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IN THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

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PREFACE

The present volume is the product of a conference held in 2005 at the Institute for Advanced Studies (now the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies) in Jerusalem to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the passing of Shlomo Pines (1908–1990). The colloquium held in his memory was conceived to reflect as far as possible the manifold areas of his interest and the masterly ingenuity of his scholarship. Even by assembling a fairly large team of scholars, however, it was impossible to cover the full scope of his scholarly oeuvre. The conference's theme, which is also the title of the present volume, aimed at highlighting the common thread linking the diverse contributions to it: prominent examples of contact between cultures in antiquity and in the Medieval period. This theme also highlights Pines's particular talent for spotting covert connections between diverse literary and cultural expressions.

The papers assembled in this volume give a glimpse of the many fascinating insights that can be obtained by examining interactions between religious traditions and schools of thought. The participants, some of them Pines's former students and all of them contributors to the field of cross-cultural studies, sought to explore meaningful areas in the transmission of literary and intellectual content across the boundaries of religions and cultures.

One such area, addressed by many of the articles in this volume, is that of contacts between Islam on the one hand and Judaism and Christianity on the other, especially in the field of science. Two papers, by Haggai Ben-Shammai and Patricia Crone, deal with the meaning of Koranic terms that seem to reflect Jewish and Christian concepts – a discussion from which the Koran passages in which these terms appear gain some depth of meaning. The influence exerted by Ibn Sīnā on Maimonides in relation to the notion of prayer and intellectual worship is the topic of Steven Harvey's contribution.

Sarah Stroumsa's paper is concerned with the so-called translation movement, which yielded the translation of Greek philosophical works into Arabic, often through the intermediary of a translation into Pahlavi or Syriac. Stroumsa suggests some corrections to the new view of this movement recently framed by Dimitri Gutas.

The studies by Warren Zev Harvey and Josep Puig Montada pursue connections between Jewish thinkers and the philosophical schools developed in Islam and Christianity. Harvey argues that Ḥasḏai Crescas should in a

sense be understood as belonging both to the Muslim tradition and to the contemporary school of Christian philosophy. Puig Montada demonstrates that Eliahu del Medigo maintained his adherence to Averroes while conducting a dialogue with the Latin authors who tried to solve the difficulties of harmonizing Christian doctrine and faith with Aristotle's philosophy.

Two more papers deal with the transmission and diffusion of knowledge between and within the dispersed Jewish communities of the Middle Ages. Gad Freudenthal discusses how two outstanding twelfth-century scholars, Abraham Ibn Ezra and Judah Ibn Tibbon, served as intermediaries propagating the scholarship developed in Muslim Spain and bringing it to the Jewish communities of Christian Europe. James T. Robinson traces the propagation of philosophical ideas in the Jewish communities of southern France. The two works selected to illustrate this trend, Jacob Anatoli's *Malmad hatalmidim* and Menahem ben Solomon haMe'iri's *Commentary on Proverbs*, show a degree of Jewish openness to Christian philosophical wisdom. Anatoli quotes in his biblical exegesis from the works of Christian thinkers, and these quotations are borrowed again by Me'iri.

Tzvi Langermann, dealing with a Hebrew composition preserved in a manuscript kept in the Vatican, unearths an early layer of Jewish philosophical speculation in the author's polemic against the claim for the eternity of the world. Yehuda Liebes, who has already dealt elsewhere with Solomon Ibn Gabirol's famous philosophical poem 'I Love You,' here provides a likely clue to the origin of the riddle at its heart, in the second of Plato's Epistles.

The article by Shaul Shaked deals with the transfer of popular wisdom from a Zoroastrian source into Islam, via a translation into Arabic. The Arabic text is preserved in an anthology of wisdom works from various sources prepared by Miskawayhi, a prolific Arabic author of Persian descent. Absorption of wisdom from various sources, including the adoption of pre-Islamic Iranian lore by Islamic literati, was a typical trait of Islamic literature in its formative period.

The editors hope that this collection of essays will contribute to a better understanding of the enormous movement of borrowing and translation in which Muslims, Christians and Jews took part in the early centuries of the Islamic era and well into the Medieval period.

Our thanks go out, first of all, to the participants in the conference and in this volume, both for the quality and sparkle of their contributions and for their patience and cooperation in a publication process that took much

longer than expected. It is our hope that the final outcome will be found to have been worth the effort. We wish to thank Deborah Greniman, Senior Editor of English-Language Publications in the Publications Department of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, for expertly bringing the preparation of the copy to a successful conclusion. We are grateful to Miriam Himmelfarb, whose initial round of copy editing created a uniform book out of a diverse assemblage of papers, and to Esther Rosenberg, whose skilled proofreading uncovered the last remaining errors. Tali Amir, Director of the Academy's Publications Department, skillfully oversaw the volume's preparation.

We remember with gratitude the late Professor Haim Tadmor, Vice President of the Israel Academy, for agreeing to include this book among the publications of the Israel Academy in its Humanities series. Prof. Yohanan Friedmann, former Chairperson of the Academy's Publications Committee, was also instrumental in advancing the publication of this book.

The Editors
Jerusalem, December 2012