

Roger Arnaldez. *Averroes: A Rationalist in Islam* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000) [translation by David Streight of *Averroès: un rationaliste en Islam* (Paris: Éditions Balland, 1998)], pp. 157 \$34.95 (cloth) ISBN 0 268 02007 8; \$18.00 (paper) ISBN 0 268 02008 6.

Averroes: A Rationalist in Islam is Roger Arnaldez's most recent attempt to shift the emphasis in the scholarship on Averroes from Averroes, the inspiration of Latin Averroism, to Ibn Rushd, the Islamic philosopher, legal scholar, and physician, Chief Judge of Cordoba and theologian of the Almohade dynasty. Building on his earlier articles and encyclopedia entries, Arnaldez in this book portrays Ibn Rushd in broad strokes, introducing his legal, medical, philosophical, and theological writings in relation to their historical and cultural context. He focuses attention on Ibn Rushd himself, on his sources and influences, the cultural context in which he worked, his interaction with teachers and contemporary philosophers or statesmen, and the complex relationship between his legal, medical and philosophical writings. Although Arnaldez's efforts at achieving this broad synthetic representation of Averroes are not wholly successful, the goal is admirable and should continue to be the aim of contemporary scholarship. After a summary of the book and its problems, especially concerning its English translation, a few suggestions for English reading will be given.

Arnaldez's book consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a brief chronology of Averroes' life and work, a glossary of Arabic terms, a short bibliography of suggested readings, and an index of proper names. The introduction presents Ibn Rushd's biography, identifying important family influences and teachers, briefly describing intellectual developments in Andalusia, and characterizing the different fields of research in which Ibn Rushd excelled. Chapter 1 discusses his legal writings, describing *Bidāyat al-mujtahid* in relation to the Maliki school of jurisprudence and in light of relevant ideas about rhetoric and politics. Chapter 2 describes his contribution to medicine, based mainly on *al-Kullīyyāt fī al-ṭibb*. Chapter 3 discusses the commentaries on Aristotle, focusing on metaphysics, cosmology, and psychology and concentrating on select passages in the Long Commentary on *Metaphysics* and the Epitome of *De anima*. Chapter 4 focuses on philosophy and theology, outlining *The Decisive Treatise, Exposition of Religious Arguments*, and *Incoherence of the Incoherence*. The Conclusion summarizes the main themes of the book, emphasizing the unity and inner coherence of Ibn Rushd's thought.

Although Arnaldez does mention the translation of Averroes' writings into Latin and Hebrew and their subsequent influence, his approach is consciously opposed to that of Ernest Renan, whose pioneering *Averroès et l'averroïsme* (first edition 1852) had considerable influence on subsequent scholarship. The emphasis in Arnaldez's study is placed squarely on Ibn Rushd in his historical context, although the repeated mention of enlightened individualism, free-thinking, open-mindedness, tolerance, and consistency seems to betray Arnaldez's interests more than those of Averroes. Arnaldez attempts to introduce Ibn Rushd through his own writings, citing extensively from his philosophical and theological works, but the failure to give proper source references makes this approach problematic. The absence of secondary references is also frustrating for the reader who wants to pursue any particular subject in greater detail. The list of sources for further reading given at the end of the book is limited and mostly outdated, while the

few references in the body of the discussion are incomplete, leaving it to the reader to do the research independently. Robert Brunschwig, Ernest Renan, and Henri Corbin, for example, are mentioned without the relevant bibliographical information. Such important Averroes scholars as Deborah Black, Michael Blaustein, Charles Butterworth, Gad Freudenthal, Steven Harvey, Arthur Hyman, Alfred Ivry, Barry Kogan, Richard Taylor, just to mention a few contemporary figures writing in English, are not mentioned at all.

While the French original is problematic, and frustrating for its lack of source references, it still provides a satisfactory introduction to certain aspects of Ibn Rushd's thought. The same cannot be said of the English translation. Because the translator is evidently ignorant of Arabic and Arabic philosophy, of philosophy in general and philosophical terminology in particular, he mistranslates terms and expressions, produces awkward translations of Arabic titles, and translates Arabic citations from the French rather than relying on existing English versions. Nor does he make any effort to correct the deficiencies of the original French, choosing not to emend bibliographical references or supply them when they are absent, and not to add a supplementary bibliography for English readers, to whom the translation is addressed. A few examples will be sufficient to substantiate the famous apothegm: A good translator ought to know not only the source and target languages but the subject of the work to be translated.

Mistranslations of technical terms and proper names: "particle of liaison" instead of "copulative" (p. 35); "sky" instead of "heavens" or "celestial world" (p. 44 and elsewhere); "driving force" instead of "agent cause" (p. 50 and elsewhere); "milieu" instead of "medium" (p. 52); "relationship" instead of "relation" for *idāfa* (p. 63 and elsewhere); "rapport" instead of "relative" for *nisba* (p. 63 and elsewhere); "parentage" for *ittiṣāl* (p. 79); "worker" instead of "artisan" for *ṣāniʿ* (p. 80); God does not know "details" instead of "particulars" or "individuals" (p. 84 and elsewhere); "active mind" instead of "active intellect" (p. 117); "Illuminism" instead of "Illuminationism" (p. 120). Unusual renderings of Arabic titles: *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* as "The downfall of the philosophers" (p. 11) and "The decay of the philosophers" (p. 152); *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* as "The decay of decay" (p. 79 and elsewhere); *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* as "The rebirth of the sciences of religion" (p. 6) and "The renaissance of the sciences of religion" (p. 153); *Faṣl al-maqāl* as "The short treatise" (p. 90); al-Biṭrūjī's *Kitāb fi al-hay'a* as "The book on the configuration of the sky" (p. 151); Ibn Bājja's *Tadbīr al-mutawahhid* as "Diet of the solitary" (p. 153); and al-Fārābī's *Al-siyāsa al-madaniyya* as "Politics of the city" (p. 153). There are also several awkward locutions, which defy classification: "astronomist" (p. 14), "Ptolomeic" (p. 14), "Grenada" instead of 'Granada' (pp. 27, 155), "man is a reasonable animal" (p. 54), "Platonics" instead of "Platonists" (p. 113).

Although *Averroes: A Rationalist in Islam* is a noble attempt to present a brief but comprehensive introduction to Averroes in all his glory, its defects clearly outnumber its virtues; this is especially true with respect to the English translation. The question then arises: How ought an English reader to proceed in his investigation of the life and thought of the great sage from Cordoba? For general introduction, he should read Oliver Leaman (*Averroes and His Philosophy*, 1988), Dominique Urvoay (*Ibn Rushd*, 1991) and Majid Fakhry (*Averroes: His Life, Works, and Influence*, 2001). In order to investigate any particular subject in greater depth, he ought to consult Gerhard Endress and Jan A. Aertsen (eds. *Averroes and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 1999), together with the bibliographies of Philipp W. Rosemann (in *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 30 (1988), 153-221), Thérèse-

Anne Druart and M.E. Marmura (in *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 32 (1990), 106-11), and Hans Daiber (*Bibliography of Islamic Philosophy*, 1999). He should also be aware that several of Averroes' writings are now available in English, including *Bidāyat al-mujtahid* (*The distinguished jurist's primer*, trans. Imran Khan Nyazee, 1999), *The Decisive Treatise* (trans. George Hourani, 1961, Charles Butterworth, 2001), *The Exposition of Religious Arguments* (trans. Ibrahim Najjar, 2001), *The Incoherence of the Incoherence* (trans. Simon van den Bergh, 1954), *The Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect* (ed. and trans. Kalman Bland, 1982), *The Epitome of Plato's "Republic"* (ed. and trans. E.I.J. Rosenthal, 1966, trans. Ralph Lerner, 1974), *De substantia orbis* (ed. and trans. Arthur Hyman, 1986), and several of the commentaries on Aristotle, most recently the *Middle Commentary on "De anima"* (ed. and trans. Alfred Ivry, 2002). These writings and translations will be more than enough to introduce the interested English reader to the rich literature of a field that is slowly but steadily moving forward.

James T. Robinson
University of Chicago

Peggy McCracken. *The Curse of Eve, the Wound of the Hero. Blood, Gender, and Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. xii+178 \$38.95 £27.50 (cloth) ISBN 0 8122 3713 7.

The opening paragraphs of *The Curse of Eve, the Wound of the Hero* make the book sound truly exciting, groundbreaking. When Peggy McCracken observes that "medieval religious, legal, and medical discourses describe blood as both figurally and literally effective" (ix), one wants to know more. To look at metaphorical and literal associations of blood in medieval society would be an immense project, however, and McCracken wisely narrows her focus to blood and gender. She pursues the argument "that gendered cultural values are mapped onto blood and that cultural values are inscribed into a natural order when they are described in terms of blood" (ix). This subject is in itself new and engaging, but McCracken loses something by remaining so deep within the confines of her subtitle, "blood, gender, and medieval literature."

The main sources for her work are medieval literary texts written from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, with grail romances receiving particular attention. Those themes that give this book such promise in the opening words—religion, law, and medicine—receive only cursory consideration. This may be partly because it is in literature that the gendering of blood is most apparent; moreover, these sources provide the strongest support for what is a decidedly feminist argument, an argument that sees female blood as being represented in negative terms because of the "persistent definition of the values of women's blood in relation to the value of menstrual blood" (2). The feminist stance is further affirmed by McCracken's chapter headings.

The first four chapters, "Only women bleed," "The amenorrhea of war," "The gender of sacrifice," and "Menstruation and monstrous birth," establish a division between masculine and feminine blood. In chapter one, McCracken demonstrates that menstrual blood and the blood of parturition are associated with pollution and suffering. Next, she discusses the incompatibility of female blood with a war

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