

LOLA FERRE (with the collaboration of Esther Boucher and Basem Mahmud), *Isaac Israeli's The Definition of Fever and Its Essence in Its Hebrew Translations (Accompanied by Arabic, Latin and Old Spanish Editions and English translation)*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society Press, 2023, (256 pp.) (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, volume 111, Part 5).

PAULINE KOETSCHET, *Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, Doutes sur Galien. Introduction, édition et traduction*, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2019, (cxxxviii + 347 pp.) (Scientia Graeco-Arabica Band 27, herausgegeben von Marwan Rashed).

SERGI GRAU TORRAS, *Les transformacions d'Aristòtil. Filosofia natural i medicina a Montpeller: el cas d'Arnau de Vilanova (c. 1240-1311)*, Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans - Fundació Noguera, 2020, (267 pp.) (Treballs de la Secció de Filosofia i Ciències Socials 50).

These three books deal in their own particular ways with three of the most conspicuous physicians-philosophers of Islamic societies: Isaac Israeli, al-Rāzī and (indirectly) Ibn Rushd. Even though the intersections between science, medicine and philosophy are difficult to explore, the study of authors who were as much philosophers as physicians and scientists is crucial for an exact understanding of all the areas of knowledge that they developed. All three books represent notable contributions to the understanding of the complexity of medieval scientific thought.

Lola Ferre's *Isaac Israeli's The Definition of Fever and Its Essence in Its Hebrew Translations* describes an essential work of the earliest physician and philosopher who flourished in Western Islam, Isaac Israeli (d. ca. 950). Although edited totally or partially several times, the work lacks a definitive edition which would bring together the various versions that have appeared over the course of history (Arabic, Hebrew, Latin and Castilian). Lola Ferre and her collaborators make a decisive step forward in this regard focusing on the first book in the treatise, which deals with the definition, nature and causes of fever. The first book also contains a thorough reflection based on Aristotelean logic which aims to teach the reader the fundamentals of the scientific method that should be followed to address this complex subject. The main body of Lola Ferre's *Isaac Israeli's* includes:

- (1) An edition of the Arabic version that updates the unpublished PhD thesis by Haskell D. Isaacs (Cambridge, 1968), based on three manuscripts (there are two more manuscripts listed in F. Sezgin's *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, III). This edition is contrasted with an anonymous translation into Hebrew which, according to Ferre, stems from a first translation that has not come down to us.
- (2) The Latin version by Constantine the African, contrasted with the Hebrew translation of this text written by Doeg the Edomite.
- (3) The Castilian version, edited by Esther Boucher on the basis of her unpublished Ph. D. (U. Laval, 1995, partially accessible via academia.edu). This partial edition improves substantially on a previous edition of the whole translation by José Llamas (Madrid, 1945).
- (4) A translation into English of the Hebrew version of the Arabic text, whose apparatus indicates the textual variants and additions found in the other versions. Ferre thus gives a most interesting insight into how Isaac Israeli's work evolved over time.

An introductory section gives the reader the necessary background about the author, the work, and the history of its translations. At the end of the book, there is a detailed and very helpful glossary of philosophical and medical terms. Ferre's methodology is eminently philological and linguistic. Her work in collecting and describing the Hebrew manuscripts is particularly thorough and precise and deals very effectively with the difficulties that such a complex collection of manuscripts poses. Even though Ferre does not delve into the sources of the treatise, she offers future researchers the opportunity to increase their familiarity with one of the most eminent figures in the rational sciences in Western Islam. In spite of the importance of Isaac Israeli, we are far from having a precise assessment of many aspects of his work: the true extent of his influence in the history of Islamic and Jewish medicine and philosophy, his influence in European medicine and his role as intermediary between the rational lore of Eastern and Western Islam. In this regard, Ferre's book is likely to make an outstanding contribution to future research.

Pauline Koetschet's *Abū Bakr al-Rāzī*, Doutes sur Galien. *Introduction, édition et traduction* is a splendid contribution to the studies about al-Rāzī (d. 925 or 935). It might be said that the author rediscovers a well-known work that most scholars had, in some way, overlooked, possibly because it was only accessible in Arabic. Al-Rāzī wrote *Shukūk 'alā Jālīnūs* inspired by the famous Aristotelean

motto «*Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*», which is quoted at the beginning of *Shukūk*. This work is one of the best expressions of a form of original thinking that aroused the enmity and criticism of many generations of followers of Aristotle and Galen. Koetschet gives a new and thorough edition of the treatise according to the three extant manuscripts. The edition is accompanied with a very accurate translation into French that makes al-Rāzī's text accessible to new readers. As meritorious as the edition and the translation is the apparatus of the edition and translation that mentions the sources of al-Rāzī, and most particularly the references to Galen, taken from either the Arabic translations (most of them only extant in manuscript form) or in the classical editions. In addition, Koetschet writes an introductory essay that analyses some of the most salient themes addressed in the book. The introduction (whose contents should probably have been noted in the table of contents) deals with:

1. Cosmology, and specifically the problem of the eternity of the world
2. Matter and elements, which studies al-Rāzī's atomism
3. Nature, with an suggestive analysis of al-Rāzī on the void
4. Medical epistemology, containing an interesting approach to al-Rāzī's logic and scientific method
5. Optics, where al-Rāzī's peculiar theory of vision, in between Aristotle and Galen, is studied

Some of these topics (namely the eternity of the world and the theory of vision) have been addressed by the author in previous articles. This introduction systematizes and provides new insights into the natural philosophy of al-Rāzī and many other aspects of his thought that have had an impact on the global understanding of the physician-philosopher (see, in this regard Peter Adamson, *Al-Rāzī*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2021). Even though some of the subjects that were of concern to al-Rāzī are not thoroughly studied (for example, his criticism of what Galen says about the pulse or about sensation), Koetschet provides an erudite apparatus that sheds light on them and facilitates future research. One of the main merits of the work is the author's use of secondary sources, among them the criticism of al-Rāzī's *Shukūk* written by the Andalusī Abū l-'Alā' Zuhri (d. 1131) and known as *Kitāb al-tabayīn fī qat' al-shakk bi-l-yaqīn intisāran li-Jālīnūs 'an al-shukūk al-mansūba li-Abī Bakr Muḥammad. b. Zakariyā' al-Rāzī*. We eagerly await Koetschet's edition of this book that will contribute decisively to the understanding of a crucial phase in the history of medicine in al-Andalus.

Sergi Grau Torras' *Les transformacions d'Aristòtil. Filosofia natural i medicina a Montpeller: el cas d'Arnau de Vilanova (c. 1240-1311)* is an important book that probably most experts will miss because it is written in a minority language (Catalan). To overlook it would be a mistake. Even though the subject is not exactly the history of medicine in Islamic civilizations, the book is particularly helpful for those who are interested in this subject. As is well known, Arnau de Vilanova, one of the leading scholars of the famous School of Montpellier, is a seminal figure in the history of medicine in the Late Middle Ages. He is also one of the best-known exponents of the long and arduous task of processing the knowledge that Christian Europe received from the Arabs via translations. This translation project was one of the reasons why European scholars reassessed the problem of the relationship between medicine and philosophy. The physicians of the 13th century (like Pietro d'Abano and Taddeo Alderotti) were well aware of the importance of philosophy for the training of physicians. Sergi Grau Torras rightly suggests that Arnau de Vilanova studied not only medicine in Montpellier but also the arts, so that he had a more than solid philosophical background. According to Grau, Arnau was driven by the desire of «constituting a new medical discipline that had its own tools, but tools based in natural philosophy». The details of this process are the main object of the book. Even though the central theme of the book is Aristotle's presence in Arnau's oeuvre, the Islamic legacy is also important. The author gives a thorough and detailed description of the medical and philosophical sources that were available to those who aspired to learn medicine in the 13th century in Montpellier. This section may be read as one of the most complete exposés of Europe's indebtedness to the Arabic texts, be they original works or translations from Greek into Arabic retranslated into Latin. Within this framework, two authors stand out: Ibn Sīnā, whose *Qānūn* became an invaluable handbook for the European physicians of this era, and Ibn Rushd, whose Aristotelized conception of medicine and science had a major impact on the European scholars. Grau gives a precise analysis of Arnau's reading of Ibn Rushd's works, particularly *Kulliyāt fī l-ṭibb/Colliget*, and provides new nuances and insights into the role played by Ibn Rushd's works in Medieval Europe. Although Arnau was generally very critical of Ibn Rushd's doctrines, in many instances he followed his thinking closely.

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