

PRIMER SEMINARIO HISPANO-ITALIANO DE ESTUDIOS SOBRE EL JUDAÍSMO

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The Escuela Española de Historia y Arqueología en Roma (EEHAR), a unit of the Spanish National Council for Research (CSIC), convened the First Spanish-Italian Seminar in Jewish Studies in its centre in Rome on December 4–5, 2008. The Seminar focused on the topic: “From Sophia to Ḥokhmah: Classical Sources in Judaism.” Five Spanish and four Italian scholars discussed the reception and influence of Greco-Roman philosophy, science and law in ancient and medieval Jewish cultures.

Raúl González Salinero’s (EEHAR) introduced the variable intellectual relationship of the Jews to classical (especially Hellenic) culture from antiquity until Ḥasḏai Crescas. Then Francesca Calabi (Univ. of Pavia) illustrated how Philo imported (or exported) the allegorical method from the hermeneutics of Greek myth to the Bible. The main task of philosophy according to Philo was to help explain otherwise obscure texts; for this purpose he mainly employed Platonic philosophy (e.g., to make sense of the presence of the two distinct accounts of the creation of man, reading the first as the creation of the idea of man, and the second as the creation of sensible man). Philo was also influenced by Stoicism (e.g., in his ideal of political participation in the *kosmopolis* in *De opificio mundi* 143–144), whereas he used Epicureism only as a term of polemical comparison. Sabino Perea Yébenes (Univ. of Murcia) read Philo’s account of the Therapeutae in *De vita contemplativa* against the background of its sources—mostly Plato’s *Republic* and *Phaedrus*, but also Strabo and Dionysius of Aycarnassus—showing how this group modelled itself on the Platonic ideal of practising virtue as a way of living close to God. He then discussed the Christianization of the Therapeutae in Gregory of Nazianzus, Ambrose, Clement of Alexandria, and Jerome.

Raúl González Salinero reviewed the studies on the *Collatio legum mosaicarum et romanarum* (also known as *Lex Dei*), a late fourth–early

fifth century comparison between primarily penal laws in the Pentateuch (in a Latin translation from the Hebrew that is closer to the Septuagint than to the Vulgate) and in similar Roman juridical texts composed by illustrious jurists or preserved in imperial decrees. The aim of the *Collatio* was both apologetic—showing that Jewish law was older than Roman law, possibly with an anti-Christian intention, since no reference at all is made to the New Testament—and practical—explaining to Diaspora Jews elements of Roman law that were alien to their tradition (such as laws of inheritance) so as to integrate Jewish law with norms that were actually enforceable.

Piero Capelli (Ca' Foscari Univ. of Venice) examined the usage of Greek embryological sources in Nahmanides' homily *Torat Adonai temimah*, identifying three explicit quotations from the pseudo-Hippocratic treatise *De natura pueri*, Galen's commentaries on Hippocrates' *Aphorisms* and *Epidemics*, and Aristotle's *De insomniis*, which was probably already available to Nahmanides in the so-called *Vetus* Latin translation (twelfth century), rather than through Syriac and/or Arabic intermediaries.

Mauro Zonta (La Sapienza Univ. of Rome) investigated the ways in which the notion of *hokhmah*—which includes the modern conceptions of both 'philosophy' and 'science'—was received by medieval Jewish authors who knew them, not from the original sources but from their translations into Arabic (until 1040) or Latin (especially in Christian countries between 1150 and 1300). Aristotelian trends reached the Jews mostly through the mediation of late ancient commentators (Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius) and Averroes—with the exception of the *Politics*, which probably remained unknown, and the two *Ethics*, which did not emerge as a subject of interest until the fifteenth century. Authors such as Isaac Israeli and Shelomoh ibn Gabirol were acquainted with neo-Platonic sources, principally through Arab intermediaries such as al-Kindī and the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā. Jewish intellectuals from the Iberian Peninsula played a decisive role in this itinerary of translations and traditions, mostly Andalusians (between 1000 and 1250), but also émigrés from Andalusia and Catalonia, such as the Ibn Tibbon family (active in Provence ca. between 1160 and 1300). The Ashkenazi realm remained outside this flurry, with the minor exceptions of some translations from Aristotelian Christian authors.

Saverio Campanini (Univ. of Bologna) analysed the Latin translation (entitled *Portae Lucis*) of the *Iggeret ha-Qodesh* (Spain, thirteenth

century, ascribed for a long time to Naḥmanides or Gīqatilla), made in 1486 at the request of the Italian humanist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola by the Sicilian convert from Judaism Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada, a.k.a. Flavius Mithridates, now extant in the Vatican ms. Hebr. 191. Mithridates' interventions on the text are mostly aimed at stressing its kabbalistic contents or introducing new ones; they either depend on a *Vorlage* slightly different from our editions and mss., or are made with the deliberate purpose of pleasing his client. The Hebrew *Iggeret* polemically blames Maimonides for following Aristotle's depreciation of the sense of touch (Book II of the *Nicomachean Ethics*) in his *Guide of the Perplexed*; elsewhere it ascribes the heretical assumption that brute matter is uncreated and eternal to "this accursed and diabolical Greek philosopher," with whom Maimonides shared "an imperceptible inkling of heresy."

María Teresa Ortega Monasterio (CSIC) and Francisco Javier del Barco del Barco (CSIC) surveyed the twenty-seven Hebrew mss. with scientific content preserved in the libraries of the Comunidad de Madrid, deepening del Barco del Barco's description in his *Catálogo de manuscritos hebreos de la Comunidad de Madrid*, III (Madrid: CSIC-Instituto de Filología, 2006). The collection is small relative to the great number of Hebrew mss. copied in the Iberian peninsula, but many of those left the peninsula from 1391 onward. The most frequently translated and copied scientific texts in the Jewish-Iberian medieval period were Avicenna's *Canon*, Averroes' commentaries to the scientific works of Aristotle, Maimonides' *Chapters in Medicine*, and Euclid's *Elements*. The reception of Greek science, particularly the astrological and astronomical doctrines formulated in Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* and *Almagest* (second century), was addressed by Mariano Gómez Aranda (CSIC). Ptolemy, who was a highly relevant and respected scientific authority in Abraham ibn Ezra's time (early twelfth century), became an object of criticism for Andalusian Jewish scientists thereafter, as Aristotle was rediscovered through Averroes. Gómez Aranda analysed this kind of criticism in Abraham bar Hiyya's astronomical works, Maimonides' *Guide* (where Ptolemy is mentioned three times as "irrational"), Yehudah ha-Kohen's encyclopedic work, and the work of Abraham Zacuto (fifteenth century), who no longer depended on Ptolemy but on Jewish scientists of the twelfth-thirteenth centuries.

In drawing conclusions, Raúl González Salinero pointed out how the medieval Jewish reclamation of the classical tradition took

place with constant attention to texts, albeit through the mediation of Arabic and sometimes Syriac translations. Such a relationship to classical sources also raises the question of the concurrent relationship to biblical and talmudic tradition, at times perceived as necessary, at other times completely superseded. The proceedings of this dense and fruitful meeting will be published by Signifer Libros in Madrid.

Piero Capelli
Università Ca' Foscari, Venice