

and internalized vis-à-vis multiple aspects of Jordan's perpetually hardening national narrative, the research is superb.

As much as this book contributes to a better understanding of Jordan's history in its many complexities and nuances, the anodyne nature of its presentation of Mithqal al-Fayiz's relationship with the Jewish Agency leads me to conclude with two related observations, somewhat tangential to the work itself. Alon opens his book with a synopsis of the events of autumn 2012, a crescendo in nearly two years of intensifying activism in opposition to the long, ongoing erosion of the social contract and its resultant inequality, accompanied by the further authoritarian securitization of the state. While much of the academic and journalistic analyses published since have seized on this same moment to offer better and worse versions of "why Jordan survived the 'Arab Spring,'" Alon's purpose is to provide crucial historical context for that moment and what has followed through the actions of his subject's descendants, who came forward, of course, in strong defense of national unity, the monarchy, and with the harshest possible language for and about the protestors. As historians we need to take this long view and tie it explicitly to the contemporary moment as Alon has done, as the events to which we have borne witness over the past several years are best understood in light of the longer, highly contextualized lenses we can offer for viewing them. We have a responsibility to be of service to the uprisings and to our field by our unrelenting insistence on such nuanced contextualization, and by our refusal to cede to anything less. While not his task to do so, it might be a disappointment to some readers that Alon takes these few pages about a fraught, important moment no further. There is no subsequent interrogation of what the kind of action he describes of Mithqal al-Fayiz's descendants says about elite complicity in an untenable status quo and the potential for agency (or lack thereof) of a *hirāk* in it. That said, Alon has added to the solid foundation, including his own excellent scholarship, by which we might better understand the nodes of symbiosis between Jordan's tribes, monarchy, and state. The path is well laid for scholars who will use autumn 2012 in the future as a lens for refracting histories of resistance.

The final observation is this: despite decades of excellent, interdisciplinary scholarship on tribes in Jordan and the broader region, the nuance too often gets lost out there, and Jordan and its history are continually reduced to stories about great men, ultimately loyal Transjordanian tribes, and a plucky monarch versus an angry and hostile Palestinian majority, and then Iraqis, and then the migrant laborers, and now Syrians, and next who and what? It is so much more complicated than this narrative. But this narrative is easy and serves a popular discourse that at its best is ignorant and at its worst enables a continuously hardening nationalist militarist identity discourse manifest in claims to the scraps of the frayed social safety net and how it got to be this way. With *The Shaykh of Shayks*, Yoav Alon has given us another piece of critical scholarship with which to foster better, critical understanding of complex histories with immediate relevance. Let's be sure to use it, and wisely so.

ALEXANDER ORWIN, *Redefining the Muslim Community: Ethnicity, Religion, and Politics in the Thought of Alfarabi* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017). Pp. 250. \$59.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780812249040

REVIEWED BY THÉRÈSE-ANNE DRUART, School of Philosophy, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.; e-mail: druart@cua.edu
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Alexander Orwin's approach to al-Farabi's political thought is refreshing. He is well aware of the usual scholarly debates on this topic, but chose to focus on a term with a double meaning, namely, *umma*. Though this is unusual in a medieval setting, al-Farabi uses *umma* to refer to what we now call a nation. But, of course, this term also often appears in the Qur'an with the meaning of the

community of believers, which transcends ethnic, geographic, and linguistic boundaries. These two meanings lead Orwin to observe their interplay in al-Farabi's writings.

Orwin, first, determines how al-Farabi conceives the "national" *umma* and to do so uses many Farabian texts and not simply those generally classified as political. He argues convincingly that, for al-Farabi, people sharing the same geographical area and the same language may constitute a "national" *umma*. Orwin offers a detailed examination of al-Farabi's views on language and dialects. This reader particularly appreciated his use of *The Great Book of Music*, which, though one of the longest works al-Farabi penned, remains much neglected. Orwin tells us very honestly on page 213 that this book is so technical in what concerns music proper that he limited his reading to the introduction. Orwin is right to speak of this text as a forbidding book, but contrary to what he says on the same page, there exists a full translation of this text in a European language. In 1930–35 Rodolphe d'Erlanger translated it into French (Paris: Vrin, 2001 [reprint]). There exists also an English translation of its last section in a 1992 Cornell University PhD dissertation by Madian Azza Abd al-Hamid, *Language–Music Relationships in al-Farabi's Grand Book of Music*. This last section contains fascinating remarks on the political importance of music and why rulers should pay close attention to the kind of music people perform or enjoy.

Orwin dedicates one chapter to the Muslim *umma* and then moves to a study of the interplay between the two types of *ummas*. He claims that al-Farabi "strives to assure their harmonious coexistence" (p. 136). In showing this, Orwin raises various questions trying to determine what al-Farabi would think of some issues. For instance, he asserts that al-Farabi would require a looser and more flexible interpretation of Islam for artists and judges. The section on al-Farabi's Encouragement of Visual Art in Islam fascinated me. I do not think anyone had yet considered what al-Farabi says of the visual arts.

While discussing various aspects of al-Farabi's views Orwin tries to determine what these views may contribute to contemporary issues in the Islamic world. For instance, he reflects on al-Farabi and the Modern Restoration of the Muslim Umma. I find it refreshing that, besides a careful and historically grounded reading of al-Farabi's texts, Orwin tries to tell us what al-Farabi's views can tell us for today.

The book is clear, well-written, and often carefully nuanced. Orwin reads texts carefully and points to interesting and unexpected statements, as well as to what may well be significant omissions. He certainly gives us a plausible interpretation of obscure or surprising passages, but at times I am far from sure that this is the only plausible interpretation. Orwin certainly offers food for thought.

Political philosophy is not my favorite philosophical field, but this book grabbed my attention and was a pleasure to read. It is well informed, closely reads texts, and raises fascinating issues. It is provocative at times and should be read with some caution, but I do not hesitate to recommend it.

DAVID R. COLLIER, *Democracy and the Nature of American Influence in Iran, 1941–1979*, Contemporary Issues in the Middle East (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2017). Pp. 428. \$75.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780815634973

REVIEWED BY JAMES GOODE, Department of History, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Mich.; e-mail: goodej@gvsu.edu
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Scholars come back again and again to the reign of Muhammad Reza Pahlavi (1941–79), and especially to the years 1941–53 when Muhammad Musaddiq, the avuncular Iranian nationalist