



CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF
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

IN IBN AL-NAFIS' SHADOW

7
OCTOBER
2025
5.00 pm CET

TRANSFORMATIONS IN MEDICAL THEORY IN ISLAMIC SOCIETIES (1200-1520)

NAHYAN FANCY • University of Exeter

This talk is based on my forthcoming monograph, *In Ibn al-Nafis's Shadow*. Based on a close study of four Arabic commentaries composed on *The Canon of Medicine* of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and four commentaries composed on its abridgment, *The Epitome of Medicine/The Epitome of the Canon*. The book makes three key, interrelated claims. First, it shows that medical theory in these commentaries advanced well beyond what is found not only in the works of Galen

and Aristotle, but also in the works of earlier Islamic physicians such as al-Rāzī (d. c. 925), al-Majūsī (d. c. 994) and Ibn Sīnā. A key figure in the transformations in medical theory was Ibn al-Nafis (d. 1288) whose reworking of the medical system was at the heart of subsequent discussions, even though he was not unique in transforming medical theory. Second, these advancements in medical theory, including those found in Ibn

al-Nafis's *Commentary on the Canon*, were indebted to a post-classical tradition of *taḥqīq* (verification). Verification encapsulated the systematic investigation of the content of a source text, such as the *Canon*, using lexical, philosophical and empirical arguments. Moreover, arguments and new positions that emerged first in medical commentaries were subsequently taken up by philosophers and theologians in topics that were relevant to them, such as on categories of motion, foetal ensoulment and the soul-body relationship. In this talk I shall provide examples from humoral theory and generation.

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