

Despite some patches of fairly detailed and gruelling statistical analysis, the reader reaps the benefits of perseverance in both the important insights gleaned from this work and the sometimes touching, sometimes dramatic but always detailed retellings of the very personal stories which bring the actors to life and make this study enthralling reading.

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Langermann, Y. Tzvi, ed., *Avicenna and his Legacy: A Golden Age of Science and Philosophy* (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages), Turnhout, Brepols, 2009; hardback; pp. 381; R.R.P. €80.00; ISBN 9782503527536.

Avicenna and his Legacy: A Golden Age of Science and Philosophy represents a significant advance in our understanding of the significance of Avicenna (Abū Alī Avicenna, 980–1037). Avicenna was one of the principal philosophers in the medieval Hellenistic Islamic tradition. His philosophical theories were a rationalistic account of the nature of Being and God, in which the corporeal world, spirit and logical thought, including dialectic, rhetoric, and poetry, were systematically arranged. This volume examines Avicenna's impact, and that of his followers and critics, on Muslim and Jewish thinking.

The first paper by Ahmed H al-Rahim casts light on the disciples of Avicenna and the transmission of his philosophy. This paper not only assists in placing the subsequent papers into a temporal context but also demonstrates that Avicenna influenced contemporary philosophers as well as his pupils. The inclusion of his philosophy in the works of contemporary philosophers facilitated its broader transmission and acceptance.

The following four papers, by Frank Griffel, M. Afifi Al-Akiti, Binyamin Abrahamov, and Anna Akasoy, consider aspects of the work of Abu Hāmid al-Ghazālī (1058–1111), a significant philosopher who made a close study of Avicenna. In a methodical paper, Heidrun Eichner examines the Avicennan distinction between 'essence' and 'existence' through Ibn Kammuna's (d. 1284) work on existence in *al-Jadid fi l-hikma*. Nahyan Fancy analyses Ibn al-Nafis' (d. 1288) stance on the issue of the human soul touching the divine, which conflicted with Avicenna's. David B. Burrell continues with the theme of 'existence' from the perspective of the influential seventeenth-century Muslim scholar Mulla Sadra, who was also critical of Avicenna. Robert

Wisnovsky turns to Avicenna's stance on Aristotelian logic. Sari Nusseibeh considers Providence through a complex and interesting web of ideas. Leigh N. Chipman provides a critical commentary and translation of sections of the foremost commentaries on Avicenna's *al-Qānūn fi al-Tibb* written by Qutb al-Din al-Shīrāzī. F. Jamil Ragep examines Avicenna's impact on a work on astronomy by al-Juzjānī. Robert Morrison analyses the relationship between astronomy and philosophy through the work of Nizām al-Din al-Nisāburī (d. 1330). Steven Harvey considers Avicenna's influence on Jewish thinkers. The final paper by Paul B. Fenton reflects upon the perceived writings of the great Jewish philosopher Maimonides on metempsychosis, the transmigration of the soul, a theory that was rejected by Avicenna.

The collection of papers is diverse, of exceptional quality and covers Avicenna's work on astronomy, medicine, logic and philosophy. This volume presents a comprehensive study of his influences and his legacy, mainly focusing on the early medieval period. However, there is an important omission from the discussion. Avicenna was a significant mathematician of his time. His most important work in this field is his encyclopaedic work, the *Kitab al-Shifa'* (*The Book of Healing*) and unfortunately this work is not mentioned in this volume. Also the followers and critics, and the legacy of Avicenna mentioned in this volume are all from the 'Golden Age of Science and Philosophy' of the Jewish and Muslim tradition, yet Avicenna also had a significant legacy in Western scholarship of the Renaissance.

Avicenna's *al-Qānūn fi al-Tibb* (*The Law of Medicine*) challenged the established medical text of Galen. Although *Al-Qānūn fi al-Tibb* was translated into Latin in the twelfth century, it did not make an impact on Western scholarship until the fifteenth century. However, the impact was a significant one and at the end of the fifteenth century there were fifteen Latin editions and *Al-Qānūn fi al-Tibb* had gained pre-eminence in the medical literature of the Renaissance, replacing the works of Galen. The legacy of the 'Golden Age of Science and Philosophy' of Western scholarship is totally ignored in this volume. In other words, the legacy of Avicenna is much greater than the volume implies. Perhaps it would have been advisable in the title and the introduction to state what the volume covered and what it omitted. The title is ambiguous, and the extent of his true legacy could have been at least outlined in the Foreword to put the papers into context.

Nevertheless, within its context, the volume is an important contribution to early medieval scholarship. It highlights the legacy of Avicenna in the Jewish

and Muslim traditions, which are relatively unknown in Western scholarship. This interesting volume should generate further interest in Avicenna who was a true polymath of his time, and whose legacy to later generations is significant.

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Lipton, Emma, *Affections of the Mind: The Politics of Sacramental Marriage in Late Medieval English Literature*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2007; paperback; pp. x, 246; R.R.P. US\$32.00; ISBN 9780268034054.

‘Affections of the mind’, in this book’s title, comes from St Augustine’s discussion of the marriage of Mary and Joseph, while ‘sacramental marriage’ is used for one particular theory of marriage prevalent during the Middle Ages. The ‘late medieval English literature’ discussed includes Chaucer’s *Franklin’s Tale*, Gower’s *Traitié pour Essampler les Amantz Marietz*, the Mary and Joseph plays in the N-Town Cycle and *The Book of Margery Kempe*, all of which, Emma Lipton claims, use this sacramental view of marriage to construct a middle-class ideology. She goes on to argue for an intrinsic connection between such literary representations and the construction of a class identity.

Not everyone will be happy with a substructure which distinguishes marriage as a sacrament, based on love, from other views of marriage, such as the ‘doctrine’ of the marriage debt or the view that the husband should rule over the wife. In the West, marriage was indisputably regarded as a sacrament from at least the thirteenth century, and is regularly included as such in the catechetical material produced in response to the Lateran Council of 1215, but this did not necessarily exclude other ‘emphases’. A simple ‘love or sex ... partnership or rulership’ (p. 3) dichotomy is just too simple, especially when its principal representative turns out to be C. S. Lewis’s 75-year-old *Allegory of Love*! However, if the reader is prepared to suspend belief at this early stage, Lipton offers an interesting theory about the connection of sacramental marriage with the rise of lay values and the self-legitimation of a ‘middle strata’ of merchants and small landowners just below the level of the gentry.

It is not surprising, then, given the narrator’s social status, that the first text presented in this light is *The Franklin’s Tale*, but this is the least rewarding