



Gersonides: A Portrait of a Fourteenth-Century Philosopher-Scientist

By Ruth Glasner



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Gersonides was a highly original Jewish philosopher, scientist and biblical exegete, active in Provence in the first half of the fourteenth century. Ruth Glasner explores his impressive achievements, and argues that the key to understanding his originality is his perspective as an applied mathematical scientist. It was this perspective that led him to examine Aristotelianism from directions different from those usually adopted by contemporary scholastic scholars.

Gersonides started on his way, as he himself claims, as a 'mathematician, natural scientist, and philosopher', who believed in his power to solve the main problems of medieval science. He ended up concentrating on his work as a mathematical astronomer, developing techniques of observation and computation, and somewhat less optimistic about the prospect of scientific knowledge.

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Review

In each of these discussions, Glasner succeeds in providing the reader with an illuminating and brief exposition of Gersonides stance. * Tony Levy, Isis *

About the Author

Ruth Glasner is Professor of the History and Philosophy of Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her PhD research focused on Greek philosophy, and she later turned to work on medieval science, notably physics, mathematics and astronomy. Glasner studies mainly Hebrew medieval texts with a special interest in the genre of the commentary.

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