

prominent topic, with further contributions in physics, astronomy, mechanics, cosmology, and psychology. The questions addressed largely consist of the puzzles of the curious layman (e.g. why is the sky sometimes red, how do flies stick to walls, etc.), presented in the style of the Greek *problemata* literature. The arguments offered in response are, as one would expect, essentially Aristotelian; but they often set forth new formulations or deal with problems not to be found in the Aristotelian corpus. Daiber's commentaries are especially useful for the way in which they place Ibn al-'Amīd's essays within the context of the development of Aristotelianism in medieval Islam, with the philosopher al-Kindī (d. c. 252/866) proving to be an important source of influence. The transition from Greek to Arabic is also pursued by Daiber; he draws attention to numerous points of translation, and observes, *inter alia*, that Ibn al-'Amīd seems to have access to an Arabic translation of the *Parva naturalia* which does not agree with the extant Greek text. There is also a detailed Arabic-German glossary which will be of considerable value to researchers interested in the technical and specialized vocabulary of the medieval Arabic natural sciences.

In his introduction and commentaries, Daiber repeatedly compares his author to Leonardo da Vinci. The comparison was first made by Khalīl Mardam Bey in 1931, and more recently has been reiterated by several other scholars, but seems both unnecessary and misleading. Both Ibn al-'Amīd and Leonardo displayed formidable talents in many fields, but their cultural backgrounds, the focal points of their contributions, and their influence on later cultural and scientific developments were so different as to render a comparison highly problematic. Beyond that, such comparisons tend to obfuscate an important feature of Islamic science illustrated by Daiber's volume. In matters of culture, such scholars as al-Jāhīz (d. 255/868), Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023), and Ibn al-'Amīd were primarily literary figures, but represented a tradition which encouraged very broad learning and denigrated narrow specialization.² The result was the appropriation into literary culture of much of the philosophical, medical, and other scientific learning of the day, and the side of Ibn al-'Amīd's career presented by Daiber in this volume may perhaps best be seen as an example of the ways in which this process encouraged not just the assimilation, but also the expansion of scientific knowledge.

Lawrence I. Conrad, Wellcome Institute

¹ Hans Daiber, 'Briefe des Abū l-Faḍl Ibn al-'Amīd an 'Aḍudaddaula', *Der Islam*, 1979, 56: 106–16.

² See, for example, al-Jāhīz, *Rasā'il*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Ḥārūn, Cairo, 1384–99/1964–79, I, pp. 379–93.

VARDIT RISPLER-CHAIM, *Islamic medical ethics in the twentieth century*, Social, Economic and Political Studies of the Middle East, vol. 46, Leiden and New York, E. J. Brill, 1993, pp. vii, 149 (90-04-09608-6).

Since their emergence in the nineteenth century, newspapers in the Islamic world have been major vehicles for discussion of the impact of the West and how Muslims should respond. Up to the present day, religious scholars have taken advantage of the press to publicize their formal pronouncements, or *fatwās*, on many topics of concern to Muslims, and in doing so they continue a mode of legal discussion and commentary which in its Islamic context dates back more than a millennium.

To Dr Rispler-Chaim goes the credit for recognizing that this *fatwā* literature offers a valuable corpus of evidence for modern Islamic medical ethics. Based on documents published in numerous *fatwā* collections, and others from twenty-two different Muslim newspapers and periodicals, her book illustrates ethical discussions on a broad range of issues. These include abortion, artificial insemination, organ transplants, cosmetic and sex-change surgery, medical aspects of Muslim worship (e.g. is one's fast in Ramaḍān broken by taking essential medication?), doctor-patient relations, autopsy, circumcision, euthanasia, and AIDS. A chapter of 'Miscellany' offers translations of *fatwās* in areas where insufficient material was available for more analytical discussion, and includes documents on healing, wine drinking, drugs and pork, milk banks, smoking, sex during menstruation, freezing sperm, masturbation, epilepsy in married women, and the *siwāk* (a traditional tooth-cleaning stick).

Apart from the author's specific observations, two broader themes seem to emerge. First, the modern medical *fatwās* demonstrate a clear continuity from medieval times. Companions of the prophet Muḥammad and classical legal compendia are cited as easily—and as cogently—in the twentieth century as in the tenth, the mode of argument is often identical, and the classical terminology of classical Islamic jurisprudence is in evidence on all sides, although the specific issues have of course changed. One can hardly doubt that the scholars whose work informs this book consider themselves as falling squarely within the tradition of their illustrious medieval predecessors, and the author's conviction that "modern" medical ethics are at issue here thus bears important qualification. Second, in most medical-ethical matters the tenets of Islam serve to set broadly construed bounds for discussion rather than to define normative positions. The *fatwā* literature is thus characterized by a spirit of lively debate legitimating many shades of opinion.

Certain problematic aspects of the book merit comment here. Rispler-Chaim's sources are entirely Arab, and mostly Egyptian: eighteen of twenty-two cited newspapers are Egyptian, and there are none from Turkey, Iran, or North Africa. Shī'ī Islam is entirely omitted, and within Sunnī Islam the views set forth are essentially those of Egyptian fundamentalist groups. What is represented, then, is not the views of "the Muslims", but only of a limited segment of Muslim thinking.

In her introduction the author asserts that *fatwās* presume a dialogue between lay people and scholars (p. 4), but it is well known that often they represent conundrums posed by scholars for the benefit of other scholars, and so are abstractions that have nothing to do with the genuine medical-ethical concerns of Muslim societies. Rispler-Chaim has in fact taken up some of this material in her book. An Egyptian *mufīī*, for example, puts the question of whether a woman is guilty of adultery if she finds some semen and, supposing it to be that of her husband, inserts it into her vagina, only to discover later that it was not his after all (pp. 20–1). Several scholars argue over whether a doctor may use the skin of a pig (an unclean animal whose meat is forbidden to Muslims by the Qur'ān) for skin grafts to a badly burned patient if no other alternative is available (p. 38). If a dying person swallows a large amount of someone else's money, may his body be cut open after his death in order to retrieve the money (pp. 76–7)? Should a Muslim ruler go to war against a city where Muslims do not circumcise their sons (p. 85)? In some such cases the real point appears to be that no problem—however vexed or esoteric—lies beyond solution in terms of the Sacred Law; in others, the actual dispute is over the role and authority of competing personalities and groups, again, especially in fundamentalist circles in Egypt.

Finally, if the author wishes to argue that contemporary Islamic medical ethics differ in essential ways from medieval Islamic ethics (pp. 2–3, but what are these differences? See above), then a clear distinction needs to be drawn between modern and medieval authorities. A non-Islamist may well suppose that the oft-cited views of 'Abd al-Razzāq, al-Nasā'ī, and al-Tirmidhī represent modern thinking, as they are quoted in such contexts, but in fact these are all renowned authorities of the ninth and tenth centuries AD.

While one must for these reasons view with caution some of the author's judgments on the extent to which the *fatwās* she has collected represent generally prevailing Muslim attitudes toward issues in medical ethics, the fact remains that her book is one of considerable interest and value. Indeed, in view of the vast amount of material reviewed in order to locate the relevant documents, the collection of the medical-ethical corpus is in itself a major achievement. Rispler-Chaim's work commendably fulfils the task of introducing the main issues currently under discussion and laying a foundation for further work. It also serves to illustrate the richness and breadth of research potential outside the range of traditionally consulted medical-historical source materials.

Lawrence I. Conrad, Wellcome Institute

MAGDA WHITROW, *Julius Wagner-Jauregg (1857–1940)*, London, Smith-Gordon and Nishimura, 1993, pp. xxiv, 221, illus., £20.00, \$40.00 (1-85463-012-1).

Has a psychiatrist ever won the Nobel Prize? In 1927 the great Austrian psychiatrist Wagner-Jauregg won the accolade which had been denied him by the Swedish assessor Gadelius for some years. It sounds odd to us that he was so honoured for his treatment of *giving* patients malaria to treat the common and dreaded disease of neurosyphilis.