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The Pythagorean Doctrine of the One as the *arche* in the Works of Ikhwan al-Safa and al-Shahrastani

The doctrine of the one as the *arche* was the key link between theoretical and practical sides of philosophy in the Greek Pythagoreanism. From the statement that the numbers and the one as their principle are the basis of the world it followed that there is a fundamental correspondence between all levels of the reality.

Although this theory seems to have been important for the Pythagoreans since a very early date, it attracted even more attention among the late antique philosophers. They developed this idea further and mixed it with Platonic and Aristotelian elements. Therefore, the Arabs – who inherited the late antique version of the Pythagoreanism – in general accepted the Neoplatonic version of this idea.

In my paper, I will use the *Epistles* of the Ikhwan al-Safa (Brethren of Purity) and al-Shahrastani's *Book of Sects and Creeds* to show how the Arabs continued this late antique tendency in writing about the Pythagoreanism. In fact, they even moved farther in mixing elements of the ancient Pythagoreanism with later doctrines of the late antique and Arabic followers of the Classical Greek philosophers (e.g., al-Shahrastani mixed it with Avicenna's ideas). I will, therefore, focus especially on the reception of the Pythagorean doctrine of the one as the *arche* and the parallels between various levels of the reality in the works of these Arabic authors. I will analyse what they did with this theory and how they possibly changed it. Finally, I will attempt at answering if they also drew any practical conclusions from this metaphysical doctrine. This applies in particular to the Ikhwan al-Safa who claimed to share some elements of philosophical way of life with the Greek Pythagoreans.