

Michael E. Marmura, *The Metaphysics of the Healing: A parallel English-Arabic text (al-Ilahiyyāt min al-Shifā')*

Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005. xxvii + 441 pages + 378 pages of Arabic text.

Reviewed by Muhammad Hozien

Professor Marmura's masterful translation brings about the fruits of many years of research. Marmura, a first rate scholar in the field of Avicennian studies, is an accomplished translator, as he has demonstrated in his edition of al-Ghazali's *Incoherence of the Philosophers (Tahafut al-falasifa)*; Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1997.

Marmura's in-depth knowledge of the material shines through this work under review. Few today are more qualified than Professor Marmura to take on this Herculean task. Avicenna's book, *al-Shifā'* (Ibn Sina (370–428/980–1037) as he is known in the Muslim World) is a veritable encyclopedia of Islamic philosophy that covers all aspects of the discipline in detail. It has taken an army of scholars just to edit the work in the original Arabic, in order to present readers with a scholarly edition from which to work with. The late professor Ibrahim Madkour who took on the monumental task of overseeing the editing of the work, which is in at least fifteen published volumes that include music theory, logic, mathematics, physics, rhetoric, poetics, and metaphysics.

The text of the *Metaphysics* represents two volumes (as published in the Cairo edition of 1960, books 1–5 in volume one and books 6–10 in the second volume) of the work that was carefully edited by S. Zayid and G. C. Anwati, who completed volume 1, and S. Zayid, S. Dunya, and M. Y. Musa who completed volume 2. The late Fr. G. C. Anwati, a mentor (perhaps not in the literal sense) of Marmura, has translated this work into French (volume 1 in 1978 and volume 2 in 1985) based on the said Cairo edition and his own reading of the text.

Marmura has reproduced a revised Arabic text that was the basis for his translation that either follows a reading

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variant from the Cairo edition (that contained the critical apparatus) or the reading of Anwati's French translation. In the text points out what reading he is following. Here, as elsewhere, Marmura's scholarly integrity shines through.

In this volume, Ibn Sina discusses issues of existence, causes, the intellect, and additional issues of prophecy and political rule. Ibn Sina's philosophy is a revision of the philosophical ideas of al-Farabi (d. 950) and that of the Hellenistic philosophy that was available to him in Arabic translation, with the addition of Islamic elements that he deemed appropriate.

A cursory review of his philosophy is not possible in such a short review. Needless to say, al-Ghazali (d. 1111) took it upon himself to refute many of the ideas that Ibn Sina espouses here in this volume.

Brigham Young University Press is providing a great service for Islamic philosophy by offering a slate of key texts in English translation by eminent scholars in the field. Some, like this work, are available for the first time in English.

This work is destined not only to become a classic but also to spawn a reinvigorated interest into the field of Islamic philosophy, as it has brought an essential work to a wider English-speaking audience that would not have access to it otherwise.