

## MAIMONIDES AND PHILOSOPHY

SHLOMO PINES  
and  
YIRMIYAHU YOVEL  
(editors)

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# MAIMONIDES AND PHILOSOPHY

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edited by

SHLOMO PINES and YIRMIYAHU YOVEL  
*The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

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## Preface

In the year 1985, presumed to mark the 850th anniversary of Maimonides' birth, the Sixth Jerusalem Philosophical Encounter was dedicated to Maimonides as *philosopher*. We did not enter into the other aspects of his work, rabbinical, legal, medical, etc., except in so far as the relation between his philosophy and his work in *halakha* (Jewish law) is itself a philosophical question.

That no one is quite certain about Maimonides' date of birth is symbolic of the state of his philosophy as well. Maimonides' thought poses various enigmas, lends itself to contradictory interpretations and gives rise today, as it did in the Middle Ages, to sustained controversies. Some of the contributions to the present volume deal with these and cognate topics. Others deal with certain aspects of the philosophical tradition in which Maimonides was rooted, with some traits peculiar to the Islamic society in the midst of which he lived, and with his influence on Christian scholasticism.

Maimonides' thought had many facets, and for this and other reasons the question as to his place and stature in the history of philosophy admits of no simple answer. In this volume an attempt has been made to draw attention to some of these complexities.

The essays in this book were first read at the Sixth Jerusalem Philosophical Encounter, organized by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, with the cooperation of the Jerusalem International Book Fair. The *Jerusalem Philosophical Encounters* are a series of bi-annual international symposia, in which philosophers of different backgrounds meet in Jerusalem to discuss a common issue. Organized by the S.H. Bergman Center for Philosophical Studies of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the series of Encounters have so far produced the following books: *Philosophy of History and Action*, ed. Y. Yovel (Reidel, 1978); *Meaning and Use*, ed. A. Margalit (Reidel, 1979); *Spinoza — His Thought and Work*, ed. N. Rotenstreich (The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1983); *Franz Rosenzweig*, ed. P. Mendes-Flohr (New England University Press, forthcoming); *Nietzsche as Affirmative Thinker*, ed. Y. Yovel (Nijhoff, 1985).

Special thanks are due to Unesco for assistance in the publication of this volume, and to Mrs. Marie-Hélène Vulcanesco, who made Unesco's participation in the Encounter warmly personal. The World Jewish Congress

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through Dr. Israel Singer made its own contribution. Most of all, it is Mr. Zev Birger, Managing Director of the Jerusalem International Book Fair, and his staff, especially Mrs. Linda Futterman, who made the Maimonides Encounter a success, along with Dr. Elhanan Yakira and Mrs. Evelyne Cohen of the Bergman Center.

In conclusion we wish to express our thanks to Ms. Eva Shorr, Managing Editor at the Bergman Center, who gave much thought and meticulous care to the preparation of this volume, and to our colleague Dr. Warren Zev Harvey who kindly made himself available throughout the project. The volume could not have come out as it has without their unstinting efforts.

*The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

Shlomo Pines  
Yirmiyahu Yovel



## A Note on Texts and Transliteration

### *Quotations*

Quotations from Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* are identified by Roman numerals referring to Part, Arabic numbers referring to Chapter, and page numbers referring — unless otherwise noted — to Shlomo Pines' translation (University of Chicago Press, 1963): e.g., III:20:481. When necessary, reference is also made to I. Joel's edition of the Arabic text, *Dalālat al-hā'irīn* (Jerusalem: Junovitch, 1930/31).

### *Diacritical Marks*

Diacritical marks are used in the transliteration of Arabic words and of the full Arabic names of philosophers, but not in the shortened forms of their names. No attempt was made to achieve complete consistency in transliteration.

### *Diaeresis*

Because of technical difficulties the name *Maimonide* appears without diaeresis in the French articles.