

Isaac ben Solomon the Israelite physician and philosopher, (his medical and philosophical achievements and their impact on human civilization)

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Abstract:

In this research paper, we attempt to present a summary of an important scholarly figure who appeared would like the Maghreb at the end of the 3rd century H / 9th century and the beginning of the 4th century H / 10th century, leaving significant in the fields of medicine and philosophy that remain to these days. This figure is the physician and philosopher Isaac ibnSulayman al-Isra'ili. We want to introduce him and the legacy he left behind in order to highlight his role in human civilization. He authored numerous works in the two aforementioned fields, which became important references relied upon from his own time until today. Were they were not of great value, they would not have reached us today, especially since most of them were translated—after some time from their composition—to several languages, most notably Latin and Hebrew. Thanks to these translations, the majority of his writings, whose original Arabic versions were lost, have come down to us.

Keywords: The Maghreb Latin, Islamic conquest, Isaac ben Solomon, Al-Andalus, Europe, Civilization.

Introduction:

The interest of the people of the Maghreb in the sciences following the Islamic conquest was not significant, because the spread of knowledge in general at that time was limited even in the Islamic East, which constituted the origin and point of the onset of Islam to all regions. However, beginning in the 3rd century H / 9th century, scholarly activity started to flourish across all regions and reached its peak in the subsequent centuries. It was no longer confined to specific sciences, as it had initially been restricted to the sciences of the Qur'an and Hadith; rather, it came to cover various rational sciences such as medicine, mathematics, philosophy, and others. As a result, a large group of scholars appeared whose reputations spread far and wide, whether through their achievements in the fields in which they were engaged or through the valuable works they left behind, which remained references in their own time and thereafter. Indeed, many of these works continue to be authentic to these days.

In this article, we attempt to high on one of these scholars who excelled in the lands of the Islamic Maghreb from the end of the 3rd century H / 9th century until the middle of the 4th century H / 10th century: the Jewish physician Isaac ibnSulayman al-Isra'ili. His fame

spread widely through his work as a physician in the court of the Aghlabids and later, after them, in the court of the Fatimids, as well as through the distinguished works he left in the fields of medicine and philosophy, which became references for successive periods in the Maghreb, al-Andalus, Europe, and the Islamic East. This constitutes the central research problem of this study, which may be formulated as follows: **To what extent did the physician Isaac ibnSulayman al-Isra'ili contribute to human civilization?**

To touch upon problem, the research has been divided—after the introduction—into four sections in addition to the conclusion. In the first section, we provide an introduction to the person of Isaac ibnSulayman al-Isra'ili. In the second section, we discuss his migration from Egypt to Ifriqiya, mentioning some of his works as a physician. In the third section, we deal with his teachers and his students, mentioning only the most prominent among them for the sake of brevity. As for the fourth section, we entitled it “His Role in Human Civilization,” by which we mean the most important works he left behind. We divided this section into two parts: the first devoted to his medical works, in which we focused on some of his well-known books in this field that remained significant until late period as important sources in medicine; and the second devoted to his works in the field of philosophy, in which we likewise focused on the well-known books that were widely referred to by specialists and that have remained present until noadays. Thus, we aim to have demonstrated, albeit briefly, the role of this physician in human civilization.

In order to enhance the subject, we referred to a diverse set of sources and references related to the topic, foremost among them the books devoted to the biographies of physicians, such as *‘Uyūn al-Anbā’ fī Ṭabaqāt al-Aṭibbā’* by IbnAbīUṣaybi‘a, *Ṭabaqāt al-Aṭibbā’ wa al-Ḥukamā’* by IbnJuljul, and *Kashf al-Zunūn* by ḤājjiKhalīfa, in addition to a variety of other books and articles that we shall mention at the end of this article.

This research problem is formulated as follows: What was the extent of the contribution of the physician Isaac ibnSulayman al-Isra'ili to human civilization?

To talk about this problem, I have divided the study into four sections. In the first section, we present a biographical introduction to Isaac ibnSulayman al-Isra'ili. In the second section, we discuss his migration from Egypt to Ifriqiya, mentioning some aspects of his work as a physician. In the third section, we mention his teachers and his students, only the most prominent among them for the sake of brevity. As for the fourth section, we have entitled it “His Role in Human Civilization,” by which we mean the most important works he left behind. This section is divided into two parts: the first devoted to his medical writings, in which we focused on some of his well-known books in this field that remained credible until a late period as important sources in medicine; and the second devoted to his works in the field of philosophy, in which we likewise focused on the well-known books that were widely relied upon by specialists and that have remained present to these days, we hope to have demonstrated, even if only briefly, the role of this physician in human civilization.

In order to enrich the subject, we relied upon a diverse collection of sources and references related to the topic, foremost among them the books concerned with the biographies of physicians, such as *‘Uyūn al-Anbā’ fī Ṭabaqāt al-Aṭibbā’* by IbnAbīUṣaybi‘a,

Ṭabaqāt al-Aṭibbā' wa al-Ḥukamā' by IbnJuljul, and *Kashf al-Zunūn* by ḤājjiKhalīfa, in addition to a variety of other books and articles that will be mentioned at the end of the article.

1. Introducing AbūYa'qūb

Isaac ibnSulayman al-Isra'ili, known as AbūYa'qūb. The date of his birth is not precisely known; however, he passed away in the year 300 H / 912¹. Based on calculating the span of his life in relation to his date of death, it appears that his birth took place before 200 AH / 815 CE. He was a Jewish physician of Egyptian origin². At the beginning of his career, he worked as a *kāhil* (oculist), that is, a physician specializing in eye diseases, in the court of Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn (254–270 H / 868–884)³. He later developed himself and entered other fields of medicine until he became, toward the end of his life, a comprehensive medical authority, both in medical practice (treatment) and in authorship. Ibn AbīUṣaybi'a described him as "excellent in classification, lofty in aspiration".⁴

2. His Migration to Ifriqiya:

AbūYa'qūb migrated from Egypt to Ifriqiya and settled in al-Qayrawān. At that time, the well-known physician Ishāq ibn Imrān was residing there⁵, who was regarded as the leading physician and master of physicians in his time. AbūYa'qūb attached himself to him and studied under him. When ZiyādatAllāh heard of him, he summoned him while he was then encamped in al-Arbus⁶, in preparation for confronting Abū'AbdAllāh al-Shī'i, whose mission had begun some time earlier. He sent to him five hundred dinars as financial

¹Aḥmad ibn al-Qāsim ibn Khalīfa ibn Yūnus al-Sa'dī al-Khazrajī, Muwaffaqal-Dīn, known as Ibn AbīUṣaybi'a, *'Uyūn al-Anbā' fī Ṭabaqāt al-Aṭibbā'*, ed. NizārRiḍā, DārMaktabat al-Ḥayāh, Beirut, n.d., p. 370.

²Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ghazzī, Shamsal-Dīn Abū al-Ma'ālī, *Dīwān al-Islām*, ed. SayyidKasrawīḤasan, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1st ed., 1410 H / 1990, vol. 2, p. 233.

³WisāmḤāmidī, "The Medical Contributions of the Dhimmīs in Ifriqiya during the Aghlabid and Fatimid Periods," *Journal of Human and Natural Sciences*, vol. 38, no. 38, 2020, p. 308.

⁴Ibn AbīUṣaybi'a, op. cit., p. 370.

⁵Ishāq ibn Imrān, known as al-Sā'a, was a Muslim physician of Baghdad origin and a contemporary of the Aghlabid state in Ifriqiya during the days of ZiyādatAllāhibn al-Aghlab III (r. 290–296 H). Through him medicine flourished in the Maghreb. He was a skilled physician distinguished in the composition of compound medicines and knowledgeable in differentiating illnesses. He resided in al-Qayrawān for a time and authored several books, including *Nuzhat al-Nafs*, a book on melancholia (*al-mālīkhūliyā*) unparalleled in its kind, a book on phlebotomy, and a book on the pulse. A dispute arose between him and ZiyādatAllāhibn al-Aghlab that led to estrangement, until Ibn al-Aghlab crucified him. See: Sulaymān ibn Ḥayyān al-Andalusī AbūDāwūd, known as IbnJuljul, *Ṭabaqāt al-Aṭibbā' wa al-Ḥukamā'*, ed. Fu'ādSayyid, Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Cairo, 1st ed., 1955, p. 68.

⁶Al-Arbus (with ḍamma on the alif and sīnsākinah, followed by bā' with ḍamma and sīnmuhmala): a city and district in Ifriqiya, three days from al-Qayrawān in the direction of the Maghreb. See: Yāqūt ibn 'AbdAllāh Shihāb al-Dīn Abū'AbdAllāh al-Ḥamawī al-Rūmī al-Baghdādī, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, DārṢādir, Beirut, 1st ed., 1995, vol. 1, p. 306.

assistance for the journey, and he came to him with Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥātim. A courteous exchange took place between them, which ended with his remaining at his side¹.

When the state of the Banū al-Aghlab fell at the hands of the dā'ī in the year 296 H / 909, Ishāq ibn Sulaymān entered into his service. He mentioned this himself, saying: "When Abū 'Abd Allāh, the dā'ī of al-Mahdī, arrived, he brought me near to him and elevated my rank. He was suffering from kidney stones, and I treated him with a medicine containing burned scorpions."² After the dā'ī, Ishāq ibn Sulaymān entered the service of 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī and became his personal physician. He authored numerous books at his request, all of which were translated into Hebrew³. He remained in this position throughout the reigns of the Imams al-Qā'im bi-Amr Allāh and al-Manṣūr⁴.

It has been reported that he was the one who treated the latter during the illness from which he died. He had advised him, when he became ill in al-Manṣūriyya, not to enter the bathhouse; however, he did not heed his advice and entered it, thereby losing his innate heat, and his illness worsened until he suffered from insomnia. A second physician was then sought, and a young physician named Ibrāhīm—who was in fact his well-known student Ibrāhīm ibn al-Jazzār—was recommended. He gave him sleep-inducing medicines, and he could sleep as a result. When Ishāq was asked about his condition and was told that he had been given a sedative and that he was asleep, he replied: "If he has been given a sedative, then he has died." When they entered upon him, they found him dead. They nearly killed the young physician, but Ishāq prevented them from doing so, explaining that he (the young physician) did not know the cause of the illness, whereas he did know that the cause was insomnia resulting from the loss of innate heat, and that he had been treating him to restore it; had it been restored, sleep would have returned to him. However, the medicines that were administered caused his death. This happened in the year 341 H / 953⁵. Thus, he served in the Fatimid court for nearly half a century.

3. His Teachers and Students:

3.1. His Teachers:

Despite the great fame of Isaac ibn Sulayman, we find only rare mentioning of his teachers in the sources. The most prominent among them was the physician Ishāq ibn Imrān,

¹Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib fī Akhbār al-Andalus wa al-Maghrib*, ed. G.S. Colin and É. Lévi-Provençal, Dār al-Thaqāfa, Beirut, 1st ed., 1983, vol. 1, p. 199.

²Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, op. cit., p. 373.

³Abū al-Qāsim Sā'id ibn Aḥmad ibn Sā'id al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Umam*, published with notes by Fr. Louis Cheikho, Catholic Press of the Jesuit Fathers, Beirut, 1912, p. 49.

⁴Wisām Ḥamidī, op. cit., p. 308.

⁵Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Abī al-Karam ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shaybānī, known as Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Daqqāq, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1st ed., 1987, vol. 7, p. 400; Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz al-Ḥunafā' bi-Akhbār al-'Imma al-Fāṭimiyyīn al-Khulafā'*, ed. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo, 1st ed., 1971, vol. 1, pp. 30–31.

known as al-Sā'a¹. In al-Qayrawān, at the beginning of his life, he used to treat the Aghlabid princes; however, he was expelled from the palace of the emirate and, toward the end of his life, worked in the squares of al-Qayrawān treating people and receiving only modest wage for that.

Ishāqibn'Imrān was the most renowned and most experienced physician in al-Qayrawān. When Isaac ibnSulayman migrated to al-Qayrawān, he also himself to him and benefited from his knowledge until he too became one of the most famous physicians. As we mentioned at the beginning of this article, when he came from Egypt, he was not excelled in general medicine; rather, he was primarily an oculist. However, once he attached himself to Ishāqibn'Imrān, he educate himself, acquired from his knowledge and expertise, and excelled in the various fields of medicine to the point that he reached the same rank as his teacher, and perhaps even surpassed him.

3.2. His Students:

Isaac ibnSulayman left behind a group of distinguished students in the field of medicine. The historical sources mention some of them among the well-known figures, such as Ibn al-Jazzār and the Jew AbūSahlDūnashibnTamīm al-Shaflajī.

As for the former (Ibn al-Jazzār), he was the leading physician and the most renowned among them in Ifriqiya. His biography appears in most historical sources. He healed from a family of physicians—his father was a physician, as was his uncle. IbnJuljul said of him: “AḥmadibnAbīKhālīd had adopted for himself an astonishing manner in his conduct, guidance, and devotion; no slip was ever recorded against him in al-Qayrawān, nor he incline toward pleasure...”².

Ibn al-Jazzār studied under a group of physicians, including his father and his uncle, and then he attached himself to Isaac ibnSulayman al-Isra'ili, benefiting from his knowledge. IbnJuljulstated: “He was among those who met Isaac ibnSulayman and kept his company.”³¹⁴ This is all that was mentioned on the topic, as the sources do not indicate the duration of his companionship, though it is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that he was one of his students.

As for AbūSahlDūnashibnTamīm al-Shaflajī, he was likewise among the well-known students of Isaac ibnSulayman. He was born in al-Qayrawān in 280 H / 893. He mastered both Arabic and Hebrew, then inclined toward medicine and excelled in it, studying under Isaac ibnSulayman until he attained a rank equal or close to his. Due to his proficiency, he was summoned to the Fatimid court to serve as the physician of the caliph al-Mu'izz li-DīnAllāh⁴. He joined him and remained at his service until the end of his life⁵.

¹Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'UthmānShamsal-DīnAbū'AbdAllāh, known as al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-IslāmwaWafayāt al-Mashāhīrwa al-A'lām*, ed. and annotated by Bashshār'AwwādMa'rūf, Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, Beirut, 1st ed., 2003, vol. 7, p. 370.

²IbnJuljul, op. cit., p. 60.

³Ibid., p. 60.

⁴ Al-Mu'izz li-DīnAllāh was AbūTamīmMa'addibn al-Manṣūribn al-Qā'imibn al-Mahdī'UbaydAllāh. He was born in al-Mahdiyya on Monday, 11 Ramaḍān 319 AH. He was designated heir apparent during his father's reign and later pledged allegiance as caliph after

AbūSahl left behind numerous works, some related to medicine and others to various sciences such as philosophy and astronomy. In the field of medicine, he authored several valuable works, including *Kitāb al-Mustalḥaq*, *Kitāb al-Talkhīṣfī al-Adwiya al-Mufrada*, *Kitāb al-Targhībwa al-Tashīl*, and *Risālaḥ al-Tanbīh*. In astronomy, he also authored several works, including a book on astronomy and the movement of the stars, and a book on Indian arithmetic known as *Hisāb al-Ghubār*, in addition to other writings in various fields. However, most of these works are currently considered lost, though their content survives in some later works¹.

4. His Role in Human Civilization:

Isaac ibnSulayman al-Isra'ili left numerous works that immortalized his name in the history of human civilization. Some of these works pertain to the field of medicine—which constitute the majority, given that he was primarily a physician—while others relate to different sciences, particularly philosophy and logic. Historical sources have transmitted to us many of these works in the form of authored books. Some of them have reached us and are accessible to those who seek them, while others are unavailable either because they are originally lost or because they exist but are restricted to a specific group. In what follows, we shall emphasize on the most important of these works and briefly introduce their contents.

4.1. In the Field of Medicine:

Isaac ibnSulayman al-Isra'ili became renowned for authorship just as he became renowned for medical practice. He was skilled and meticulous in writing; indeed, he was described as “a master author, famous for his precision and excellence in medicine.”² He authored numerous books and treatises in the field of medicine, some of which are extant, while others we have been unable to access due to their unavailability. In what follows, we shall mention the most important of these books:

• *Kitāb al-Ḥummayāt* (The Book of Fevers):

It is among the finest works written by Isaac ibnSulayman in medicine. He himself praised it when he was asked about his declining from marriage and replied: “If I have my Book of Fevers, that suffices me.”³ It is a valuable book, and according to what is mentioned in medical literature, its summary concerns prevention; that is, it advises adopting measures that would prevent illness, such as following a balanced dietary regimen in terms of the types of food, the timing of meals, and avoiding the mixing of opposites among foods such as hot and cold, moist and dry.

Despite its great importance, this book is available only in very limited locations, and, to the best of my knowledge, no Arabic edition has been published. What has been mentioned

his father's death on Sunday, 14 Shawwāl 341 AH. During his reign, Egypt entered under his rule and his state expanded widely. He died on Friday, 11 Rabī' al-Ākhir 365 H and was buried in Cairo. See: IbnKhallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yānwānābā' Abnā' al-Zamān*, ed. Iḥsān'Abbās, DārSādir, Beirut, n.d., vol. 8, pp. 400–402.

⁵WisāmḤāmidī, op. cit., p. 307.

¹Ibid., pp. 307–308.

²al-Dhahabī, op. cit., p. 370.

³IbnAbīUṣaybi'a, op. cit., p. 373; IbnJuljul, op. cit., p. 67.

about its content exists in other works that relied upon it and referred to it. I personally attempted to locate a copy but found only a study conducted by Haskell D. Isaacs and John Derek Latham, published in 1971 within the series *Arabic Technical and Scientific Texts* at the University of Cambridge. The study examined a collection of chapters from the book under the title: *Kitāb al-hummayāt li-Ishāq ibn Sulaymān al-Isrā'īlī*. It is available on Google Books but is not accessible to the general public.

• **Kitāb al-Bawl (The Book of Urine):**

This is one of the well-known books authored by Isaac ibn Sulayman al-Isra'ili, through which he diagnoses diseases by means of urine. He discusses the color, odor, and quantity of urine, and through these analyses determines the type of illness and consequently its method of treatment. Isaac ibn Sulayman was among the earliest to authored works in this field. For this reason, this book was adopted as a medical reference throughout centuries in the Middle Ages. However, it is currently lost, and despite my efforts to locate a copy, I was unable to find one¹.

• **Kitāb al-Aghdhiyawa al-Adwiya (The Book of Foods and Drugs):**

“It is among the most excellent works written in this field, and it is one of the most famous books of Isaac ibn Sulayman al-Isra'ili. The reader will find the vastness of its material, the abundance of its discussions, and the benefit of its contents, and will perceive the skill of its author, the depth of his understanding, the quality of his classification, and the greatness of his knowledge...”².

This book is of great value. From its very title, it demonstrates that food is the first medicine, and that medication comes only when necessary if food alone does not suffice. In it, he explains the nature of food and how it affects the body, then classifies foods according to their properties (hot and cold, dry and moist, light and heavy), and applies this classification to all foods. Through this, he offers advice on how to consume healthy foods in the correct manner so that the body may benefit from them.

He then addresses medicines, likewise classifying them according to their importance and benefit, when they should be administered, and their dosage. Nevertheless, he grants primacy to food, always placing it before medicine, since he considers that most treatment lies in the quality of nourishment. Therefore, he focuses on it prior to administering drugs. If he finds himself compelled to use medication, he recommends gradual administration, beginning with a small dose and increasing it as needed. This is what gave the book its importance, as it represents a comprehensive pharmacy in light of its contents.

For those who wish to obtain this book, it is available in PDF format across various websites. It has been published in several editions, one of which was critically edited by Dr.

¹ al-Dhahabī, op. cit., p. 370; Ibn Juljul, op. cit., p. 67; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, op. cit., p. 373.

² Isaac ibn Sulayman al-Isra'ili, *Kitāb al-Aghdhiyawa al-Adwiya*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ṣabbāḥ, Mu'assasat 'Izz al-Dīn for Printing and Publishing, Beirut, 1999, p. 30.

Muḥammad al-Ṣabbāḥ in 1999 and issued by Mu'assasat'Izz al-Dīn for Printing and Publishing in Beirut¹.

He has other medical works, all of which are of high value, such as *Kitāb al-Istikṣās*, which is one of the four books he himself mentioned, stating that they would preserve his legacy after his death better than a son². He also authored *Kitāb al-Nabḍ* (The Book of the Pulse), which concerns blood circulation; *Kitāb al-Tiryāq* (The Book of the Antidote), which contains treatments for poisons resulting from venomous animals; *Kitāb al-Ladghāt* (The Book of Bites/Stings), dealing with the stings of poisonous insects; and another book rarely mentioned by most sources, namely *Kitāb al-Madkhalilāṣinā'at al-Ṭibb al-Awā'ilwa al-Aqāwīl*³.²

These constitute the corpus of Isaac ibnSulayman al-Isra'ili's medical writings, all of which possess great value according to specialists, whether his contemporaries or those who came after him. Perhaps what substantiates this claim is the work of the renowned translator Constantine the African, who translated Isaac ibnSulayman's medical writings and transmitted them to the Medical School of Salerno in Italy⁴. These books include *Kitāb al-Ḥummayāt*, *Kitāb al-Bawl*, and *Kitāb al-Aghdhiyawa al-Adwiya*. The latter was translated under the title *The General and Particular Regimen* and was attributed by him to himself⁵.

4.2. In the Field of Philosophy:

Isaac ibnSulayman excelled in the field of philosophy and logic just as he excelled in medicine, demonstrating creativity in various branches of knowledge. He left behind several works in this regard, among which are:

• **KitābBustān al-Ḥikma (The Garden of Wisdom):**⁶

Some refer to it as *Bustān al-Ḥakīm* (The Garden of the Sage)⁷. It is a book that combines philosophy and medicine, addressing aspects of theoretical medicine and then moving to discussions of the soul and the intellect, linking the relationship between them, as though he intended thereby a form of spiritual medicine. Platonic ideas are evident in it. Due to its importance, it was translated into Latin by Constantine the African and consequently became a source in Europe throughout the medieval period⁸.³ It was also translated into other

¹ Ibid.

² IbnAbīUṣaybi'a, op. cit., p. 373; IbnJuljul, op. cit., p. 67.

³ Ismā'īlBāshā al-Baghdādī, *Hadiyyat al- 'ĀrifīnwaAsmā' al-Mu'allifīnwaĀthār al-Muṣannifīn*, DārIḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, Beirut, n.d., vol. 1, p. 370.

⁴ Aldo Mieli, *al- 'Ilm'inda al- 'ArabwaAtharuhufīTaṭawwur al- 'Ilm al- 'Ālamī*, trans. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Najjār and MuḥammadYūsufMūsā, revised from the original French by ḤusaynFawzī, Dār al-Qalam, Cairo, 1st ed., 1960, p. 370.

⁵ YūnusKaramatī and MuḥammadJawādAnwārī, "IshāqibnSulaymān al-Isrā'īlīAbūYa'qūb," Center for Islamic and Iranian Studies, published 30/03/2000, website: cgietitl.

⁶ ḤājīKhalīfa, *Kashf al-Zunūn'anAsāmī al-Kutubwa al-Funūn*, ed. and annotated by Ekmeleddinİhsanoğlu, Bashshār'AwwādMa'rūf, and others, Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, London, 1st ed., 2000, vol. 2, p. 370.

⁷ Ibn AbīUṣaybi'a, op. cit., p. 373.

⁸ Alexander Altmann, "Isaac Israeli's 'Chapter on the Elements' (Ms Mantua)," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 1956, vol. 7, nos. 1–2, p. 31.

languages such as Hebrew. There is currently no edited Arabic version available; however, it is said that a manuscript exists under the title *RawḍatBustān al-Ḥukamā' wa-Ādāb al-Fuhamā'*, preserved in the occupied territories. Although the title differs from the original, based on the introduction with which both versions begin and certain materials in the manuscript that correspond in content to what is known of the original book, we may consider it to be the original version¹.

• **Kitāb al-Ḥudūdwa al-Rusūm (The Book of Definitions and Descriptions):**

It is one of Isaac ibnSulayman's philosophical works in which he addresses the definitions and conceptual delimitations of certain philosophical notions, such as logic, metaphysics, the soul, nature, ethics, time, place, and other related topics. It is among the early works that dealt with this type of philosophical inquiry. Some scholars hold that Isaac, in authored this book, was influenced by the ideas of the renowned Arab philosopher al-Kindī (d. 256 H / 870), the author of *KitābḤudūd al-Ashyā' waRusūmihā* (The Book of the Definitions of Things and Their Descriptions). It also reflects his engagement with ancient Greek philosophies, both Aristotelian and Platonic².

Given the considerable scholarly value of *Kitāb al-Ḥudūdwa al-Rusūm*, it was translated into several languages, most notably Latin. It is most likely that the one responsible for this translation was Gerard of Cremona³. It subsequently became a source for numerous philosophers throughout the medieval period. It was also translated into Hebrew by Nissim ben Solomon⁴. As for the Arabic version, a complete manuscript is hardly to be found; what exists are only snippets from one of its manuscripts preserved in Cairo⁵.

Isaac ibnSulayman has other philosophical works mentioned in various historical sources, although the titles sometimes differ while the intended works are the same. Among these works are *Kitāb al-Madkhalilā al-Manṭiq* (The Introduction to Logic), *Kitāb al-Madkhalilā al-Ḥikma* (The Introduction to Wisdom), and other works that combine medicine and philosophy, such as *Kitāb al-Istiḳās*, *Kitāb al-MadkhalilāṢinā'at al-Ṭibb*, and *Kitāb al-Awā'ilwa al-Aqāwīl*⁶.⁴ However, most of these works—if not all—are no longer available today, although some sources indicate the existence of scattered manuscripts across the world

¹ Abd al-ʿAzīz al-Naqqār, “IṣḥāqibnSulaymān al-Ṭabīb al-Faylasūf,” Ibn al-Bannā' al-Marrākushī Center for Research and Studies in the History of Sciences in Islamic Civilization, Morocco, published 07/03/2010, website of al-Rābiṭa al-Muḥammadiyya li-l-ʿUlamā'.

² Lenn E. Goodman, “Isaac Israeli,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Center for the Study of Language and Information (CSLI), Stanford University, (July 6, 2007).

³ Hasse, Dag Nikolaus, *Three Double Translations from Arabic into Latin. Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes*, Volume 2, Brill, 2020, p. 255.

⁴ Alexander Altmann, “Isaac Israeli's Book of Definitions: Some Fragments of a Second Hebrew Translation,” *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (July 1957), pp. 232–233.

⁵ HartwigHirschfeld, “The Arabic Portion of the Cairo Genizah at Cambridge,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Jan. 1903), p. 711.

⁶ Isaac ibn Sulayman, op. cit., p. 37; Ibn AbīUṣaybi'a, op. cit., p. 373; Ibn Juljul, op. cit., p. 67.

that may constitute the original versions of Isaac's writings. Were it not for certain translators who translated Isaac's works into other languages, such as Latin, perhaps none of his writings would have reached us.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study has led us to a number of findings, which may be summarized as follows:

- Isaac ibnSulayman al-Isra'ili is considered one of the most renowned physicians who lived in the Islamic Maghreb, for several reasons, the most prominent of which are:
- He lived a long life, most of which he devoted to medicine. It is reported that he lived more than one hundred years, spending at least forty years as a physician in the Fatimid court. This long duration granted him extensive experience in the field of medicine, given his continuous practice of the profession.
- He was a physician of multiple specializations. When he first arrived in the Maghreb, he worked as an oculist; later, after settling in the Aghlabid court, he drew close to the renowned physician Ishāq ibn 'Imrān, known as al-Sā'a, who was the leading physician of his time. He acquired knowledge from him until he himself became one of the most famous physicians in the Maghreb.
- Although Isaac was primarily engaged in medical practice (treatment), he also excelled in medical authorship. His writings in this field were abundant and became authoritative sources throughout the medieval period in both the Maghreb and Europe.
- With regard to his medical works, and based on what we have discussed in this study, his writings were of high quality. Consequently, they were widely adopted during that period and translated into other languages, most notably Latin. Thanks to these translations, some of these works have reached us today, whereas their original Arabic versions are no longer existing.
- Isaac ibnSulayman al-Isra'ili was not limited to medicine alone, despite his excellence in it; he also excelled in philosophy and logic, authoring several works that were likewise translated into multiple languages, most prominently Latin and Hebrew. Although the original Arabic manuscripts are lost, their contents have reached us through these translations.
- Isaac ibnSulayman's distinction is further evident in his ability to combine medicine and philosophy. Several of his works merge the two disciplines, and specialists have noted that such a method of combining medicine and philosophy requires broad intellectual imagination and the capacity for combining between them.
- Despite the acknowledged scholarly value of Isaac ibnSulayman's works in medicine and philosophy, and despite the fact that they were written in Arabic, most of these works are unfortunately not available in their original Arabic form today. They are considered lost, although it is reported that some manuscripts of his works exist in certain research centers but have not yet been made publicly accessible. What has reached us from his writings is only one complete book, namely *Kitāb al-Aghdhiyawa al-Adwiya*, along with fragments of his other works preserved through the Latin and Hebrew translations made during the medieval period.

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