

ISIS

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My dear and honored friend:

Many thanks for your friendly letter of December 15 which arrived a few days ago. The book which it announced *Jesu cristo segun los Evangelies* has not yet reached me, but that is not surprising, as printed matter travels very slowly. I thank you beforehand and shall thank you again after I have received the book and read it.

I have mailed to you as a belated Christmas present a copy of Nykl's new book "Hispano-Arabic poetry" (it bears the date 1946 but appeared only at the beginning of 1947). I think the book will interest you and perhaps also Señora Millas. Nykl has a deep knowledge of Arabic in general and of Arabic poetry in particular. I am myself almost ignorant of Arabic poetry, but a fluent reader of Arabic prose. Nykl is an astounding polyglot, but he has spent so many years abroad (many of them in Spain and Portugal) that when he finally came back to America there was no room for him in our universities. It is a great pity for himself but also for those universities, for there is nobody in America who is as familiar as he is with the Arabic and Romance literatures and as able to discuss the influence of the former upon the latter.

The printing of *ISIS* had been so much neglected by the Harvard Press that I finally issued a protest (copy enclosed). This has had a good effect. The Press has promised to treat *ISIS* more generously and a new managing editor has been appointed to help me. Indeed, a great part of my time must necessarily be given to my Harvard courses and to the printing of my vol. III and its index. The first part dealing with the first half of the fourteenth century (over 1,000 p.) is page-proofed; there remain the second part, the introduction and indexes. I have been obliged to give up my London lectures of this spring but hope that the London university will not be discouraged and will invite me (a fourth time!) for the spring of 1948.

I do not know any references of Ibn Sīnā to trepidation. It is possible that Abraham ben Ezra had in mind Ibrāhīm ibn Sīnāh (X-1) - Introduction, 1, 631; Ibrāhīm was a grandson of Thābit ibn Qurra, who had revived that Greek and Hindu theory. The trepidation was generally accepted by the Muslim astronomer (except al-Battānī) and later by the Christian ones, including Copernicus! That false theory was finally rejected by Tycho Brahe and Kepler. Ibn Sīnā was not much of an astronomer; he probably accepted the theory of trepidation, but whether he accepted it or not does hardly matter, because his acceptance or non-acceptance of it would have been independent of new observations, arbitrary. For further details, see Introduction (vols. 1, 2, 3 by index).

Please accept for yourself and your family my very best wishes.
May the year 1947 bring us a little closer to peace.

Yours devotedly,

George Sarton

George Sarton

GS/FS

Nyck's book as well as the Introduction were
mailed to the Via Cayetana. Please warn the Post
Office that Via Cayetana was meant

Bulletins prepared to simplify my correspondence
Bulletin no. 4, November 18, 1946

1. Introduction to the history of science - Volume III dealing with science and learning in the fourteenth century is being proofread. Printing is exceedingly slow. Most of the galleys have been read, as well as 637 page proofs, less than one-third.

A photographic reprint of vol. 1 (1927), long out of print, has been published by Williams and Wilkins, Baltimore. This was done without my knowledge and hence the book contains neither errata nor new preface. A few corrections will be indicated in the preface to vol. III.

2. Harvard lectures - The third part of the course on the history of science, dealing with the XVth, XVIth and XVIIth centuries, is now being explained to about 212 students. These lectures are given in the Geographical Building, Divinity Avenue, on Tu., Th., Sat. at 10 A.M.
3. Isis - Latest no., 104 January 1946 (vol. 36, 2). The printing of vol. 32 (stopped by the German invasion of Belgium) has been begun by the St. Catherine Press in Bruges.
4. Osiris - It is hoped that vol. 8 will appear in 1947. It will be dedicated to Paul Ver Eecke, Belgian historian of Greek mathematics.
5. Latest publication - no. 357. Demetrio Canevari, New York. Still available upon request.
6. London lectures - I had tentatively accepted to deliver a few lectures at the University of London in the spring of 1947. The possibility of my being able to do so is weakening every day, for I cannot leave Cambridge before having signed the final proofs of Vol. III.

Harvard Library, 185
Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.

George Sarton