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Gerrit Bos, Charles Burnett, Tzvi Langermann, *Hebrew Medical Astrology: David ben Yom Tov, Kelal Qatan*. Original Hebrew Text, Medieval Latin Translation, Modern English Translation (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, vol. 95, part 5). Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 2005, 121 pgs.

Reviewed by C. del Valle.

Review translation by Adriana Lecuona, Diane Publishing Co.

Gerrit Bos, Charles Burnett and Tzvi Langermann, three professors and researchers, have edited for the first time the work of the physician and astronomer Provençal “juheu de Perpinya”, David ben Yom Tov, el “Compendio breve” –*Kelal Qatan*, the most extensive and original treatise of astrological medicine in ancient and medieval Hebrew medical literature. The editing is done with all scientific protocols. Though the text begins with an account of ancient and Medieval astrological medicine, it explains the background that led the ancients (Ptolemy, Hippocrates, Galen ...) to astrological medicine. Next is a study of the life and work of David ben Yom Tov, with special reference to the Hebrew authors associated with astrological medicine. Apart from some of the Hebrew translators who worked in the field (David Calónico, Solomon Avigdor), the authors cite a hitherto unpublished work of Pinças Narbonne and that is just one part of astrological medicine. The influence of the astral world in the sublunary world and specifically the power that the moon exerts on the plants and animals, Pinças makes a study of the influence of hebdomales lunar cycles in human pathology.

The preliminary study follows the publication of the essays: the critical edition of the Hebrew text based on the four known manuscripts, the edition of the medieval Latin translation based on the only extant manuscript (Catalonia Biblioteaca 634, 84r-90r), together with five tables which in principle also accompany the Hebrew text, but now only accompanies the Latin version. Finally, a modern English translation is followed by a vocabulary in three languages (English, Latin, Hebrew), organized alphabetically by the Hebrew language, and concludes with a bibliography and indexes.

In *Kelal Qatan* ("Concise Summary"), the author provides the precise astronomical knowledge that the doctor must have in the exercise of his office and gives indicators of auspicious moments, called elections - for therapeutic intervention in the case of various fevers, either by surgery (bleeding) or drugs (laxatives, emetics ...). Those times are basically determined by the position of the moon.

The author sets out with the principle of the celestial world's influence with changes in the lower world and specifically with the onset of disease or with recovery of health. A friend had asked him for a short treatise or *vademecum* to illustrate the doctor in this field. With that objective, David composes his work as a "concise rule" for the physician who, in complicated cases, should go to an expert astrologer. For the benefit of his reader, David provides the concepts and terminology that the doctor in this field must know and which have important usage in Astral literature: conjunction, aspect, ascending, lord of the ascendant, apogee, perigee, beneficent planets, malefic planets, planet

backward, Seventh House, constellations and constellations changing fixed, slow or rapid course of the planets, corruptions of the moon. He then makes a practical application of astrological knowledge. As an illustration of one of its rules: "If you want to practice a bleeding (on a patient), guard well that the moon is not in the sign of (constellation) Gemini and not in conjunction with Saturn or Mars, or in the Quaternary or Mercury opposite. But the tertiary or sextile aspect of Mars is better than the tertiary or sextile aspect to Saturn. In general, beware of touching with iron causing an injury to a limb on which the moon is dominant in that constellation." Within its undeniable originality, the author borrowed from the *Centiloquio* of Pseudo-Ptolemy and astrological works of Abraham Ibn Ezra.

The authors acknowledge that in the history of astrological medicine there are still many elements to be researched. But there is absolutely no doubt that this small booklet, a mere 120 pages, clearly has advanced our knowledge of Hebrew medieval medicine. The American Philosophical Society must be recognized its success in the publication of this work.

Where I find uncertainty in the authors is in the identification of the genealogy of the author and his work. They point out that the father or the son of Jacob ben David Poel ben Yom Tov and that David "appears to have been accomplished astronomer," when it seems evident that David ben Yom Tov was an astronomer, to which Pedro IV commissioned to compose the *Taula de estelabre* and that the king had to admonish him in 1352 without further delay to deliver the outstanding charts. This David was the father of the astronomer Jacob ben David Poel ben Yom Tov who composed astronomical tables in 1361 based on the astronomical coordinates of Perpignan. Jacob, in turn, was the father of David Bonet, who some identify—no documentary sources—as the companion of Profiar Duran, who was forced to undergo baptism and who proposed traveling to the Holy Land to return to the religion of their fathers.