

Book Review

Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfi, *Qit‘a min Kitāb al-futūḥ, li-l-‘allāma al-mu‘arrikh Abī Muḥammad Aḥmad b. A‘tham al-Kūfi, al-mutawaffā ba‘da sanat 320 h, qūbilat ‘alā nuskha qadīma min al-qarn al-sādis al-hijrī, akhrajahu wa-waḍa‘a fahārisahu Markaz Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-Tābi‘ li-Dār Makhtūṭāt al-‘Ataba al-‘Abbāsiyya al-Muqaddasa*. Edited by Qays al-‘Aṭṭār (Karbalā’: Maktabat wa-Dār Makhtūṭāt al-‘Ataba al-‘Abbāsiyya al-Muqaddasa, 1438/2017), 4* + 736 pp.

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The book under review is a new, partial edition of Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfi’s *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, made by Qays al-‘Aṭṭār and printed in 2017 in Karbalā’, Iraq.¹ Although the *Kitāb al-futūḥ* has been edited several times over the past half-century, the present volume deserves special attention as it is based on a manuscript—MS Ankara (Saib 5418), kept in Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Kütüphanesi of Ankara University—that has not been used for any of the work’s previous printed editions.

Until the middle third of the twentieth century, scholars of Arabic historiography wishing to use this work had to rely, besides manuscripts, on a later nineteenth-century lithograph edition of the work’s Persian translation.² Although the most extensive extant Arabic manuscript of the work had already been found in 1925,³ it remained unedited for almost half a century. This shortcoming was finally remedied, at least in part, by the publication of the hitherto most reliable and complete printed text, published in Hyderābād in 1968–1975

1. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Mahdi Mojtahedi, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, for calling my attention to this edition and making a copy of it available to me. Al-Shaykh Qays al-‘Aṭṭār, the editor of the book, is the director of Markaz al-Imām al-Ḥasan li-l-Dirāsāt al-Takhaṣṣuṣiyya Far‘ Mashhad (see <https://imamhassan.org/contents/view/details?id=135>).

2. Mustawfī, *Tarjuma-yi Kitāb al-futūḥ*, ed. Mīrzā Muḥammad Shīrāzī Malik al-Kuttāb as *Tarjuma-yi Kitāb al-futūḥ az Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-ma‘rūf bi-A‘tham al-Kūfi, wa mutarjim-i ān Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Harawī* (Bombay: Mīrzā Muḥammad Shīrāzī Malik al-Kuttāb, 1305/1887).

3. Zeki Velidi Togan, “Ibn A‘tham-al-Kufi,” *Islamic Culture* 44, no. 1 (1970): 249–252.

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(henceforth abbreviated as H).⁴ Yet strictly speaking, that volume cannot be regarded as a truly critical edition, either, even if the editors made a major effort to base their undertaking on all the manuscripts preserving the Arabic text that were available to them. In fact, they used four out of the seven currently known Arabic exemplars: MS Gotha (FB MS. orient. A 1592), MS Istanbul (Ahmet III 2956/1–2), MS Dublin (Chester Beatty 3272), and MS Birmingham (Mingana 572). Two further copies might have escaped the editors' attention because of the misidentification of their codices: MS Patna (Khudā Bakhsh 1042) was ascribed to al-Wāqidī in the library's 1929 printed catalog,⁵ while Fuat Sezgin referred to MS Ankara in his first, 1967 volume of *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* as a work by Abū Mikhnaf.⁶ The same cannot be said of the last known fragment, MS Milan (Ambrosiana H 129), since it was properly identified as Ibn Aʿtham's work in the very first paper to mention it. Yet this piece, published in an Italian *Festschrift* in 1910 and also quoted by C. Brockelmann in his entry on Ibn Aʿtham in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, did not gain particularly wide currency in later research, which could explain why it was overlooked by the editors of H.⁷

Despite the unquestionable merits of the editors, who, for the first time, made available a fairly complete Arabic

text of Ibn Aʿtham's history, like most pioneering enterprises, H was unable to settle all the problematic issues raised by the manuscript tradition. Unfortunately, since no introduction is provided to the eight volumes, the editors share neither working principles and methods nor their observations concerning the work's textual tradition. In the absence of such information, readers are left almost entirely in the dark about major questions, including the physical condition and dating problems of the manuscripts, their copyists, the circumstances of their copying, the lacunae, and the handling of poems, to mention but a few issues. Thus, from time to time, a shroud of vagueness envelops the source of textual insertions and their extent, especially since not even the most careful reading of the footnotes sheds light on these issues. It is not always clear, for example, why some of the poems missing from MS Istanbul (the one apparently chosen as the edition's basis against which the other three were collated) but preserved in MSS Dublin and Birmingham were sometimes included in the main text, whereas in other cases they were relegated to the footnotes. Nor are hypercorrections infrequent, particularly when *isnāds* are concerned, as Lawrence I. Conrad has already pointed out.⁸

Although much caution thus needs to be exercised when drawing conclusions

4. Ibn Aʿtham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAẓīm al-Dīn and Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Muʿīn Khān, 8 vols. (Hyderābād: Dāʿirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1388–1395/1968–1975).

5. Maulavi Muinuddin Nadwi, *Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore*, vol. 15, *Arabic MSS., History* (Patna: Baptist Mission Press, 1929), 108–110.

6. Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, 9 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967–1974), 1:308–309 (4–5).

7. Eugenio Griffini, “I due episodi siciliani dello Pseudo al Waqīdī in una nuova redazione anonima,” *Centenario della nascita di Michele Amari*, ed. Enrico Besta, Gaetano M. Columba, Carlo A. Nallino, Antonio Salinas, Giambattista Siragusa, and Carlo O. Zuretti, 402–415 (Palermo: Virzì, 1910).

8. Lawrence I. Conrad, “Ibn Aʿtham and His History,” *Al-ʿUṣūr al-Wuṣṭā* 23 (2015): 87–125, esp. 114.

based on H’s text because of these uncertainties, none of the *Kitāb al-futūḥ*’s three subsequent editions provided a more solid basis for research. The edition published by Nu‘aym Zarzūr in 1986 only rarely offers more than a simple retyping of H.⁹ The editor also chose a peculiar “method” to fill the lacunae of the Arabic text. In most cases, he simply inserted the medieval Persian translation’s modern Arabic retranslation without indicating this fact accurately. As though to worsen this indefensible practice, such insertions were from time to time also complemented with additional texts from, for example, the work of al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923).¹⁰ Moreover, even a careful reading of his text is sometimes of little help in securely distinguishing the entire extent of editorial interventions. For instance, although at 1:75, n. 1, Zarzūr draws his readers’ attention to a gap and refers to the Persian manuscripts he used (MSS Hyderābād, Salar Jung 144 and 145),¹¹ ten pages later the endpoint of the Arabic retranslation is marked only by a square bracket, without any explanation.¹² The process of harmonizing H and the retranslation of the Persian may have led to further difficulties,

including losses from the Arabic text transmitted through the extant codices, as is the case with a section of about half a page that was in all probability left out when the end of the retranslated Persian passage was inadequately joined to the Arabic of H.¹³

The same method of filling the lacunae of the original Arabic with sections translated back from the Persian was employed by both later editors of the *Kitāb al-futūḥ*. However, one of them, ‘Alī Shīrī, was more careful in systematically marking these insertions by introducing them with an editorial note and indicating their terminations by square brackets supplemented with clarifying footnotes.¹⁴ The insertions are less easily discerned in Suhayl Zakkār’s 1992 edition.¹⁵ Unlike Shīrī, Zakkār did not merely reuse Zarzūr’s modern Arabic retranslation¹⁶ but chose to create his own based on Shīrāzī’s abovementioned lithograph.¹⁷ To be sure, this is very much in line with Zakkār’s intention to finally prepare the much-needed critical edition, for which he likewise chose to rely on MS Istanbul, using MS Dublin as the control text. Yet his footnotes reveal that he did not

9. Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, ed. Nu‘aym Zarzūr as: *al-Futūḥ*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1406/1986).

10. See, e.g., Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ* (ed. Zarzūr), 1:78, lines 20–21; 1:81, lines 4–5.

11. Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ* (ed. Zarzūr), 1:75, n. 1.

12. Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ* (ed. Zarzūr), 1:84, line 20.

13. For the missing part, see H 1:100, lines 1–11.

14. See, for example, Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, ed. by ‘Alī Shīrī as *Futūḥ*, 5 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā’, 1411/1991), from 1:72, line 16 to 1:83, line 8, esp. 1:83, n. 1.

15. Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār as *al-Futūḥ*, 3 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1412/1992).

16. Since Shīrī’s text is identical with Zarzūr’s, there is good reason to assume that he simply recycled his predecessor’s text.

17. Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazawāt*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār as *Ghazawāt Ibn Ḥubaysh*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1412/1992), 13 (introduction).

systematically refer to the readings of the latter, and like Zarzūr before him, he also incorporated different passages from independent works into the main text of the *Kitāb al-futūḥ* (e.g. “Şıffīn,” most likely the *Waq‘at Şıffīn*).¹⁸

This brief overview perhaps explains the excitement felt by any student of ninth- and tenth-century Arabic historiography when laying hands on a freshly edited Ibn A‘tham, especially if, as is the case with the volume reviewed here, it draws on a previously neglected manuscript, thereby making its testimony available to the academic community. Of course, the choice to edit merely a select part of a multivolume opus has its potential pitfalls. However, in view of the enormous extent of the *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, the hardships of accessing its manuscripts, and the difficulties abounding in its extant printed versions, of which my review gives no more than a slight glimpse, all efforts to improve the entire text or portions of it are easily justifiable and more than welcome.¹⁹ This having been said, it may also be noted that an approach along these lines yields the best results if the editor selects a particular portion that provides an intrinsic rationale for its quasi-independent treatment, either in terms of its textual transmission or because of the work’s structure. This does not entirely hold true for the present volume, since,

as the editor, Qays al-‘Aṭṭār, explains in his introduction, his intention was simply to complement the *Kitāb al-futūḥ*’s existing editions by making a previously unpublished manuscript available to a broader audience.

It must also be noted that MS Ankara does not seem to represent a separate, easily definable thematic unit within the *Kitāb al-futūḥ*. Although neither the original beginning nor the end of the codex is extant, in my estimation, which is based on an examination of the quire signatures of the manuscript, no more than a few, most likely about two to three, folios could have been lost from its beginning. Unfortunately, no similar calculation can produce a reliable estimate of the number of missing folios at the manuscript’s end. Comparing the estimated loss in the beginning closely with Ibn A‘tham’s text suggests that MS Ankara very possibly did not start with the beginning of a larger thematic unit but rather was part of a multivolume set of manuscripts in which textual units were not necessarily distributed among the single codices according to thematic principles. Yet mention should be made of the interesting circumstance that the very first preserved lines of MS Ankara are three hemistichs of a poem. The poem cannot be completed on the strength of the other manuscripts because those either do not preserve

18. Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ* (ed. Zakkār), 1:164, lines 13–17.

19. This would also be true for other partial editions based on different codices, if their editors had not ascribed Ibn A‘tham’s text to others, thereby deluding themselves while modifying and commenting on the text; cf. Mónica Schönleber, “Notes on the Textual Tradition of Ibn A‘tham’s *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*,” in *Contacts and Interaction: Proceedings of the 27th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Helsinki 2014*, ed. Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, Petteri Koskikallio, and Ilkka Lindstedt, 427–38 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), esp. 429–31, with further literature.

these lines or contain another poetical composition.²⁰

The edition under review begins with a very detailed introduction that occupies almost one hundred pages. To the reader’s delight, besides some general issues usually discussed in this section, al-‘Aṭṭār addresses certain problems rarely touched upon in Middle Eastern editions. He opens his discussion with a chapter on Ibn A‘tham, covering his name, *madhhab*, works, poetry, and death (pp. 9–23). Al-‘Aṭṭār’s conclusions are generally reliable. Only in some cases should they be treated with caution because, though he bases his arguments on a majority of the available sources, a few important ones are not mentioned.²¹ The next chapter (pp. 23–33) outlines the rise of early Arabic historiography and offers an overview of how historical information was transmitted from Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/774) down to Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200); a particular emphasis is placed on the role of *isnāds* and the emergence of their use in historiography.

The main aim of the next chapter is to explore the *Kitāb al-futūḥ*’s reception history between the fifth and thirteenth *hijrī* centuries (pp. 34–56). The sources reviewed are listed in twenty-three sections in chronological order. The chapter collects the most important data

on authors and works that made use of the *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, but its principal value is no doubt the attention al-‘Aṭṭār pays to Ibn A‘tham’s confessional affiliation (pp. 13–19). After citing some medieval and modern authorities who explicitly declared Ibn A‘tham to be a Shi‘i writer, al-‘Aṭṭār reviews a significant amount of medieval and early modern Muslim literature, including authors who belonged to *al-shī‘a* and what he calls *al-‘amma*.²² On the basis of their writings, he rejects the previous claim, arguing that Ibn A‘tham was not in fact committed to any particular *madrassa* (school) or *madhhab*.

The next chapter explains the editor’s goal in taking on this project and presents in detail—over almost twenty pages—the main differences between his text and the previous editions (pp. 57–74). Curiously, instead of basing his editorial undertaking on comparing the text transmitted in MS Ankara to those preserved in other manuscripts, of whose existence he was aware, and making emendations accordingly, al-‘Aṭṭār chose to use Zarzūr’s and Zakkār’s editions as control material to MS Ankara. In light of the problems mentioned above, this choice is less than fortunate in several respects.

To highlight MS Ankara’s value, the editor meticulously lists the differences between the two editions and his

20. MS Birmingham (fol. 63v, lines 6–7) has two lines, while MS Dublin (fol. 150r, line 8) has only one, which is identical with the first line of MS Birmingham. By contrast, MS Istanbul (fol. 91v, line 14) only alludes to a poem (*shī‘ran*, “a poem”) but omits its text.

21. Significant sources not consulted include, for example, al-Sahmī’s (d. 427/1038) *Ta’rīkh Jurjān*, Ibn Mākūlā’s (d. ca. 475/1082) *al-Ikmāl fī raf‘ al-irtiyāb ‘an al-mu’talif wa-l-mukhtalif fī l-asmā’ wa-l-kunā wa-l-ansāb*, Ibn Funduq al-Bayhaqī’s (d. 565/1169–70) *Tārīkh-i Bayhaq*, and Ibn Nuqṭa’s (d. 629/1231) *Takmilat al-Ikmāl*.

22. Al-‘Aṭṭār uses this term in a consistent manner throughout his introduction to designate non-Shi‘i persons and institutions.

manuscript.²³ His examples are divided into the following four larger groups:

1. Missing parts: MS Ankara preserves texts, mostly poems, missing from the two editions (pp. 58–63).
2. Completeness: It contains a more complete version of the text than do the two editions (pp. 64–67).
3. Correctness: It has the correct wording in sections that were corrupted in the previously published versions (pp. 68–72).
4. Vocalization: Its vocalization is more reliable than that in the two editions (pp. 73–74).

To prove his points, al-‘Aṭṭār provides a detailed list of examples—in the form of direct quotations—for each group. This meticulous work has unquestionable merits, but its effectiveness is necessarily constrained by the inherent deficiencies of Zarzūr’s and Zakkār’s volumes, not to mention the fact that H, on which Zarzūr’s edition was based, failed to include a detailed description of the principles applied in establishing its readings. Given that al-‘Aṭṭār was aware that Zarzūr’s work was merely a copy of H, his rationale for choosing that edition remains obscure, and he provides no clear explanation for it in his introduction.

The discussion continues with a description of MS Ankara (pp. 74–77). Al-‘Aṭṭār reaffirms that in spite of Fuat Sezgin’s earlier attribution of MS Ankara

to Abū Mikhnaf, the manuscript, in fact, contains a long section of the *Kitāb al-futūḥ* covering the stories of Ṣiffīn, al-Nahrawān, the caliphate of al-Ḥasan and his treaties, and Mu‘āwīya’s reign (pp. 74–75). As for the manuscript’s date, he seconds Sezgin’s opinion in assigning it to the sixth/twelfth century. There is no indication, either in the introduction or elsewhere in the text, as to whether this dating is based on the editor’s personal examination of the manuscript.

After introducing his readers to the main manuscript, al-‘Aṭṭār also briefly discusses the two previously published editions on which his comparisons are based. He notes explicitly that Zarzūr’s work is “taken literally from the printing of Dā’irat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmāniyya in India,” that is, H (pp. 75–76). However, for reasons that remain unclear (see below), he seems to think that the editors of H consulted only MS Istanbul. Thus he does not mention H’s use of MSS Birmingham and Dublin, or of the Persian translation.²⁴ By contrast, he correctly acknowledges MSS Istanbul and Dublin as the sources of Zakkār’s edition.

Al-‘Aṭṭār explains the main principles of his editorial method in fourteen paragraphs (pp. 76–77). As a general rule, he has compared the three texts against each other, with preference given to readings in MS Ankara, which, if necessary, have been corrected against the two selected editions. In several cases, he has also consulted other historical sources. Normally, changes made to the text of

23. Al-‘Aṭṭār’s volume covers the following pages in the two editions: Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ* (ed. Zarzūr), from 2:55, line 8 to 317, line 5; Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ* (ed. Zakkār), from 1:281, line 1 to 2:31, line 4.

24. The text covered by MS Ankara is equivalent to H 3:87, line 13 to 4:197, line 10, and MS Istanbul 1:91v, line 14 to 169r, line 18.

MS Ankara are clearly indicated in the footnotes.

However, this principle is overruled in a curious set of editorial interventions (p. 78). Al-‘Aṭṭār emphasizes that he has changed certain recurrent features of the manuscript’s text without marking these changes in the critical apparatus. These are as follows:

1. Changes to word order (e.g., *an yakhruja ilā al-kurdūsīna bi-aṣḥābihi*, instead of *an yakhruja bi-aṣḥābihi ilā al-kurdūsīna*)
2. Spelling of *innī*, *innā* and similar words with one *nūn* as preserved in the manuscript instead of *innanī* and *innanā*, as in the two editions
3. The addition of *nasab* to all names appearing without it in the manuscript (e.g., *fa-qāla al-Ash‘ath b. Qays*, instead of *fa-qāla al-Ash‘ath*)
4. Modifications to conjunctions such as *wa-*, *fa-*, and *thumma*
5. Slight changes to sentences introducing poems (e.g., *fa-kataba ilayhi Qa‘b b. Ja‘īl shi‘ran* instead of *fa-kataba ilayhi Qa‘b b. Ja‘īl*)
6. In cases where Arabic grammar allows both feminine and masculine forms of a verb, selection of the form that agrees with the gender of the subject (e.g. *zaḥafat al-nās* rather than *zaḥafa al-nās*)

Although al-‘Aṭṭār explains his decision not to mark these modifications in the footnotes by invoking their high number, one might argue that their regular appearance in fact makes them

a valuable object of study for gaining a better understanding of the manuscript, its archetype, and its copyist, on the one hand, and perhaps of the text itself, on the other.

The edited text covers almost 550 pages (pp. 89–641). The layout is pleasing and carefully designed, and the font size chosen for the text is convenient, which makes the book easy to read. Readers will surely appreciate that the editor put in the time and effort to vocalize the poems. The only annoyance to readers hoping to exploit the volume for textual studies is the editor’s choice to mark all divergences between MS Ankara and the two printed editions while omitting all references in the footnotes to the volume and page numbers of those editions. This decision, made perhaps for the sake of simplicity, makes the time-consuming work of double-checking the sources of these modifications even more tiresome.

The volume concludes with a set of indexes covering Qur’ānic verses, proper names, place-names, tribes, battles, and poems, as well as a bibliographic section that lists the primary and secondary sources cited in the introduction (pp. 643–701). A separate bibliography is provided for the sources used in the preparation of the edited text (pp. 703–30). A very detailed table of contents can be found at the very end of the volume. This includes not only the subchapters of the introduction but also all chapter titles in the edited text (pp. 731–36).

The volume under review is a solid, careful work and an outstanding example of the high-quality editions produced in the Middle East. By making available the text of a previously unedited—and thus largely

inaccessible—manuscript, it enables future scholars to base their studies on a larger number of testimonies to the transmission of Ibn A‘tham’s work, thereby significantly contributing to our understanding of this process. Besides suggesting new readings of already published textual units, an even more significant contribution of MS Ankara is its abundance of poems. In this regard, MS Ankara is hardly unique among the manuscripts that were disregarded in the production of H. The present edition thus again drives home how incomplete and imperfect our knowledge of the *Kitāb al-futūḥ* must by necessity remain if we base our assessment solely on the text of H, until now the most complete and reliable printed version. On the other hand, in light of the present edition as well as further similar enterprises, we can confidently entertain hopes of coming much closer to restoring a more complete version of Ibn A‘tham’s text by reinstating large portions of text that post-tenth-century readers and/or copyists had found unappealing and thus unnecessary but without which the author’s original aims and methods cannot be properly understood.

A central feature constraining the edited text’s suitability for philological and text-critical analyses is al-‘Aṭṭār’s self-imposed reliance on “control material”—namely, Zarzūr’s and Zakkār’s editions—that is, by its nature, inadequate as a reliable basis for such an undertaking. To be sure, using previously published editions in searching for the “best” readings for one’s own critical text is an established and accepted

practice, especially if the editor lacks firsthand access to all extant manuscripts. The legitimacy of this approach may seem reasonable at first sight in the present case, too, since Zakkār’s and Zarzūr’s volumes were directly or indirectly based on manuscripts that were apparently available to al-‘Aṭṭār only in this secondhand form. (As noted earlier, Zakkār worked with MSS Istanbul and Dublin, whereas H, whose text Zarzūr in part retyped, used MSS Istanbul, Dublin, and Birmingham for the portions of the *Kitāb al-futūḥ* covered by MS Ankara.²⁵)

However, while retyping H, Zarzūr pruned his model’s footnotes with a heavy hand. In his own notes, references almost always point to *al-aṣl*, which seems to stand for MS Istanbul, while omitting the readings of MSS Dublin and Birmingham (referred to as “D” and “B” in H). This “simplification” can easily mislead the unwary reader unfamiliar with H, not least by conveying the impression of an edition carefully based on a single genuine manuscript. This state of affairs might explain why al-‘Aṭṭār apparently believed that Zarzūr’s volume was based solely on MS Istanbul, which could equally have led him to omit any mention of MSS Dublin and Birmingham, ignored by Zarzūr. In addition, the process of retyping can easily introduce errors into the body of the text, which makes such a retyped volume even more unsuited to further comparisons.

In conclusion, despite the shortcomings of major and minor importance that I have indicated, this volume is without doubt a useful and important edition that, by

25. The text covered by MS Ankara is the equivalent of MS Birmingham (fols. 63v, line 8 to 150v, line 14) and MS Dublin (fols. 150r, line 9 to 254r, line 9).

making available a previously unedited codex, fills a significant gap in the study of the manuscript tradition of the *Kitāb al-futūḥ*. Accordingly, al-‘Aṭṭār’s work is of considerable interest to and a valuable tool for both scholars focusing their research on this specific topic and those investigating the period of the first *fiṭna*.

Therefore, the editor and the publisher are to be commended for undertaking this laborious task. In view of the volume’s significance, it is to be regretted that very few copies of this work are available in the specialized libraries of the Western world, limiting access to this long-awaited edition of a key witness to Ibn A‘tham’s history.