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Review of Charles E. Butterworth (ed. and trans.) Averroes' Three Short Commentaries on Aristotle's "Topics."

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The Winged Word, in conclusion, is a work of scholarship that will stand as a measure of subsequent work in the field. The author's thoroughness, capacity for detail, and creative thought in the presence of puzzling evidence stands as a model for us all. The work may not be correct in all its detail, but it has given the possibility of oral composition a firm grounding in the evidence. Those who would deny that possibility must now do likewise.

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In a 1975 article entitled "The Present State of the Study of Ancient Rhetoric," George Kennedy called for "an examination of the relationship between the classical tradition and its variants or alternatives within Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or the cultures of Africa or Asia" (Classical Philology, 70, no. 4; p. 282). The volume under review takes on Kennedy's challenge by providing a critical edition and translation of three short treatises by an important 12th-century Arab scholar. In this volume, Charles E. Butterworth helps remedy two of the problems which have severely limited our ability to understand the Arab-Islamic rhetorical tradition and its interrelationship with Western rhetoric: first, the lack of reliable editions and translations of relevant texts by Arab philosophers and rhetoricians such as Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, and Averroës, and, second, our lack of knowledge about the social, political, and religious context of medieval Arab scholarship.

In his introduction (pp. 1-4), Butterworth presents a brief biographical sketch of Averroës, and suggests explanations for why these treatises, the final three of a collection of Short Commentaries on Aristotle's Organon, have survived only in two Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts, and why their study has been neglected. He suggests that the neglect has been due to a misinformed judgment about the significance of the treatises since their recovery in the 19th century. Butterworth stresses that the treatises are not, as had been assumed, faithful summaries of Aristotle's thought, but rather that they represent an innovative Arab interpretation of Aristotelian logic which conceals a "daring critique of traditional Islamic thought and of the dialectical theologians who considered themselves its true defenders" (p. 4).
The chapter on "The Text" (pp. 5-18) includes discussion of two problems connected with the identification and character of the treatises: the problem of determining their original titles (and the related problem of deciding whether they can be considered "commentaries" on Aristotle, since they are nowhere labelled as such), and the problem of establishing their authenticity. Then, after describing the physical characteristics of the two manuscripts he used (pp. 14-17), Butterworth briefly discusses the principles which guided him in his translation (pp. 17-18). The translation, he says, necessarily suffers from some stiffness, partly because of "the technical character of the treatises," and partly "because insofar as has been consonant with intelligent speech, the same word has been translated in the same way whenever it occurs" (p. 17). In general, he says, "the path facilitating instruction was chosen when there was no way to avoid choosing between literal ineloquence and eloquent looseness" (p. 18).

The third and last of the introductory chapters is the chapter on "The Teaching of the Text" (pp. 19-41). Butterworth begins by pointing out the differences between these three commentaries and Averroës' other short commentaries on Aristotle's Organon, differences which justify the study of these three in isolation from the others. Besides being physically distinct from the other treatises in the collection, these treatises on the Topica, Rhetoric, and Poetics are the only ones which deal with "mere similitudes of apodeictic premises and demonstrative reasoning" (p. 19), rather than with the demonstrative syllogism; "while the other treatises are recommended because they teach how to reason correctly, these three treatises are presented as providing ways of imitating or abridging correct reason in order to influence other human beings in any number of situations . . ." (p. 19). But the main reason for studying these treatises, and Butterworth's central claim in this chapter, is because they help "to acquire an understanding of the relation between politics, religion, and philosophy in the thought of Averroës" (p. 20).

As the reader of the treatises notices, and as Butterworth himself points out, they all "first appear to be purely technical" (p. 21). But, as Butterworth repeatedly stresses in his general remarks about the treatises and in more detailed discussions of each one, "the tedious technical discussion is a screen for a more important substantive argument" (p. 25), namely Averroës' criticism of the dialectical theologians, the keepers of the Islamic faith who "were responsible for confusing the common people by using extraordinarily complex arguments to speak about simple principles of faith and guilty of attacking philosophy under the pretext of saving the faith they had garbled" (p. 21). While this argument against the dialectical theologians is the main purpose of the treatises, according to Butterworth, it is nowhere made explicit. Instead, Averroës leaves it to the reader to reconstruct it from the way the treatises are organized, the ways in which they restrict the fields they examine, and the technical details which are stressed, as well as occasional allusions to theological arguments and personalities.
For example, in the commentary on the *Topics*, Averroës presents a detailed examination of the difference between dialectic and demonstration, and in connection with this, a long discussion of induction in which he restricts its use to a limited role. The purpose of this restriction, says Butterworth, is to imply that "those who used induction extensively and placed no restrictions on its use—as the dialectical theologians did, for example—really knew nothing about the art they claimed to practice" (p. 25). In the same way, the commentary on the *Rhetoric* is organized in such a way as "to show why rhetoric is more suited to public discourse than dialectic" (p. 29), that is, to show that the dialectical theologians were using dialectic when they should have been using rhetoric. Furthermore, through his long discussion of non-artistic means of proof, "explicitly assigned a lower rank of logical value and rhetorical merit than the enthymeme or example" (p. 31), Averroës tried to show how "the traditionalist theologians and jurists had failed to understand the rhetorical origins of these devices and consequently relied upon them too heavily" (p. 31). The treatise on the *Poetics* is the only one of the three which discusses the practical uses to which the art can be put. In this case, the uses are political, but the implication is that poetics can be used for religious purposes as well, and much of the treatise is devoted to explanations about "the potential for deceptiveness in poetic speeches" (p. 36).

In general, Butterworth claims, Averroës' goal in these treatises was to put dialectic, rhetoric, and poetics in their proper place, as logical arts, but ones which depend on and are subordinate to correct theoretical (demonstrative) inquiry. In Butterworth's words, "the goal was to show why the arts based on opinion were best suited for certain functions but also why they had to be limited in their application to these functions" (p. 40).

Butterworth's argument about the underlying purpose of the three treatises is clearly presented and convincing. It also makes sense in light of earlier Arab commentaries on Aristotle, such as those of Al-Farabi (J. Langhade and M. Grignaschi, Al-Farabi: Deux Ouvrages Inédites sur la Rhetorique, Beirut: Dar al-Machreq, 1971), which are similar in structure and content to those of Averroës (and which Averroës was certainly familiar with). However, this chapter on "The Teaching of the Text" should not be mistaken for a summary of the treatises, which is what it first appears to be. The reader in search of summaries of the treatises should turn instead to the "Outline of Argument" pages which precede each translation. In fact, one would do well to read these outlines, and the treatises themselves, before turning to Butterworth's analysis in "The Teaching of the Text."

The translations (pp. 45-84) form the core of the book. Butterworth's earlier warning about them is well-taken: they are somewhat difficult, but through no fault of the translator. Medieval Arabic style and syntax simply are difficult. Butterworth's extensive notes on the translations (pp. 85-134), including
comments about the rendition of problematic words and cross-
references to Averroës' other treatises, to relevant sections of
Aristotle's works, and to other relevant texts, are most helpful.

Following the translations are two indexes (pp. 135-142),
one of names and titles cited by Averroës in the three treatises,
and one listing technical terms used by Averroës both in English
and in Arabic. Both these indexes are of value to scholars
interested in specific aspects of Averroës' treatises.

The final section of the book (pp. 142-206) consists of the
Arabic texts, well footnoted with cross-references between the
two Judaeo-Arabic recensions used to edit them and references to
other editions in Latin. For readers of medieval Arabic, this is
the most important section of the book, as it makes these treatises
accessible for the first time in an edited and easily available
form, and in Arabic script.

It must be stressed, though, that this volume is not only of
interest to Arabists or Medievalists. Averroës is a key figure
not only in the history of Arab-Islamic thought, but also in the
history of rhetoric in the West. A complete understanding of the
history of our rhetorical tradition will only be possible once we
understand the ways in which classical texts were interpreted by
Arab scholars like Averroës, and the political and historical
reasons for their interpretations. Furthermore, it is becoming
increasingly imperative that we study the rhetorical traditions
of the Middle East in their own right, as a vital clue to
understanding how Arabs talk, and how to talk with them.

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Francis Bacon and the Style of Science. James Stephens. Chicago
$10.95 (Cloth).

Driven by his inability to handle the experimental procedures
he advocated and disturbed by his personal failure to persuade
his contemporaries about many matters, Francis Bacon (1561-1626)
took refuge in a lifetime of concern for a proper method to
preserve "essential knowledge from the masses." As with Roger
Bacon before him, Lord Bacon's distrust of the herd was both
sincere and intense. Left in the care of Everyman, he argued,
the intellectual treasures of mankind would soon be buried neath
the mud of pragmatism and common-ness. In short order, Everyman's
disdain for intellectual labor would result in the common packaging
of uncommon matter to be offered on every street corner for the
pastime of the vulgarians. He struggled for much of his adult
life to devise a method which would protect against such
devaluation and, at the same time, strengthen the bonds among the
elite protectors of that knowledge. In the heat of his struggle,