which is given at the beginning of the *Companion* in order to create a chronological framework for the reader, because it is composed only of figures who are mentioned in this work, does not draw an accurate picture of Arabic philosophy. The list does not include many famous figures in Arabic philosophy and *kalām*, in addition to philosophers in the Ottoman and Mogul empires. In a revised list, the following names should at least be added to it: Saraḥsī, Abū-l-Abbās Aḥmad ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 286/899), al-Māturīdī, Abū Manṣūr (d. 333/944), al-Bāqillānī, Abū Bakr (d. 403/1013), Ibn al-Ḥammār, Abū-l-Ḥayr (b. 331/942), Ibn al-Samḥ, Abū 'Alī (d. 418/1027), Avicenna's immediate students such as Juzjānī, Ma'ṣūmī, Ibn Zayla, īlākī, 'Omar ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī (d. 5th/11th), al-Shahrastānī, Abū-l-Faṭḥ (d. 548/1153), al-Āmidī, Sayf al-Dīn (d. 631/1233), al-Ḥūnajī, Afḍaluddīn (d. 646/1249), al-Urmawī, Sirājaddīn (d. 682/1283), al-Tustarī, Badraddīn (d. 707/1306),

al-Taḥṭānī, Qutbaddīn (d. 766/1364), Qādī-zāda Rūmī (d. 815/1412), al-Jurjānī, Sayyid al-Sharīf (d. 816/1413), Mullā Fanārī (d. 834/1431), ‘Alī Kushju (d. 849/1474), ‘Alāaddīn Ṭūsī (d. 887/1482), Ḥoja-zāda, Musliḥiddīn (d. 893/1487), Kamālpasha-zāda (d. 940/1534), Kinali-zāda ‘Alī (d. 979/1572), Jawnpūrī, Maḥmūd (d. 1062/1652), Siyalkutī, Abd al-Karīm (d. 1067/1656), Es‘ad Yanyavī (d. 1143/1730).

Despite this incomplete list of philosophers and some *mutakallimūn*, another list in the *Companion* prepared by Charles Burnett should be mentioned. At the end of the Chapter 18 that studies the reception of Arabic philosophy into Western Europe, Burnett gives a list of Arabic philosophical works translated into Latin before ca. 1600 (pp. 391–400). The list is very comprehensive and it is useful to have an idea about the second great translation movement in the world history, namely the translation from Arabic into Latin.

To sum up, in spite of the deficiencies, the *Companion* is doubtless a very significant contribution to the study of Arabic philosophy in the West, especially for two reasons: (i) it was prepared according to the view that Avicenna is the greatest philosopher in Arabic philosophy and his philosophical system is the culminating point of this tradition, (ii) it called attention to the post-Avicennian period as one of the main periods of Arabic philosophy, despite the fact that it has not yet been sufficiently studied and that some Orientalists and modern Muslim thinkers have claimed that Arabic philosophy ended after Averroes.

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Ismaili Literature. A Bibliography of Sources and Studies

By Farhad Daftary

London: L.B. Tauris, 2004

Daftari provides a thorough compendium of both published and unpublished Ismaili texts, as well as works on Ismaili history and thought. The

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