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MEDICINE AND THE BODY
IN THE RENAISSANCE

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UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA



STUDIO FIRMANO
PER LA STORIA DELL'ARTE MEDICA E DELLA SCIENZA

CSMBR
ONLINE
EVENTS

PTOLEMAIC THEORIES IN GALENIC LANGUAGE

13
FEBRUARY
2024
5.00 pm CET

AL-FARGHANI'S «ELEMENTS OF ASTRONOMY» AT THE MEETING POINT OF ASTRONOMICAL AND MEDICAL TRADITIONS

RAZIEH S. MOUSAVI • Max Planck Institut for the History of Science

This paper explores al-Farghānī's *Elements of Astronomy*, a pioneering work in theoretical astronomy written in Arabic during a period of increased availability of translated scientific texts. While the technical aspects of the treatise largely follow Ptolemaic astronomy, its manner of presentation departs from the typical geometric-demonstrative structure of Greek astronomy in favour of *jawāmiḡ* genre, which was predominantly associated with the translations

of Alexandrian summaries on Medicine. I argue that this writing choice, beyond serving educational purposes, featured a thematic connection between medicine and astronomy. Al-Farghānī's treatise emphasises shared concerns between the two fields, such as a nuanced understanding of seasonal periods through mathematical definitions of equinoctial and solstitial points, the delineation of climatic zones, and the cyclical changes

in day and night hours throughout the year. Although the application of astronomical concepts in medicine is not explicitly stated, the treatise introduces a new language for astral knowledge, making it more accessible beyond the realm of astronomy specialists, in particular appealing to physicians. This stands in contrast to Ptolemy's *Almagest*, which was challenging for non-astronomers to grasp and pick up information. The widespread dissemination of al-Farghānī's text outside astronomical circles attests to the success of this approach in reaching a broader audience.

The event is free to attend but registration is required. Info at csnbr.fondazionecomel.org