

time, unique to al-Farabi. Streetman suggests, quite correctly, that previous findings on al-Farabi as a follower of Plato in the sphere of political philosophy should be revisited in the light of these new ones.

To sum up, the book bears witness to the fact that the time has finally come for the need to completely acknowledge the value of openness and cultural diversity and to revitalize Islamic discourse in this regard once more. This anthology could not have come at a better moment; it fills the gap and provides copious references for further study as really ground-breaking in this regard. The author of this review would like to recommend it whole-heartedly for its inclusion in courses of comparative philosophy. Its vantage point and its aim to support inter-traditional constructive engagement in our more and more interdependent world bear witness to the need for crucial mutual understanding, which is definitely a matter of survival in today's world.

Nevad Kahteran

doi: [10.21464/sp31219](https://doi.org/10.21464/sp31219)

Oliver Leaman (ed.)

The Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy

Bloomsbury Academic,
London et al. 2015

An extensive research of the significant contributions of Muslim thinkers to world philosophy, now available for the first time in its paperback edition, *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy*, provides access to the ideas and persons belonging to almost 1400 years of the Islamic philosophical tradition and covers all the major and many minor philosophers, theologians, and mystics who contributed to its nascence and development. Its first edition (Continuum, London, 2006, 736 pages; also an electronic, searchable edition of the same work) was well received but also very expensive, which was the reason

why it was limited only to libraries and research institutes. Now this amazing volume is available at a much more reasonable price and it is more accessible. Created by the main editor, Oliver Leaman, and thirty-nine scholars and researchers, *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy* contains entries on more than 300 thinkers and key concepts, and also includes a timeline, a glossary, and a detailed bibliography. Coverage extends from the early Islamic period to the modern age. Only a few scholars would be able to work on such a project, which Leaman has attempted as a collaborative work, provided that we exclude Hans Daiber's existing *Bibliography of Islamic Philosophy* (Brill, Leiden/Boston, 1999) and its supplement volume (2006).

This is the ideal study resource as it includes: an introduction, a list of contributors, a list of entries, and a combined bibliography with an index and a brief glossary. Leaman's inclusion of Ottoman scholars who studied and wrote on philosophy, which has also already been noted by other reviewers, should be commended. In addition, the editor is to be commended for compiling a work that will help to alleviate the pervasive lack of knowledge on Islamic thought and culture in the English-speaking world, because of its poor treatment. However, this largely overlooked area has a real potential to present enlightening insights into the development of Western thought as already presented in the work of the late professor A.-T. Tymieniecka, as well as contributing to contemporary discussions on philosophy and theology in general through constructive engagement of comparative philosophy. The editor himself, in showing its contemporary relevance, has undertaken an important task so that the status of Islamic philosophy may be promoted to its proper station in the dialogue of cultures.

This encyclopaedic work definitely offers access to Islamic philosophers from all periods, as well as providing information on the main trends, schools and ideas as the main aim of this volume to include entries on Islamic philosophers (biographical entries), as well as to constitute a comprehensive list of all those who could be described as such (the average entry is about 500 words long; the shorter ones only half as long). Within the body of entries there is a cross-referencing system to include the other entries, i.e. the work is fully cross-referenced. All this makes it highly recommended for faculties, university libraries, research centres, and, hopefully, other kinds of prestigious institutions, since it fills an important gap in reference literature in this field and includes a great deal of relevant material.

Oliver Leaman offers us a penetrating perspective with his encyclopaedic work, which represents a landmark achievement in the understanding of Islamic philosophy (*falsafa, hikma*) at a time when such understanding is direly needed like never before during its entire history which extends over almost 14 centuries. Almost a third of all entries were written by the main editor himself, who is a prolific author in this field and who is also the co-editor (with S. H. Nasr) of the best ever written *History of Islamic Philosophy* (two volumes; Routledge, London/New York, 1996).

Oliver Leaman (1950) is a professor of philosophy and Zantker professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Kentucky. He was a section editor in the multivolume *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and contributed to the *Companion Encyclopedia of Asian Philosophy*. He is author, editor, and co-editor of many books on Jewish, Islamic, and Eastern philosophy. His publications include:

- *An Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 1985;
- *Death and Loss: Compassionate Attitudes in the Classroom*, Cassell, 1995;
- *Evil and Suffering in Jewish Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 1995 (paperback edition, 1997);
- *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. by S. H. Nasr and O. Leaman, Routledge, 1996;
- *Friendship East and West – Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. by O. Leaman, Curzon, 1996;
- *History of Jewish Philosophy*, ed. by D. Frank and O. Leaman, Routledge, 1996;
- *Moses Maimonides*, 2nd edition, Curzon, 1997;
- *Averroes and His Philosophy*, 2nd edition, Curzon, 1997;
- *The Future of Philosophy: Towards the 21st Century*, ed. by O. Leaman, Routledge, 1998;
- *Key Concepts in Eastern Philosophy*, Routledge, 1999;
- *A Brief Introduction to Islamic Philosophy*, Polity Press, 1999;
- *Eastern Philosophy: Key Readings*, Routledge, 2000;
- *A Reader in Jewish Philosophy*, ed. by D. Frank, O. Leaman, and C. Manekin, Routledge, 2000;
- *Encyclopedia of Asian Philosophy*, ed. by O. Leaman, Routledge, 2001;
- *Companion Encyclopedia of Middle Eastern and North African Film*, ed. by O. Leaman, Routledge, 2001;
- *Encyclopedia of Death and Dying*, ed. by G. Howarth and O. Leaman, Routledge, 2001;
- *Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 2001 (second edition of *Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy*);
- *Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, ed. by D. Frank and O. Leaman, Cambridge University Press, 2003;
- *Lost in Translation: Essays in Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, Buybook, Sarajevo, 2004;
- *Islamic Aesthetics: An Introduction*, Edinburgh University Press, 2004 (US edition by University of Notre Dame Press);
- *The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by O. Leaman, Routledge, 2006 (paperback edition, 2008);
- *Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophers*, ed. by O. Leaman, Continuum, 2006;
- *Jewish Thought: An Introduction*, Routledge, 2006;
- Translation of M. Campanini, *Il Corano e la sua interpretazione* (2004); M. Campanini, *The Qur'an: The Basics*, Routledge, 2007;
- *Islamic Philosophy A-Z*, P. Groff with O. Leaman, Edinburgh University Press, 2007;
- *Islam: The Key Concepts*, with K. Ali, Routledge, 2008;
- Editor of N. Smart, *World Philosophies*, 2nd edition, Routledge, 2008;
- *Islamic Philosophy: An Introduction*, Polity Press, 2009;
- *Judaism: An Introduction*, I. B. Tauris, London, 2011;
- *Controversies in Contemporary Islam*, Routledge, 2013.
- *The Qur'an: A Philosophical Guide*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.

Nevad Kahteran