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Cover

Mašhad, Kitābhāna-i Āsitān-i Quds-i Raḡawī 300, f. 1v
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, *grec* 1853, f. 186v

Book Announcements & Reviews

Siglas

CDA – Cristina D’Ancona

EC – Elisa Coda

GM – Giovanni Mandolino

MZ – Marianna Zarantonello

VK – Veysel Kaya

Ö.M. Alper, *Osmanlı Felsefesi - Seçme Metinler [Ottoman Philosophy - Selected Texts]*, Klasik Publications, Istanbul 2015 (in Turkish), 517 pp.

This welcomed publication arises from a growing interest in the last few years on Ottoman scholars and their achievements in the fields of theology and philosophy. Names like Mulla Fanārī, Khojazāda, Kamālpāshazāda and Tashkoprizāda are no longer totally unknown to researchers, even if many are still unaware of the depths of their intellectual world. Several studies consider the Ottoman theological and philosophical works as continuations of classical Islamic thought. Others still doubt if these works should be labelled as truly 'philosophical', since they feature 'commentaries' and 'glosses' (*ṣurūḥ* and *ḥawāṣī*) on classical works. Ö.M. Alper thinks that Ottoman philosophy is philosophy in its own right, contending that the alleged absence of philosophy in the Ottoman world depends upon a "lack of conscience about the nature and essence of philosophy" (p. 5). This statement can be best understood taking into consideration another work of his, *The Nature of the Philosopher (Felsefenin Doğası, Litera Yayıncılık, Istanbul 2012, esp. pp. 19-21)*, a philosophical essay where he defines 'philosophy' in very broad terms, as that human activity which establishes mental and cognitive realms of existence for human beings; if taken in this sense, also the intellectual achievements of the Ottoman authors mentioned above can be defined as 'philosophical'. Of course, this question cannot be discussed here. The book consists of eleven chapters; in each Alper presents the biography of an Ottoman thinker, offering the translation of selected texts into Turkish. In this respect, this book counts as the first anthology of Ottoman philosophy. The selection and translation of the texts is organised in order to present the erudition and diversity of Ottoman philosophy.

Chapter 1 deals with Dāwūd al-Qaysarī (d. 1350). Of this author Alper translates three treatises: 1) A treatise on being and God entitled "Introduction to the Special Features of the Expression On the Meanings of the Pearls of Wisdom" (*Maṭla' ḥuṣūṣ al-kalim fi ma'ānī fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*), which is translated mainly, but not only, from the edition by Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Sā'idī (Anwār al-Hudā, Tehran 1416/1995); 2) "On the Essence of Unity and Multiplicity" (*Asās al-waḥdāniyya wa-mabnā al-fardāniyya*) translated from the edition by Mehmet Bayraktar (Kayseri Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, Kayseri 1997); 3) "Completion of the Exposition of the Notion of Time" (*Nihāya al-bayān fi dirāya al-zamān*) translated from the edition by Mehmet Bayraktar (Kayseri Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, Kayseri 1997). This last text is interesting because it discusses the concept of time according to Aristotle and his followers, elaborating on the definition of time as "the measure (*miqdār*) of movement".

Chapter 2 is about Mullā Fanārī (d. 1431). It includes the translation of the still unpublished treatise "Pointer to the conception and the truth of the existence of God", also entitled "Light of Conviviality" (*Miṣbāḥ al-uns*), which is translated on the basis of the MS Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi 1554, fol. 49r-57v. Another work translated is the "Reminder of the Reality of Perception, its Divisions and its Ways" (edited as *Ayn al-a'yān*, Rifat Bey Matbaası, Istanbul 1907/1325), a text which gathers the definitions of the key terms in the doctrine of perception in Islamic philosophy.

Chapter 3 deals with al-Kāfiyājī (d. 1474). A native of Pergamon, the name Kāfiyājī (lit. "the one who is always busy with the book *al-Kāfiyya*") was given to the author due to his intense engagement with the classical grammatical work by Ibn Ḥāḡib (d. 1249). Two translations are offered respectively of the "Principles of the Science of History" and of the "Methods and Problems of the Science of History", both translated on the basis of the edition by Muḥammad Kamāluddīn 'Īzzuddīn ('Ālam al-Kutüb, Beirut 1990). In his discussion of sight Ibn Ḥāḡib mentions Aristotle's saying "the one who loses one of his five senses, loses one knowledge".

Chapter 4 is devoted to Khojazāda (d. 1488), the author of a treatise entitled, like al-Ġazālī's, "Incoherence of the Philosophers" (*Tabāfut al-falāsifa*, al-Maṭba'a al-I'lāmiyya, Cairo 1884/1302): Not only does this text share the title of al-Ġazālī's famous work, but it also follows in its footsteps. Alper translates the section "On Rebutting the Evidences of the Philosophers on the Eternity of the World", where Khojazāda elaborates on the proofs for the eternity of the world, a doctrine that he traces back to Aristotle and his followers in the Islamic world. He also mentions Faḡr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's praise of Galen, who allegedly said on his deathbed to ignore whether the world was eternal or originated.

Chapter 5 is about Kamālpāshazāda (d. 1534). Alper offers four translations from his works. The first treatise translated is "On the Explanation of the meaning of creation and on the clarification that the

quiddity of the soul is created" (*Risāla fī bayān ma'nā al-ġā'l wa-tahqīq anna al-nafs mābiyya ma'ġ'ūla*). This treatise, still unpublished, is translated on the basis of the MS İstanbul, Müftülük Kütüphanesi, Yazmalar 276, fols. 31v-51r. In the last part of this treatise, Kamālpāshāzāda gives some details about the "Arabic Plato" and the "Arabic Aristotle". According to his quotations from several authors, it is Plato, and not Aristotle, who should be considered as the 'initiator' of the Peripatetic school; the reason he gives is the well-known legend of Plato as having two different teachings, one spiritual and secret, and the other material and based on logical inference: Aristotle followed the second way. Another treatise is "Whether or not is it possible that a contingent eternal being depends on a choosing agent" (*Risāla fī tahqīq al-ḥaqq fī l-ma'sala al-qā'ila bal yaġūz an yastanid al-qadīm al-mumkin ilā l-mu'atṭir am lā*). Also this treatise is still unpublished and is translated by Alper on the basis of the MS Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Aya Sofya 4794, fols. 60r-65v. The third treatise translated is "On the existential structure of man" (*Fī šaḥṣ al-insān*) on the basis of the edition by Ahmed Cevdet, Kamālpāshāzāda, *Rasā'il Ibn Kamāl*, İkdam Matbaası, İstanbul 1898/1316. The fourth treatise, "On the Explanation of intellect" (*Fī bayān al-'aql*), is translated on the basis of Alper's own edition (Ömer Mahir, "İbn Kemāl'in *Risāle fī Beyāni'l-'Akl'i*", *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi* 3 [1999], pp. 244-69). Alper has partially revised the text originally published. This last section refers to the well-known theories of Aristotle, Galen and Hippocrates on the human soul and their transformations in the Arab world.

Chapter 6 is about Tāshkopriżāda (d. 1561). Alper offers the translation into Turkish of a treatise entitled "Defining the Truth on the discussions on mental existence" (*Risāla al-ṣubūd al-'aynī fī mabāḥiṭ al-wuġūd al-dihni*); this translation is based on the MS Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi 3709, fols. 145v-162v, 163r-172v. This text comments upon Aristotle's alleged saying that "knowledge of high principles is too sublime to be defined in terms of correctness (*şidq*)", and on Plato's doctrine of ideas.

Chapter 7 is about Ḥasan Kāfī al-Aqḥiṣārī (d. 1615). Alper translates the "Foundations of the Order in the universe" (*Usūl al-ḥikam fī nizām al-'ālam*), on the basis of the edition by N.R. al-Humūd (al-Ġāmī'a al-Urduniyya, Amman). The text is interesting because it sets a correlation between God's order in the universe and the notion of holy war (*ġihād*) in Islam.

Chapter 8 deals with Şadraddīnzāda Maḥmad Amīn al-Şirwānī (d. 1627). Three translations are provided by Alper: 1) "the Science of the philosophy of illumination" (*al-Fawā'id al-ḥāqāniyya*), an unpublished treatise translated on the basis of the MS Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Amcazade Hüseyin 321, fols. 50v-56r; 2) another treatise bearing the same title *al-Fawā'id al-ḥāqāniyya*, translated from MS Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Amcazade Hüseyin, 321, fol. 87v-92r, and "Commentary on the Mode of Unity by al-Fanārī" (*Şarḥ 'alā ġihat al-waḥda li-l-Fanārī*, Matbaa-i Āmire, İstanbul 1277). The main characteristic of al-Şirwānī's writings is that they exhibit the influence of illuminationist philosophy (*işrāqiyya*), a Gnostic school of philosophy whose notions are rooted in the writings of al-Suhrawardī. Thus names like Hermes Trismegistus, Pythagoras, and Plato emerge in al-Şirwānī as followers of the godly philosophy (*muta'allihūn*).

Chapter 9 is about Kātip Çelebi (Ḥāġġī Ḥalīfa) (d. 1657). The text translated is a section from the famous Bibliography *Kaṣf al-zunūn*, namely "On the Definition of science and its divisions", translated from the edition by Ş. Yaltkaya - K.R. Bilge, Maarif Matbaası, İstanbul 1941.

Chapter 10 deals with As'ad Afandī al-Yanyawī (d. 1731). Alper offers two translations of unpublished works by this Ottoman philosopher, known as "the third teacher" (*al-mu'allim al-tālīt*), referring to al-Fārābī's famous label "the second teacher" (*al-mu'allim al-tānī*). The first translation is the unpublished treatise "On Proving the existence of the necessary Being" (*al-Risāla al-lāhūtiyya*), translated from the MS Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Lâleli 3657, fols. 179v-183r, and the second is "On the Principle that the existence of God is identical to His essence" (*al-Risāla al-lāhūtiyya*), translated from the MS Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Lâleli 3657, fols. 183r-204v.

Chapter 11 is devoted to Charkashīzāda Maḥmad Tawfiq Afandī (d. 1901). The two texts translated are the "Epistle on the Existence of created quiddities" (*Risāla fī kawn al-mābiyyāt al-ma'ġ'ūla*, İstanbul 1887/1305), and "On Intellect" (*Risāla fī l-'aql*, ed. Mahmud Bey Matbaası, İstanbul 1890/1308) where Charkashīzāda credits Hermes, Pythagoras and Plato with the view that the celestial spheres have the sense of smell.

VK