



Alfarabi: The Political Writings: "Selected Aphorisms" and Other Texts (Agora Editions)

By Alfarabi, Charles E. Butterworth

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Alfarabi was among the first to explore the tensions between the philosophy of classical Greece and that of Islam, as well as of religion generally. His writings, extraordinary in their breadth and deep learning, have had a profound impact on Islamic and Jewish philosophy. This volume presents four of Alfarabi's most important texts, making his political thought available to classicists, medievalists, and scholars of religion and Byzantine and Middle Eastern studies. In a clear prose translation by Charles E. Butterworth, these treatises provide a valuable introduction to the teachings of Alfarabi and to the development of Islamic political philosophy. All of these texts are based on new Arabic editions. Two--The Book of Religion and Harmonization of the Two Opinions of the Two Sages, Plato the Divine and Aristotle--appear in English for the first time. The translations of the other two works--Selected Aphorisms and chapter five of the Enumeration of the Sciences--differ markedly from those previously known to English-language readers. Butterworth situates each essay in its historical, literary, and philosophical context. His notes help the reader follow Alfarabi's text and identify persons, places, and events. English-Arabic and Arabic-English glossaries of terms further assist the reader.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Charles Butterworth has rendered a service both timely and timeless in his meticulous yet highly readable translations of four texts by a thinker second to none. . . . Butterworth here provides insightful introductions and impeccable translations." *Review of Politics*

"At last, a wider English-speaking audience will gain access to the riches contained in Alfarabi's political philosophy. . . . As always, Butterworth walks the fine line between literalness and readability with extraordinary grace, making this volume of equal value to scholar and student alike. He also offers introductions to each work that exemplify this same balance. For the scholar, he describes the manuscripts consulted and justifies our conviction that at last we have a trustworthy translation based on a critical Arabic text. For the student, as well as the scholar, and, above all, the teacher, he offers concise, insightful introduction to these challenging works. These introductions are a great boon in the classroom; each introduction leads the reader to raise the relevant questions to begin to unlock the secrets within. In the footnotes, Butterworth strikes the same balance, drawing the scholar's attention to alternate manuscript readings and translations while offering crucial pieces of information and insight, especially valuable to the novice." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*

About the Author

The author of many books, Charles E. Butterworth is Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland.

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