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ESSAY-REVIEW: A NEW "EDITION" OF ḤUNAYN'S *RISĀLA*

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Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, *Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq on his Galen Translations*, ed. and trans. John C. Lamoreaux. Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2016. xxxiii-207 pages, series "Eastern Christian Texts" 6.

One of the most important medieval documents in the history of medicine and scholarship, and of culture in general, is doubtless the bibliographical treatise ("epistle", *Risāla*) by Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq (808-873) addressed to his patron and patron of the arts, the gentleman courtier ʿAlī b. Yaḥyā b. al-Munaǧǧim (d. 275 / 888-889), listing the translations of Galen into Syriac and Arabic. Its transmission and publication history, though, is extremely complicated.

Transmission: First written in Arabic in 856 as a translation from Ḥunayn's own earlier Syriac version, it was updated by him in a second edition in 864. Only the second edition survives, in an earlier (B) and later (A) recension, each of which is extant in a single manuscript (B = Istanbul, Ayasofya 3590; A = Ayasofya 3631) which contains further additions and corrections by Ḥunayn and others. Parts of recension A, furthermore, survive in indirect transmission in the works of later bibliographers, notably in Ibn an-Nadīm's *Fihrist* and Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa's *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ*, while a list of the Galenic titles from recension B, with some information on the translators, is extant in yet a third Istanbul manuscript (C = Ayasofya 3593).

Publication: The German orientalist Gotthelf Bergsträsser (= Berg.) came first across the manuscript of recension A and published it with a German translation in 1925.[1] Some years later he was informed about the manuscript of recension B, and instead of making a new edition he printed, in transliteration, just the corrections to the text and additions to the apparatus from the new manuscript (1932).[2] To this he added a valuable study of the transmission of the text, as

[1] *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq über die syrischen und arabischen Galen-Übersetzungen* [Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, XVII, 2], Leipzig 1925; Kraus reprint Nendeln, Liechtenstein 1966.

[2] *Neue Materialien zu Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq's Galen-Bibliographie* [Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, XIX, 2], Leipzig 1932; reprint Nendeln, Liechtenstein 1966.

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reported here, and of the contents of recension B and its linguistic features. The titles and translators list in manuscript C from recension B, finally, was published separately in 2010-11 by Fabian Käs.[3]

In this situation, what was clearly needed was a comprehensive new edition, on the basis of all three manuscripts and all versions available in indirect transmission. This would present all the texts, including all variants, *in Arabic* and not in transliteration, and in a typographically appropriate way that would discriminate between the two recensions and among the later additions, in order for the reader to have immediate access in a single volume to all textual evidence needed to understand the precise nature and circumstances of each translated Galenic title.

In this new edition under review here, Lamoreaux (L.) inexplicably decided to publish in Arabic only the earlier recension B and recorded *some* variants from A, *in English*, as notes to his translation of this recension. The bizarreness of this editorial procedure apart, the edition is partly redundant, as Berg. 1932 had already provided the significant readings of B in his amended apparatus, and partly incomplete, because L. does not record *all* the variant readings from A published in Berg. 1925, as he said he would[4] (let alone from manuscript C and the indirect witnesses such as Ibn-Abī-Uṣaybi'a and the *Fihrist*), because, he says, they are not "historically significant" (p. xxvi).

Whatever Lamoreaux's notion of historical significant variants in a text with as complicated a transmission history as this one is – he does not specify –, the decision was unfortunate because even "historically significant" variants cannot be registered in English translation *only*. For example, at 2,10,[5] B reads, *wa-tafsīruhu l-fihrist*, while A reads *wa-tarğamatuhu l-fihrist*. Lamoreaux's English translation is correct ("which translated means 'the Catalogue'"), but he does not register in the apparatus or in a note that somebody changed the Arabic word for translation from *tafsīr* in B to *tarğama* in A. We thus lose significant evidence for the use of these words in mid-ninth century Baghdad.[6] Furthermore, in a text like the present one in which different parts were composed at different times and

[3] "Eine neue Handschrift von Ḥunain ibn Isḥāqs Galenbibliographie", *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften* 19 (2010-2011): 135–193.

[4] "I have noted all passages where my reading departs from his [i.e., Bergsträsser's]," p. xxvi.

[5] The numbers refer to Bergsträsser's (1925) page and line numbers, reproduced by Lamoreaux in the inner (left) margin of his "edition".

[6] Berg. 1932, 68, who is quite aware of the terminological significance of such variations, has half a page of references to the use of these two words in this text. On this very problem regarding these two words, see D. Gutas, "Aspects of Literary Form and Genre in Arabic Logical Works", in Charles Burnett, ed., *Glosses and Commentaries on Aristotelian Logical Texts*, London 1993, 32–33.

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even by other authors, like the post-Ḥunayn additions, every variation in terms or in style is potentially historically significant. For example, the following variants from A which have not been registered at all in L., *from just the first two pages of text*, have this quality and should have been presented to the reader as evidence for his assessment:

1,8 *wa-ya'lama* B : *wa-yafhama* A

1,13 *wa-aḥabba* B : *wa-ṭalaba* A

1,16 *fa-amarta* B : *fa-sa'alta* A

2,4 *muntahin ilā mā amarta bihī* B : *ṣā'irun ilā mā sa'alta* A

2,5 (first) *mā* B : *awwala mā* A

2,6 *min kutub* B : *min amr kutub* A (for the significance of the use of *amr* in the Arabic of the translators see *GALex*[7] I, 390–393)

2,11 *fa-anna* B : *wa-anna* A (for the significance of the omission of this variant see below)

2,14 *ad-dahr* B : *hāḏā l-ġaraḍ* A

2,20 *wa-li-man turǧimat kullu wāḥidin min tilka l-kutubi* B : *wa-li-man turǧimat wa-mani llaḏīna tarǧamtu anā lahum kulla wāḥidin min tilka l-kutubi* A (B has a lacuna between *turjimat* and *kullu* which should have been either indicated in the text as such, *turjimat* <***> *kullu*, or supplemented from A, and not simply translated into English in a note to the translation.)

This procedure of omitting most variants sometimes also leads Lamoreaux into translating the correct text as found in A while printing the erroneous text of B, without explanation. Again from the first page alone:

1,14 *min al-kutub* B : *min tilka l-kutub* A, "of those books" L.

1,16 *ḏālika* B : *ḏālika l-kitāb* A, "that book" L.

The Arabic text itself is badly edited. Despite his statement to the contrary,[8] Lamoreaux does not distinguish, in textual transmission, between real variants – what the author, the recensor, a reviser, etc., actually wrote – and variants due to scribal error and miscopyings which no one ever intended to be part of the text and should never be printed as such. In just the first two pages alone we see again the following:

2,3 *yustad'ā* (يسدعى) B : *šaḏḏa 'annī* (سد عنى) A. The original reading *šaḏḏa 'annī* written by Ḥunayn was miscopied by some scribe as *yustad'ā*, because its unpointed skeleton looks like it. L. prints and translates the erroneous word in B as if it were a real variant (i.e., as if someone meant to write *yustad'ā*),

[7] G. Endress and D. Gutas, *A Greek and Arabic Lexicon*, Leiden, Brill, 1992ff.

[8] "I depart from the reading of the manuscript only when I consider that it has been subject to scribal corruption," p. xxvii.

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and gives the correct reading in A only *in translation* in a note (p. 3, n. 7, "that had escaped my notice"). The reader has thus no way of deciding which of the readings may have been the original.

2,9 *naḥā bihī* B : *naḥā fīhi* A. In the *naḥā bihī* reading of B, if *bi-* introduces the object, it would mean "to take it along"; if used instrumentally, it would mean, "to proceed by means of it". Both are wrong in context, but L. prints the wrong text in B.

2,12 *ta'arrufihā* B : *ta'arrufihī* A. The final pronoun refers to *amr*, not *kutub*, and should be masculine.

In all three cases the reading of A is to be printed in the text since the readings of B are not variants but scribal errors due to skeletal misreadings, inattention, and ignorance. Similarly, L. mistakes a scribal error for a real variant and presents it as such in a note. The proper apparatus entry should have been:

1,14 *wa-l-'arabiyyati* (والعربيه) B : والى عبره A : *wa-ilā ġayrihā* corr. Berg. 1925

The unpointed text in A (which can be read as *wa-ilā ġayrihī*) is a scribal miswriting for *wa-l-'arabiyyati* due to the skeletal similarity of the two terms. Berg. 1925, not having yet, and not having been able to conjecture, the correct reading in B, "emended" it to *wa-ilā ġayrihā*, changing the final pronoun into feminine necessarily to make it refer to the preceding *suryāniyya*, which is feminine. But in the 1932 book, having gained access to the manuscript of recension B, he corrected the erroneous text he had printed and showed in the apparatus the origin of the scribal error (13,25), explicitly indicating that "والى عبره Fehler für والعربيه". Despite this, Lamoreaux takes the reading in Berg. 1925, *wa-ilā ġayrihā*, which is nobody's text except Bergsträsser's conjecture, and presents it, first, as if it were the reading of A (it isn't; if anything, A could only be read as *wa-ilā ġayrihī*), and second, as a real variant by Ḥunayn: in a note (p. 3, n. 6) he makes the misleading remark, "the present work discusses only translations into Syriac and Arabic", as if Ḥunayn had ever said that translations were made into languages other than Syriac and Arabic.

The entirety of the Arabic text itself is edited bare, without any vocalization, *šadda*s, or *hamza*s on initial *alif*s, which are necessary for the precise reading of the text, though L. adds unnecessary modern punctuation. Examples:

Absence of *hamza*s on initial *alif*s: At 2,11 Lamoreaux writes فان., without a *hamza* specifying whether it is to be read *fa-inna* or *fa-anna*, and wrongly places a period before it. He understands, as his translation indicates, *fa-inna* (meaning "because, for"), making this the beginning of a new sentence after the period he has put before it: "... . Surely it is better...". MS A has here *wa-anna*, as Berg. 1925 prints, and he also gives the variant in MS B, in his 1932 book (83,6), which he vocalizes as *fa-anna*. Assuming that *fa-anna* is a real variant and not a scribal

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error for *wa-anna*, the clause beginning with *fa-anna* is to be read, Bergsträsser correctly indicates, as a continuation of the preceding clause and not as initiating a new sentence: "I informed you that ..., and that ..., and thus that it is better ..."). Failure to distinguish between *anna* and *inna* by omitting the *hamza*, and the addition of a period – to say nothing of neglecting to consult Bergsträsser – led Lamoreaux to printing an erroneous text and translation.

Absence of *šadda*s, where they should be inserted to direct the correct reading: At 20,1 Lamoreaux reads, *wa-l-'aẓm allaḏī yšbh fī aḥruf al-yūnāniyyīn bi-l-lām*, without indicating how the verb is to be read. He manifestly understands it as *yušbihu* because he translates, "the bone that resembles the *lām* in the characters of the Greeks". But the verb cannot be *yušbihu*, "resembles", because *ašbaha*, the IVth form, takes a direct object, whereas here the object is introduced by the preposition *bi-* (*bi-l-lām*). The correct reading is *yušabbahu ... bi-*, passive of IInd form, "is likened to, has the shape of" which should have been indicated by both a *šadda* and passive vocalization. Berg. 1932, p. 17, l. 24, has the correct reading, *jušabbahu*, which L. again disregards. But even so, had Lamoreaux bothered to consult the *WKAS* under *lām* (**lwm*) for the Greek letter *lambda*, he would have been informed that in the Galenic treatises the Greek word λαμβδοειδής ("lambda-shaped") – what Ḥunayn is talking about here – was also translated by *allaḏī yušabbahu bi-l-lām min kitāb al-yūnāniyyīn*, as properly transliterated by Ullmann.[9]

Even worse, not only does L. not consult and follow Bergsträsser where he should, thus making unnecessary errors, but he does not credit Bergsträsser in some places where he does follow and adopt his corrections, thus plagiarizing. The proper apparatus entry in the following two cases, again from the first three pages only, should have been:

1,5 *wa-tabyīn* corr. Berg. 1932 : *wa-tbyn* B : without points A (*wa-yatabayyanu* Berg. 1925).

Here L. does not credit Berg. 1932 for correcting *wa-tbyn* into *wa-tabyīn*.

3,12 *mutawakkilan* corr. Berg. 1925 : *mutawakkil* A : om. B.

Here (p. 7 note b) Lamoreaux explicitly credits himself for Bergsträsser's reading of *mutawakkilan*: "I have supplemented the text from A, adding *tanwīn* for consistency."

The translation facing the text suffers as the text does. The introduction, which purports to introduce the background in which Ḥunayn translated and wrote the *Risāla*, is pedestrian and shows little understanding of the historical context and

[9] Manfred Ullmann, *Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1957-2009, vol. II.3, 1822 b 23–25.

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the secondary literature describing it. There is also an unbecoming to a scholarly book Christian chauvinism: the Muslims, Lamoreaux says, told all sorts of tales (imaginary, it is implied) extolling the translation movement under Islam, but the Christian translators "understood things differently. For them, the translation movement had begun not with the Abbasid caliphs but centuries earlier" (p. xi). The religious bias, ever so slightly camouflaged under a scholarly façade, is evident already from the series in which L. assented that the book be published: the series is titled *Eastern Christian Texts*, by Brigham Young University Press. Ḥunayn's *Risāla* is a text written by an Eastern Christian but it is not an Eastern Christian text.

There are also some factual inaccuracies and further inattention to secondary literature in the Introduction, as in Ḥunayn's birthdate, for example. Ḥunayn was born not vaguely "in the first decade of the ninth century", as Lamoreaux says, p. xii, but specifically in 807-808, as Ḥunayn himself tells us in this very work Lamoreaux is "editing". Ḥunayn says (p. 130 of L.'s text, 52,10 Berg. 1925), that he was 48 (solar) years old in 1167 of the Alexandrian era, which corresponds to 855-856 AD. A simple subtraction gives us 1 October 807 – 30 September 808 AD as his birth year, as already established.[10]

All in all, a heavily flawed and ultimately useless edition which should never have been undertaken, even were it only out of respect for Ḥunayn, the master editor and translator of texts. It can be safely disregarded, and scholars will continue to refer to Bergsträsser's two books for the text and all information on Ḥunayn's *Risāla*.

Lamoreaux's book also contains an appendix by Grigory Kessel, an "Inventory of Galen's Extant Works in Syriac", which, in sharp contrast to the rest of the book, is worth consulting.

[10] On Ḥunayn's life and works see (not consulted by Lamoreaux), D. Gutas, "Gelehrte als Vermittler philosophischen Denkens: Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq, Ṯābit ibn Qurra", in Ulrich Rudolph, ed., unter Mitarbeit von Renate Würsch, *Philosophie in der islamischen Welt 1. 8.-10. Jahrhundert*, Basel, Schwabe Verlag, 2012, 480–496, 543–544; English original in U. Rudolph et al., eds., *Philosophy in the Islamic World*, *Volume I: 8th – 10th Centuries*, Leiden / Boston 2017, 680–704, 766–768. A recent article on Ḥunayn's reception (too recent for L. to have consulted), is J. T. Olsson's "The Reputation of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq in Contemporaneous and Later Sources", *Journal of Abbasid Studies,* 3 (2016): 29–55.

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