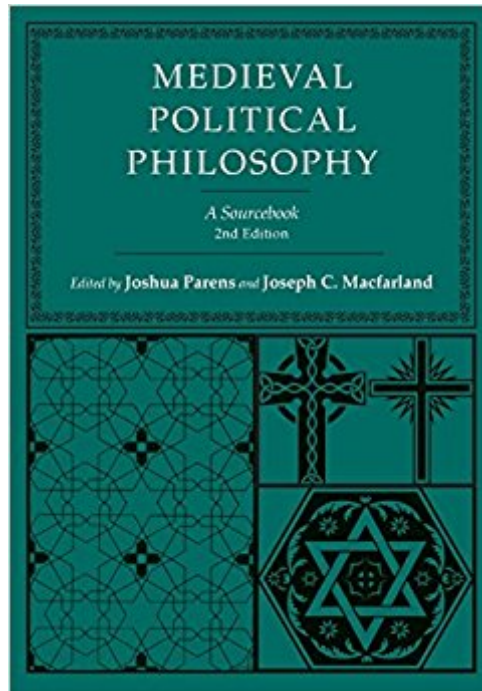




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# Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook (Agora Editions)



## Synopsis

Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook, edited by Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi, has been a classroom favorite since its publication in 1963. When it first appeared, it was the only anthology of medieval political philosophy to contain major texts from all three Western monotheistic traditions—Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—and that claim remains true today. This new edition of this classic text of political philosophy—revised and enlarged by Joshua Parens and Joseph C. Macfarland—will make accessible to today's students the insights of these profound medieval thinkers. Prior to the modern separation of religion from politics, these medieval thinkers explored a variety of approaches to the relation between religion and politics—approaches that prompted renewed interest in a world divided over how best to relate the two. For the authors gathered in this volume—including Alfarabi, Alghazali, Averroes, Maimonides, Judah Halevi, Thomas Aquinas, Boethius of Dacia, and Dante Alighieri among many others—there was a greater uniformity of general intention than at any other period. All of these authors studied the works of classical political philosophy and considered in a variety of ways the implications of this political thought for their contemporary situation in a monotheistic religious community.

## Book Information

Series: Agora Editions

Paperback: 424 pages

Publisher: Cornell University Press; 2 edition (April 14, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 080147681X

ISBN-13: 978-0801476815

Product Dimensions: 7.1 x 1.3 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.9 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #210,662 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #78 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Medieval Thought #120 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Religious History #477 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Religious

## Customer Reviews

"This updated collection is as timely now as it was back then: few students of political theory are

sufficiently conversant with the rich medieval tradition of reflection on such problems as 'reason and revelation' or 'natural and divine law'. . . . One cannot argue with the enduring relevance of this work for the study of political philosophy. Summing Up: Highly recommended." *Choice* (January 2012)

Joshua Parens is Professor of Philosophy and Dean of the Braniff Graduate School of Liberal Arts at the University of Dallas. He is the author of *An Islamic Philosophy of Virtuous Religions and Maimonides and Spinoza: Their Conflicting Views of Human Nature*.

The selection of political texts is vast and varies from other political philosophy books. Each new text is provided with a brief history of the author and what lead to the text being written. I do have to praise the introduction of this book. I find that it is one that should not be skipped over. It provides a brief but detailed background to the texts you soon are too read. I purchased the book as a requirement for a political theory class and for what it cost I had planned to sell it back after I was done. After reading it my mindset changed. It is a book you want to have in your personal library.

This sourcebook provides a great overview of the major players in Medieval political philosophy from the three major religions. Each translation includes a bibliography for further reading. It includes some of the only English translations I've been able to find for Al Farabi. Unfortunately, the book itself could have been higher quality. The pages started falling out shortly after I began using it. A friend who also bought the book from reported the same thing.

good and fast

product was as described.

This is pretty much THE sourcebook of medieval political philosophy, for any who would use that term. It presents a coherent collection of essays and extracts, with explanatory introductions for each piece and to each section (Islamic, Jewish, and Christian). The translations chosen are all the best available, with sections and/or paragraph numbers annotated and the page numbers to the prominent alternative editions or chief manuscripts bracketed. Unfortunately, my copy also has pages falling out from ordinary use, though from a look at the binding it seems to be a problem only for the first 1/5th or so of the text. I also concur with a prior reviewer that the space for marginal

notes is insufficient. I would not, however, recommend any other text as a replacement. One would do best, then, to purchase directly from Cornell University Press, asking them to inspect the text before shipment.

An excellent resource. Updated with new selections and supplemented with helpful introductory material: a general introduction which could serve as an introduction to political philosophy simply, and introductions to each section (Islamic, Jewish, and Christian) and each selection. I seem to have been lucky in that my copy does not suffer from the binding issues that other reviewers have mentioned. My only criticism as I've used this for a class is that the layout makes it almost impossible to take notes in the margins.

The binding is a problem in this text, as all the commentators have noticed. I would also remark that the classic introduction to the first addition is missing--which is simply a shame. There is insufficient space to write in the text as well. Overall I don't see a marked improvement from the first addition, except that the notes corresponding to each text have been improved. Although I own the new addition I still prefer the first, and will continue to use and recommend it.

This Sourcebook, an update and expansion of the original 1963 edition, contains a really unparalleled collection of sources pertaining to medieval political thought in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Really top notch. However, the quality of the actual physical book is quite lacking: every page I turn immediately falls out. Alas that such an excellent collection should be printed in such a low quality edition.

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