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A Newly-Discovered Commentary on the Hippocratic *Prognostic* by Barhebraeus: Its Contents and Its Place within the Arabic *Taqdimat al-ma'rifa* Tradition

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Abstract

There are only two manuscripts of Barhebraeus' Arabic *Prognosticon* commentary that have been described in catalogues. They are, moreover, incomplete and inaccessible and even considered lost for posterity. However, the present author, during recent 'fieldwork' in Istanbul (2011), recovered a complete manuscript of Barhebraeus' abridged commentary on the Hippocratic *Prognosticon*, which also contains exciting new information on his commentary of the *Aphorisms*. The manuscript under consideration remained dormant for more than 700 years. This breakthrough finding will shed light on and be of significance for our understanding of Barhebraeus' works and will also highlight his relationship to those authors who had major influences on his work. The newly discovered text will moreover offer us the possibility to study the position and status of Barhebraeus' commentary within the corpus of Arabic commentaries on the Hippocratic *Prognosticon* or *Taqdimat al-ma'rifa*.

Keywords

medicine, Arabic commentaries, Hippocratic *Prognosticon*, Barhebraeus (d. AH 685/1286 AD), 'Ali ibn ad-Dakhwār ad-Dimashqī (d. AH 628/1230 AD), 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Bagh-dādī (d. AH 629/1231 AD), Abu l-Ḥasan ibn an-Nafīs (d. AH 687/1288 AD)

Introduction

"New York, sommet de l' Empire State Building, 23 heures
Nathan, regardez le garçon à l' anorak orange
– Pardon?
– Regardez le garçon à l' anorak orange
– Bon sang, Garrett, pourquoi voulez-vous que je regarde?
– Parce qu' il va mourir.

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Moins d'une minute plus tard, l'adolescent se tire une balle dans la tête. Et c'est ainsi que Nathan Del Amico, brillant avocat new-yorkais, découvre l'étrange pouvoir de Garrett Goodrich. A la fois choqué et abasourdi, Nathan voudrait chasser cette scène de son esprit ...

Alors qui est ce Garrett Goodrich? Un oncérologue chevronné, directeur d'un important centre de soins palliatifs. Il n'a rien d'un illuminé et pourtant il se dit capable de prévoir la mort."

The above fragment is a synopsis of a chapter from a modern French novel, *Et après...* (*Afterwards*) by the author Guillaume Musso.¹ It deals with the life of Nathan, a successful lawyer in New York, who is visited by a mysterious figure calling himself Dr. Garrett Goodrich, an oncologist, who claims to be able to identify selected people who are about to die by an aura of bright light that surrounds them. The fragment is introduced here in order to clarify the medical concept of prognosis before proceeding to discuss the paraphernalia of the Greek *Prognostic* and the Arabic *Taqdimat al-ma'rifa* tradition and specifically the newly found abridgment (*talkhis*) of Barhebraeus' Arabic commentary on the Hippocratic *Prognostic*.

The prognostic skills which Goodrich displays are those which every modern physician would employ: as an oncologist and hospital director he makes use of conventional means and would merely refer to prognosis with regard to the future, that is he would look at the likely course and outcome of an illness. He would base the best prognosis for a complete cure on diagnosis and treatment in an early stage of development, before cancer cells would have spread.

But outside the hospital, when roaming through the streets of New York, he bases his prognosis on abstract phenomena that lack a rational base and merely

¹ Guillaume Musso (Antibes 1974–). French author. His novel *Et après...* (*Afterwards*) has been translated into 23 languages, among them Japanese (title: *Messeji soshite ai wo nokoru*) and Arabic (title: *Wa-ba'du*). A German/French/Canadian film by director Gilles Bourdos is based on this novel and was released in 2008. The main character Nathan is played by the French actor Romain Duris. Playing the main character's wife is Canadian actress Evangeline Lilly, while veteran actor John Malkovich plays the role of the mysterious doctor John Kay (in the novel: Garrett Goodrich). It has sometimes been maliciously suggested that Musso originally named his novel *Et puis après...* (*So what!*). For a better understanding of the text, it needs of course to be explained that Goodrich actually is a religious fanatic who believes that God shines a light on the doomed: those who are about to die are followed by a divine guiding light. This divine element in Goodrich's prognosis creates an interesting but rather disturbing dichotomy: on the one hand there is the rational and learned medical professional who follows the correct, i.e. standard, medical procedures and shows empathy to the sick. On the other hand we find an irrational and delusional individual who fully disregards his medical training and bases his prognosis on 'divine' elements, thereby completely ignoring the human factor. The fragment presented above is a synopsis of chapter four of the said novel. Guillaume Musso, *Et après...* (Paris: XO éditions, 2004), 35–41.

seem to arise from a form of *automaton* (that is, matters of spontaneous occurrence), a concept that was likewise not unknown in the ancient Hellenistic world.²

As Edelstein explained “every process arising from the *automaton* is an event of unknown cause ... it may effect a favorable outcome which could not have been achieved by human means, or an unfavorable outcome which human means could not have prevented.”³ Apart from this, Goodrich employs the ancient threefold dimension, that is *pronoia* of the present, the past and the future with the help of a thorough knowledge of strong signs or symptoms. Goodrich’s predictions on the basis of the *automaton* bring up the question of the speculative nature of prognosis that we also encounter in Galen’s commentary on the Hippocratic *Prognostic* (*Hip. Prog. com.* 197: 12): here the antagonists of Hippocrates, the Methodists, criticize him and state “that prophesying the future is a seer’s business.”⁴ To which statement Hippocrates apparently replies (*Hip. Prog. com.* 204: 19–21): “But the business of good physicians is, not to inquire into such matters, but (to find out) how the man who predicts what will happen to the sick can mostly succeed and seldom fail.”⁵ Hippocrates’ reply to the Methodists is of course a tiny bit vague, but we should acknowledge that there is only a thin dividing line between divination and prognosis. Or, put in the words of Van der Eijk: “Divination and prognosis were two areas which the Hippocratic writers were keen to present as fundamentally different without always being able to spell out what the difference was.”⁶

To put this in a nutshell: good physicians succeed for the most part because they use strong signs to predict the outcome of a disease, but the procedure of *pronoia* must also be based on conjecture, and predictions should be made conditionally.

Moreover, Edelstein’s explanation that the *automaton* can be explained and interpreted as the *theion* in diseases is rather convincing: “something whose cause men do not know they call *theion* (divine). Therefore, instead of saying that the

² Ludwig Edelstein, “The Hippocratic Physician,” in *Ancient Medicine: Selected Papers of Ludwig Edelstein*, ed. Owsei Temkin and C. Lilian Temkin, trans. from the German by C. Lilian Temkin (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), 87–110, esp. 107.

³ Edelstein, “The Hippocratic Physician,” 107.

⁴ Kenneth Arthur Jenner, *A Study of Galen’s Commentary on the ‘Prognostikon’ of Hippocrates, I.* 1–26, (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1989), 107.

⁵ Jenner, *A Study of Galen’s Commentary*, 115.

⁶ Philip J. van der Eijk, “Divination, Prognosis and Prophylaxis: The Hippocratic work ‘On Dreams’ (*De Victu* 4) and its Near Eastern Background,” in *Magic and Rationality in Ancient and Graeco-Roman Medicine*, ed. H.F.J. (Manfred) Horstmanshoff and Marten Stol (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 187–218, esp. 193.

physician should have knowledge, and foreknowledge, of the *automaton*, we can say he must have foreknowledge of the *theion* in diseases.⁷ Edelstein's thesis, however, is diametrically opposed to Galen's view (*Hip. Prog. com.* 207: 15) as the latter states that "Hippocrates did not describe as divine merely things which have unknown causes. These matters can simply be described as remarkable."⁸

We will return to the concept of *theion* and its interpretation when we come to discuss the different Arabic versions of the *Commentary on the Prognostic*.

The *Prognostic* in Greek and Arabic Revisited

The author of *Prognostic* is mainly concerned with acute diseases (or: rapidly fatal diseases), which can be detected from a variety of factors such as bodily secretions (stool, urine, sweat, vomit, saliva); behavior; and bodily changes such as swellings, inflammations and so on. Fevers obviously occupy a prominent position, and the theory of critical days is developed here.

Physicians in the medieval Islamic world took a particular interest in the topic of prognosis: it centred for the most part on a number of key issues in clinical medicine and consequently played a vital role in the education of physicians in the medieval Islamic world. To this end some authors thought it necessary to comment on the subject of prognosis and therefore used Galen as their role model. The latter wrote an extensive commentary on the Hippocratic *Prognostic*.⁹ Galen provided these authors with an all-embracing explanation and his focus was somewhat different to other scholars of his time. First, he viewed Hippocrates in a so-called 'ahistorical' or rather 'modern' manner: he often read the medical doctrine of his time, and especially his own, into the Hippocratic text. In the second instance, he followed a bold program by contradicting and scorning other commentators.¹⁰ In his *Commentary on Hippocrates' Prognostic*, he tried to offer a plausible theoretical context underpinning the basis of the Hippocratic principles.¹¹ Further, Galen explained the disputed writings by means of logic, medicine and philosophy. Apart from his commentary, Galen also composed his own work *On Prognosis*. In this particular work Galen did not primarily

⁷) Edelstein, "The Hippocratic Physician," 107.

⁸) Jenner, *A Study of Galen's Commentary*, 118.

⁹) Joseph Heeg, *Galen: In Hippocrates Prognosticum commentaria III*. *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* vol. 9, part 2 (Leipzig and Berlin, 1915); cf. also Jenner, *A Study of Galen's Commentary*.

¹⁰) Philip J. van der Eijk, "Exegesis, Explanation and Epistemology in Galen's Commentaries on Epidemics, Books One and Two," in *Epidemics in Context: Greek Commentaries on Hippocrates in the Arabic Tradition* (Scientia Graeco-Arabica Band 8), ed. by Peter E. Pormann (Berlin [a.o.]: De Gruyter, 2012), 25–47, esp. 28–9, and footnote 16 with further literature.

¹¹) For example, Heeg, *Galen: In Hippocrates Prognosticum commentaria III*, 197.

focus on the theory of how to predict the progress of diseases. Instead of this he described physical cases from his own experience, in which he cured patients through his application of prognosis.¹² It would appear that four books by Hippocrates enjoyed a particular favour with teachers and students of medicine in late antique Alexandria; they were, in order of importance: *Aphorisms*; *Prognostic*; *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, and *Airs, Waters, Places*. Stephen of Alexandria and Palladius provided commentaries on the first book.¹³ Further, we are also aware of at least two late antique authors who wrote commentaries on *Prognostic*, namely the same Stephen of Alexandria and the rather well-known but somewhat elusive Gesius. The first one survives in the Greek language and is available in a critical edition.¹⁴ Like other commentaries by Stephen of Alexandria, this one, too, interchangeably joins and uses Galenic and Aristotelian philosophy in an interesting and thought-provoking manner. But it also mirrors the methods of classroom and lecture room instruction, especially the propensity to apply division or diversity. For example, at the commencement of his commentary on the *Prognostic*, Stephen discourses on the eight main points (*kephálaia*): intention; usefulness; authenticity; title; reading order; division into parts; where it belongs; and didactic method.¹⁵ Palladius likewise follows this concept of main points in the preface to his commentary on the *Aphorisms*,¹⁶ a text that is—sadly—only partly available in an Arabic manuscript. This likewise illustrates the great influence that Stephen and his assumed master Palladius exerted on the subsequent tradition. As a matter of fact, we already find these eight headings in modified form in the introduction to Galen's *Commentary on Hippocrates' 'On Nutriment'* by Sergius of Rēš 'Aynā (d. 536) as present in MS New York, *JTSA* 2761; and this introduction also survives only in Arabic (but in Hebrew characters).¹⁷ Within the Arabic medical tradition, Ibn Hindū (d. 1032), the

¹² Vivian Nutton, *Galen: On prognosis. Text, Translation, Commentary*, CMG V.8.1, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1979).

¹³ Leendert G. Westerink, *Stephanus of Athens: Commentary on Hippocrates' Aphorisms* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985–95); cf. Hans Hinrich Biesterfeldt, "Palladius on the Hippocratic *Aphorisms*," in *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists* (Philosophia Antiqua, vol. 107), ed. Cristina D'Ancona (Leiden [a.o.]: Brill, 2007), 385–97.

¹⁴ John M. Duffy, *Stephanus the Philosopher. A Commentary on the Prognosticon of Hippocrates* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1983).

¹⁵ N. Peter Joosse and Peter E. Pormann, "Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's *Commentary on Hippocrates' 'Prognostic'*: A Preliminary Exploration," in *Epidemics in Context: Greek Commentaries on Hippocrates in the Arabic Tradition*, Scientia Graeco-Arabica, Band 8, ed. Peter E. Pormann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 251–83, esp. 254.

¹⁶ Biesterfeldt, "Palladius," 391–94.

¹⁷ Gerrit Bos and Y. Tzvi Langermann, "The Introduction of Sergius of Rēsh'ainā to Galen's *Commentary on Hippocrates' On Nutriment*," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 54, no. 1 (2009): 179–204.

author of *The Key to Medicine and a Guide for Students* (*Miftāḥ at-ṭibb wa-minhāj at-tullāb*), does for instance also introduce the eight headings, but again with some minor variations,¹⁸ and so do Ibn at-Ṭayyib and ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādī.¹⁹ This tradition of the canonical eight-fold formula also continued in the medieval Latin world.²⁰ It is, however, still very much an open question whether or not this specific tradition was also extended to the Arabic commentary tradition of the post-classical period. It has been proven that the canonical eight-fold formula was present in all layers of Arabic-Islamic science during this later period, and it can for instance be found in many works of astrology, logic, philosophy, theology and history.²¹ It nevertheless seems to be wholly absent from the later Arabic commentary tradition. There is perhaps still a tiny ray of hope here: in the domain of post-classical medicine there exist two works on ophthalmology in which the eight main points occur: the *Masā’il wa-aġwibatuhā fi ‘ilm šinā’at al-kuḥl* by the author Dāniyāl b. Sha‘yā (dates unknown)²² and the *Kitāb Nūr al-‘uyūn wa-jamī‘ al-funūn* by Abū Zakarīyā’ Yaḥyā ibn abī r-Rajā’ (fl. around 1298).²³

As with the *Aphorisms*, the *Prognostic* appeared to have been translated in the wake of Galen’s commentary. This translation, probably that by Ḥunayn ibn ‘Ishāq (d. 873), has been edited by Klamroth, who also argued that an earlier translation of this text existed as well.

He found excerpts of this older translation in the early historian and geographer al-Ya‘qūbī (d. after 905).²⁴ In addition thereto Overwien recently has suggested that this older translation may perhaps have been authored by the Greek medical writer Palladius.²⁵ The philosopher and polymath al-Kindī (d. ca. 866)

¹⁸ Aida Tibi and Emilie Savage-Smith, Abū al-Faraj ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Hindū. *The Key to Medicine and a Guide for Students* (Reading: Garnet Publishing, 2010), 52–4; Joosse and Pormann, “Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādī’s *Commentary*,” 263.

¹⁹ Bos and Langermann, “The Introduction of Sergius of Rēsh‘ainā,” 183; Joosse and Pormann, “Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādī’s *Commentary*,” 262–63.

²⁰ Faith Wallis, ed., *Medieval Medicine: A Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 10–3.

²¹ Gregor Schoeler, “Der Verfasser der Augenheilkunde *K. Nūr al-‘uyūn* und das Schema der 8 Präliminarien im 1. Kapitel des Werkes,” *Der Islam* 64 (1987): 87–97, esp. 93–4.

²² Albert Dietrich, *Medicinalia Arabica. Studien über arabische medizinische Handschriften in türkischen und syrischen Bibliotheken*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen; Philologisch-Historische Klasse, Dritte Folge, Nr. 66 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 167–8.

²³ Schoeler, “Der Verfasser,” 94–7.

²⁴ Martin Klamroth, “Ueber die Auszüge aus griechischen Schriftstellern bei al-Ja‘qūbī,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 40 (1886): 189–233.

²⁵ Oliver Overwien, “Eine anonyme Vorlesung über das *Prognostikon* aus dem spätantiken Alexandria,” *Galenos* 5 (2011): 91–102; cf. also Overwien, “Einige Beobachtungen zur Überlieferung der Hippokratesschriften in der arabischen und griechischen Tradition,” *Sudhoffs Archiv* 89 (2005): 196–210, esp. 206–8.

also may have used this older translation in his *Summaries of Medicine*, of which only an extract on the signs of death survives.²⁶

Before we turn to the medical works of Barhebraeus and the newly found abridgment, it is, however, useful to mention the three other extant commentaries on *Prognostic*. Moreover, it is striking that the *Prognosticon* commentaries in the Arabic tradition are all composed by authors from the so-called ‘post-classical’ period: ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, Ibn an-Nafīs, Ibn ad-Dakhwār and Barhebraeus. Commentaries on Hippocrates’ *Prognosticon* from the ‘classical’ period have not come to light, nor are there any commentaries known from the ‘post-classical’ period later than 1288. The question therefore remains: why is this the case, and what caused the stagnation of the production of copies of this specific text during the later ages (13th century and onwards)? It must, however, be noted that the situation with regard to the *Aphorisms* commentaries in the Arabic tradition gives us a totally different picture.²⁷

It is well acknowledged that the physician Muhadhhab ad-Dīn ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm ibn ‘Alī ad-Dakhwār (d. 1230) composed the first known commentary on the Hippocratic *Prognostic*.²⁸ His pupil Badr al-Dīn Muzaffar ibn Qāḍī Ba‘labakk arranged for this commentary to be circulated. ‘Alī ad-Dakhwār founded the ‘first medical school’ in the medieval Arab world and was considered a famous medical educator.

The commentary by ad-Dakhwār, that his pupil Badr ad-Dīn ‘fixed in writing’, as Fuat Sezgin states it,²⁹ includes sources that can be traced back to the later half of the twelfth century. It lives on in a number of manuscripts; and it has been edited. The commentary is lemmatic, but ad-Dakhwār did not follow the very short lemmas that are utilized in Galen’s commentary; he rather selected longer passages which he compiled and then provided one explanation thereof. Ad-Dakhwār’s commentary contains a number of paraphrases. He repeats the main points made by Hippocrates (as understood by Galen), and then provides his own diagrams and perceptions. He sometimes embellished his commentary with

²⁶ Gerrit Bos, “A Recovered Fragment on the Signs of Death from al-Kindī’s “Medical Summaries,”” *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften* 6 (1990): 189–94.

²⁷ Peter E. Pormann and N. Peter Joosse, “Commentaries on the Hippocratic *Aphorisms* in the Arabic Tradition: The Example of Melancholy,” in *Epidemics in Context: Greek Commentaries on Hippocrates in the Arabic Tradition*, Scientia Graeco-Arabica Band 8, ed. Peter E. Pormann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 211–49.

²⁸ Māhir ‘Abd al-Qādir Muḥammad (*dirāsa wa-taḥqīq*), ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Mu’tī Muḥammad wa-Muḥammad ‘Abduh Maḥjūb (*taṣḍīr*), *Kitāb Sharḥ Taqdimat al-ma’rifā li-d-Dakhwār* (Alexandria: Dār al-Ma’rifā al-jāmi’iyya, 2000).

²⁹ Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*. Band III: Medizin-Pharmazie-Zoologie-Tierheilkunde bis ca. 430 H. (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 32.

narrations and anecdotes that could illustrate his main points, although a significant number of these anecdotes were clearly derived from a Galenic model.³⁰

The second commentary is by the famous theoretical physician and grammarian ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādī (d. 1231). ‘Abd al-Laṭīf also composed his commentary on the Hippocratic *Prognostic* in lemmatic form: in each case he first quotes a relatively short section from Hippocrates’ work, and then proceeds to explain it. But at this point we can already notice the first difference to the Galenic model: like ad-Dakhwār, he takes larger chunks of texts as lemmas to be commented on. In fact, it would appear that he often shares the same division into larger lemmas with ad-Dakhwār, and Ibn an-Nafis and Barhebraeus follow their lead in this respect as well. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf often begins his commentary with the expression ‘By saying ... he means (*qawluhū ... ’ayy*)’. In other words, he quotes parts of the longer lemma and explains it in various ways. Occasionally, he also reflects on the lemma as a whole, as for instance in the case of the second lemma. His comments vary in both length, content, and methodology, for we find some quite short remarks in which he merely clarifies an expression or provides a synonym. At times, his strong interest in Arabic grammar shows through. For instance, he analyses the compound Arabic word ‘foreknowledge (*taqdimat al-ma’rifā*)’, a calque of the Greek *prō-gnōsis*, according to the morphological categories. But we also see ‘Abd al-Laṭīf comparing different manuscripts of the Arabic version of the *Prognostic*. At one point, he provides a variant text in full, although it would appear that a lemma has merely been omitted in the main manuscript that he follows. Elsewhere in the commentary, however, he talks about a number of manuscripts or ‘versions (*nuskhas*)’ at his disposal and notes discrepancies between them. But ‘Abd al-Laṭīf goes even further. By comparing different translations, such as perhaps the older one as reflected in al-Ya’qūbī and the younger one by Ḥunayn, he tries to come to a better understanding of the text.³¹

Such a textual comparison is rather unique in the Arabic commentary tradition. However, to which manuscripts and versions ‘Abd al-Laṭīf refers is rather unclear. The names of al-Kindī and Palladius have already passed in revue.

³⁰ For much more detailed and elaborate accounts of the Arabic commentaries on the Hippocratic *Prognostic* by the near contemporaries ‘Alī ad-Dakhwār, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādī and Ibn an-Nafis, cf. Joosse and Pormann, “‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādī’s *Commentary*,” 257–67.

³¹ A broader excursus on ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s use of different versions and translations can be found in Joosse and Pormann, “‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādī’s *Commentary*,” 263–66; For Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq’s translation technique, cf. for example Oliver Overwien, “The Art of the Translator, or: How did Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq and his School Translate?,” in *Epidemics in Context: Greek Commentaries on Hippocrates in the Arabic Tradition* (= *Scientia Graeco-Arabica* Band 8), ed. by Peter E. Pormann (Berlin [a.o.]: De Gruyter, 2012), 151–69.

Ḥunayn ibn 'Ishāq, on the other hand, is rather brief about the *Prognostic* in his *Risāla* as he states (We are quoting recension A here) that:

He [Galen] composed this book in three volumes. Sergius of Rēs 'Aynā has translated it into Syriac. Later, I myself translated it into Syriac for Salmawayh [Ibn Bunān]. I also translated the lemmata of his treatise into Arabic for Ibrāhīm Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Mūsā and 'Isā Ibn Yaḥyā translated the commentary into Arabic.³²

The manuscripts, B, Q1 and Q2 of 'Abd al-Laṭīf's commentary may, however, provide us with a strong clue, for in the beginning of lemma one the wording "foresight is a synonym of foreknowledge" is followed by a variant reading (that may have resulted from a gloss or some other form of marginal interpolation) and which reads "but in the translation of Ibn Bukhtīshū' [it is said] in this manner, namely that the excellent physician embraces foreknowledge."³³ But which member of the renowned Bukhtīshū' family is meant here? Most likely it is either Jibrīl Ibn Bukhtīshū' (d. 828) or his son Bukhtīshū' Ibn Jibrīl (d. 870).³⁴ Moreover, Ḥunayn records that Jibrīl tried his hand at improving a Syriac version of Galen's *Aphorisms* commentary composed by Job of Edessa, only to mess it up a little bit more. This could well indicate that Jibrīl was more than just a patron of Ḥunayn and that he was also actively involved in the translation process himself. A translation by Jibrīl's hand is, however, unknown to us. Therefore, we should be fully aware that patrons sometimes assisted in the collation of texts, had something to say about the style of translations and would undertake stylistic revision of the translations. Obviously Ḥunayn was not too happy with this practice, because it gave rise to the circulation of multiple versions, and judging from his utterance "If you found different versions of my translation, you might know the reason" it must have annoyed him quite a bit.³⁵ Thus, when 'Abd al-Laṭīf discusses the many different versions of the commentary on the *Prognostic*, then he might refer above all to any of these multiple versions of Ḥunayn's works which came into being because of correction and adjustment activities, and which were still readily available in 'Abd al-Laṭīf's day and age.

³² Please note that this is not an English rendering of Gotthelf Bergsträsser's German translation of the *Risāla* of the year 1925, but a new English translation by John C. Lamoreaux of which I may have seen a preview or the like, otherwise I cannot logically explain how this fragment came to my attention. Lamoreaux's *Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq on His Galen Translations*, Eastern Christian Texts, vol. 3 (Provo: Brigham Young University Press) is forthcoming.

³³ For the MSS B, Q1 and Q2 of 'Abd al-Laṭīf's *Commentary*, see: Joosse and Pormann, "'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī's *Commentary*," 261; For the marginal interpolation, see Joosse and Pormann, "'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡdādī's *Commentary*," 272, footnote 118.

³⁴ Sezgin, *Geschichte*, Band III, 226–7 and 243.

³⁵ Cf. Lamoreaux, *preview*.

However, in isolated cases, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf indeed refers to a translation that is not that by Ḥunayn, and which may reflect an older rendering of the text:

In a translation that is not that by Ḥunayn, the first part of this lemma [*faṣl*] [runs as follows]: “If the face is at the beginning of the illness [*fi bad’i l-marādi*] like this [*‘alā hādā*], then you ought to look at the other signs, think about them again, and ask about whether the patient has been sleepless.” This translation explains that of Ḥunayn. His words: “If the face is in this state” mean that “it was at the beginning of the illness [*fi bīdā’i l-marādi*] in this bad state [*fi hādhibi l-ḥāli r-radī’ati*].” By “at the beginning of the illness”, he means “the beginning that has a symptom [*‘arad*].”³⁶

It is presently unclear whether this translation represents the supposed older translation of the Hippocratic *Prognostic* as found in the works of the aforementioned authors al-Ya‘qūbī and al-Kindī, and which was perhaps composed in Greek by Palladius and afterwards translated into the Arabic language by Ibn al-Bīṭrīq. In his *Prognostic* commentary, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf seems to be rather positive about the older text and he uses it to shed light on Ḥunayn’s where the latter is more obscure. But at the beginning of his *Aphorisms* commentary ‘Abd al-Laṭīf dismisses another commentary that he had seen “by one of the Greeks” as “badly translated and poorly expressed in contrast to Galen’s clear way of expressing himself.” This *Aphorisms* commentary may likely have been that by Palladius, as Biesterfeldt recently suggested.³⁷

There is obviously some kind of friction here, which makes us sincerely doubt whether the non-Ḥunayn text in use by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf actually represents the Arabic translation of Palladius’ *Prognostic* commentary, since ‘Abd al-Laṭīf would certainly not have made use of a text that he had previously criticized and ignored.

A third commentary was composed by the more well-known Syrian physician Ibn an-Nafīs al-Qurāshī (d. 1288), who practised in Egypt for the major part of his life. He gained widespread fame in modern times through his ‘discovery’ of the pulmonary transit. His lemmatic commentary has been preserved in about eight manuscripts. He also wrote several commentaries on other Hippocratic texts such as the *Aphorisms* and *On the Nature of Man*. Ibn an-Nafīs’ commentary often shares the same division into larger lemmas with the earlier ones by ad-Dakhwār and ‘Abd al-Laṭīf. Each lemma starts with ‘Hippocrates said (*qāla Buqrāt*)’, which is then later followed by the words ‘the commentary (*ash-sharḥ*)’.

³⁶ MS Damascus, Maktabat al-Asad no. 3152 Ṭibb, p. 19, line 14–p. 20, line 1 (English transl. by Joosse and Pormann).

³⁷ Biesterfeldt, “Palladius,” 388.

In a brief introduction, some seven lines long in one manuscript, the author states that he was inspired to write a commentary on the *Prognostic*, because of the fact that his earlier commentary on the *Aphorisms* had met with so much success. He, moreover, proclaims that he is going to follow the same method as he has previously done: to conduct investigations about words and meanings, and to explain the information contained in the lemmas.

Bar Hebraeus and Medicine

Finally, the Syriac author Mar Gregory 'Abū al-Faraj ibn al-'Ibrī, better known as Barhebraeus (d. 1286), the Maphrian of the East in the Syrian Orthodox Church, also authored an abridged commentary on the *Prognostic* in Arabic. Until recently, most manuscripts of this abridgment (*talkhiṣ*) were thought to be lost, but in the year 2011 we were able to identify one extant and accessible manuscript in Turkey while trawling for manuscripts at the different libraries of Istanbul. We will, however, first give a short overview of what has been written about Barhebraeus' medical work.

The medical work of Barhebraeus has been described very briefly by Ighnāṭiyūs Afrām I Barṣaum in the *Majallat al-baṭriyarkīya* 7 (1940).³⁸ In addition to this, the article gives a short description of the manuscript collection Barṣaum (3 MSS), and offers information on the copyist and his family. Takahashi, in his *Barhebraeus: a Bio-Bibliography*, lists all the medical works of Barhebraeus. He draws the conclusion that “the majority of these eight works seem to be lost, and that it may be seen from their titles that they consisted mainly of abridgments and compilations out of the standard medical texts of his day.”³⁹ With regard to Barhebraeus' abridgment of the Hippocratic *Prognostic*, Takahashi mentions three manuscripts: 1) MS SOPatr. 6.17/c, (2) an MS from Aleppo from the collection Basil Rizq-Allah, as registered by Sbath in his *Fibris*, and (3) an MS kept in the “Public Library” in Baghdād as mentioned by Cheikho.⁴⁰ A more recent listing of Barhebraeus' medical works is provided by Micheau, who broadly discusses all the extant and non-extant titles.⁴¹ She reaches the conclusion that Barhebraeus was not an original thinker in the domain of medicine, and avers that he was a simple compiler who abridged a few important works, without

³⁸ Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem I Barṣaum, “Kitāb taḥrīr masā'il Ḥunayn b. Ishāq aṭ-ṭibbiya li-l-'allāma Ghrighūriyūs Abī al-Faraj Ibn al-'Ibrī mafriyān al-mashriq wa-ta'ālifuhū aṭ-ṭibbiya,” *al-Majalla al-baṭriyarkīya* 7 (1940): 148–56.

³⁹ Hidemi Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005), 85.

⁴⁰ Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography*, 86: 33B and 390: B33B.M1.

⁴¹ Françoise Micheau, “Les traités médicaux de Barhebraeus,” *Parole de l'Orient* 33 (2008): 159–75.

contributing anything worthwhile. The mere fact that he was not able to finish his Syriac translation of Ibn Sīnā's *Canon of Medicine* is in Micheau's view the sad symbol of a Syriac or Syrian Renaissance that was launched ("Que ce projet ait avorté est le triste symbole d'une renaissance qui devait rester sans lendemains"), but had not taken off.⁴² Unfortunately, Micheau's article has likewise not taken off, for she merely reiterates and ruminates the arguments already made by Göttberger in the year 1900.⁴³ In addition, when elaborating on the versions of the Hippocratic commentaries on the *Aphorisms* and the *Prognostic*, she remarks that both Barṣaum and Takahashi based their findings on notes that were either much too ancient, or much too obscure.⁴⁴ Moreover, she avers that the said commentaries are also not mentioned in the bibliographical register that Barhebraeus' brother Barṣawmā inserted at the end of the *Chronicon ecclesiasticum*. Thus, Micheau rejects the idea of a Syriac or Syrian Renaissance, but in doing so she also challenges the idea that sciences flourished during the so-called "post-classical" period of Islam. The implication thereof is that she apparently holds on to the rather antiquated statement that medicine in the Arab world declined after the twelfth century AD. It is, however, not untrue that Barhebraeus did not add much fresh material to his compilations, and that he perhaps was not an unique and novel scholar in the field of medicine but ... *et puis après* (so what)! It has been stated many times before that he was an excellent compiler and that through his ingenious compilations we are given a superb insight into his working method, which sources he employed and how he dealt with these sources.⁴⁵ And after all, "he was just one of the pluckers of the vineyard who followed the vintagers" as he explains in *Ethics* 4.2.6 of his *Butyrum sapientiae*.⁴⁶ In the present case, however, Micheau forgot about one simple fact when formulating her rather too premature verdict: it is still possible to make discoveries in libraries all over the world. The newly found *Talkhiṣ sharḥ taqdimat al-ma'rifa li-Abqarāṭ* is the living proof hereof.

Barhebraeus' deep interest in the art of medicine shimmers through in all facets of his oeuvre: Takahashi already pointed at the frequent references to the

⁴² Micheau, "Les traités médicaux," 173.

⁴³ Johann Göttberger, *Barhebraeus und seine Scholien zur Heiligen Schrift* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1900), esp. 43–6.

⁴⁴ Micheau, "Les traités médicaux," 167.

⁴⁵ N. Peter Joosse, *A Syriac Encyclopaedia of Aristotelian Philosophy. Barhebraeus (13th c.), Butyrum sapientiae, Books of Ethics, Economy and Politics. A Critical Edition, with Introduction, Translation, Commentary and Glossaries* (Leiden [a.o]: Brill, 2004); idem, "Expounding on a Theme: Structure and Sources of Barhebraeus's 'Practical Philosophy' in *The Cream of Wisdom*," in *The Syriac Renaissance*, ed. Herman Teule et al. (Louvain: Peeters, 2010), 123–34.

⁴⁶ Joosse, *A Syriac Encyclopaedia*, 73.

diseases suffered by various people in his *Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, the references to medicine in his *Horreum mysteriorum* (*K. d-awṣar rāzē*), and the use of Galen's *De usu partium* in his *Candelabrum sanctuarii*.⁴⁷ References to diseases can also be found in his secular chronicle (e.g. according to Barhebraeus, the caliph al-Qā'im ibn al-Muqtadir died [of suffocation or strangulation] as a result of angina that was caused by eating too large quantities of mud with his food).⁴⁸ The parts on practical philosophy of his *Butyrum sap.* likewise contain many diffused—but nonetheless fascinating—references to medicine.⁴⁹ And in a fairly recent publication, Syros explores the interplay between the Aristotelian and Galenic medical paradigms in medieval and early modern European and Islamic writing on government and the use of organic metaphors against the background of the development of medical theory and practice, drawing thereby among others on Syriac material by also looking at Barhebraeus's writings.⁵⁰

Barhebraeus' Commentary on the *Prognostic*

The newly found Arabic manuscript of Barhebraeus' *Talkhiṣ sharḥ taqdimat al-ma'rifa li-Abqrāṭ* has the siglum Istanbul, Beyazit Devlet Umumi Kütüphanesi, MS Veliyeddin Efendi 2506, fols. 1a–67b. The title page (fol. 1a) provides us with the name of the treatise and its author: *Sharḥ taqdimat al-ma'rifa li-Abqrāṭ ta'lif ash-shaykh al-'allāma al-mafrīyān al-a'zam Jamāl ad-Dīn Abī al-Faraj Ghriḡūrīyūs qaddasahu Allāh*. The preceding page contains a recipe for a specific remedy (*dawā'*) perhaps scribbled thereon by a doctor or an apothecary. The old catalogue of the Beyazit Devlet library (Istanbul, n.d.) records the commentary as 'anonymous (*majhūl*)' and indicates this by a question mark. The *Catalogue*

⁴⁷ Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography*, 54, esp. footnote 244, and 87, esp. footnote 327; For a list of references to medicine in BH *Horr.*, cf. Göttberger, *Barhebraeus und seine Scholien*, 165–6.

⁴⁸ Joosse, *A Syriac Encyclopaedia*, 223–6. From this fragment we can now make the deduction that the angina referred hereto is actually diphtheria. This means that the fluvial mud that was consumed by the caliph most likely contained contaminated water. In 1613 AD, Spain for example experienced an epidemic of diphtheria. The year is known as “El Año de los Garotillos” (The Year of Strangulations) in the history of Spain. Diphtheria is a bacteria, not a virus or disease, and is caused by the bacterium *Corynebacterium Diphtheriae*. The bacteria produces a biotoxin and causes growth of a layer of leathery sheath like membrane on the tonsils, throat and nose and can cause swollen neck. This leathery growth and swelling can impede a person's ability to breathe and cause strangulation, Daniel Dunkin, “The History of Diphtheria,” accessed April 30, 2013, <http://voices.yahoo.com/the-history-diphtheria-its-origin-1756507.html?cat=70>.

⁴⁹ Joosse, “Expounding on a Theme,” 143–7.

⁵⁰ Vasileios Syros, “Galenic Medicine and Notions of Domestic Balance in Early Modern Florentine and Islamic Political Writing,” (forthcoming).

of *Islamic Medical Manuscripts (in Arabic, Turkish & Persian) in the Libraries of Turkey* by Ramazan Şeşen et al. has recorded the author's name, but as Abū al-Faraj Ghriḥūriyūs al-Malaṭī.⁵¹

The name al-Malaṭī does, however, not occur in the manuscript itself, and this may explain why the manuscript remained hidden for such a long time. Remarkably enough Şeşen refers to an entry on Barhebraeus in Brockelmann's history of Arabic literature, but apparently the name Barhebraeus did not ring a bell and thus he was not able to identify the name al-Malaṭī with that of the renowned Syriac Orthodox prelate and polymath.⁵² The colophon (fol. 67b) reveals that the manuscript was finished on Wednesday the 3rd of the month Sha'bān in the year AH 719 (1319 AD), that is roughly 33 or 34 years after Barhebraeus's death. It was copied in the city of Aleppo by Aḥmad ibn 'Abdallāh ibn Yūsuf al-Ḥamawī (and not al-Ḥamdī or al-Ḥamādī as proposed by Şeşen). According to the information given in the colophon, the copyist's father was known under the name Yāqūt. The latter may indicate that our copyist was a descendant from a prominent Aleppan family, to which also Yāqūt ibn 'Abdallāh ar-Rūmī al-Ḥamawī (1179–229), the famous Islamic biographer and geographer, belonged. Since the manuscript was copied in Aleppo, the question arises whether or not we are dealing here with the same, almost mythical, manuscript that once formed part of the collection Basil Rizq-Allah, and that was registered by Sbath in his *Fihris*.

The manuscript is in excellent condition and is written in clear and well legible *naskhī* script, seventeen lines per page. The Hippocratic text and the commentary thereon are indicated in red by single characters. The commentary is presented in a lemmatic form.

The incipit of the text (fol. 1b, lines 1–6), following on the *basmala*, reads:

الحمد لله الذي زين كل بداية حمده ووزن كل نهاية مجده. وبعد فإني لما فرغت من تلخيصي
 لشرح كتاب الفصول للمضبوط أبقراط التمس مني جماعة من أصحابي أفادهم الله تعالى أن أقرن
 به شرح كتاب مقدمة المعرفة لتليخياً أيضاً إذ هو تاليه في الرقبة بل أعاليه في الرتبة فأسعفتهم
 بذلك مستعينا بواهب العقل ومفيض الفضل وهو مرتب علي ثلاث مقالات تشمل عشرين
 تعليماً

⁵¹ Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu (ed.), *Fihris makhṭūṭāt at-ṭibb al-Islāmi bi-l-lughāt al-'arabīyah wa-t-turkīyah wa-al-fārisīyah fī maktabāt turkiyā / Catalogue of Islamic Medical Manuscripts (in Arabic Turkish & Persian) in the Libraries of Turkey*, prepared by Ramazan Şeşen, Cemil Akpınar and Cevad İzgi (Istanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 1984), 5.

⁵² Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, vols. 1–2, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1943–9); supplement vols. 1–3 (Leiden: Brill, 1937–42); reprinted 5 vols. (Leiden [a.o.]: Brill, 1996), vol. 1, §349, 427–8; Ihsanoğlu, *Fihris makhṭūṭāt at-ṭibb*, 5.

Praise be to God whose commendation adorns every beginning and whose splendor balances every end [*al-ḥamdu lillāh alladhi zayyana kull bidāya ḥamdubuh wa-wazana kull nihāya majduhu*].

This is followed by a short introduction to the actual commentary which reads:

And after I had finished my abridgment of the commentary on the *Book of Aphorisms* by keeping and preserving the order of Hippocrates, some of my friends, may God give them profit, requested me to combine [the latter] also with an abridgment of the commentary on the *Book of Prognostic*, because it follows [the *Book of Aphorisms*] with regard to composition and arrangement,⁵³ but ranks above it. I complied with their wish by seeking help from the one who endows [us] with reason and [who] lets his excellence abound. And [the abridgment of the commentary] is arranged in three books and comprises twenty sections.

Barhebraeus short intro is well worth a few observations:

1. Barhebraeus is following ad-Dakhwār, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī and Ibn an-Nafīs in dividing the Hippocratic text into three ‘books (*maqālāt*)’, each containing a number of ‘sections (*ta’līm*)’, numbered consecutively. The first book comprises sections one to seven (7 sections), the second sections eight to sixteen (9 sections), and the third book sections seventeen to twenty (4 sections). The three books with their twenty sections follow the arrangement of the Greek text, which, in Littré’s edition, is divided into 25 chapters.⁵⁴ Book One of Barhebraeus’s commentary starts off with the general topic of prognostics, which is then followed by the subject of facial signs in regular order. This division into three books and twenty sections must go back to a Greek source, probably from late antiquity, for we already find it in the extracts from al-Ya’qūbī that may reflect an earlier translation.⁵⁵ The name for section, ‘*ta’līm*’, literally meaning ‘instruction’, also points in the direction of late antique Alexandria: for the *Prognostic* was part of the medical core curriculum there.

2. Barhebraeus is following ad-Dakhwār and Ibn an-Nafīs in omitting the eight points *kephálaia* that we encountered earlier in the commentary of Stephen of Alexandria. However, the fact that Barhebraeus still mentions one of the eight

⁵³) Arabic: *fi riqba*: ‘in the observation of matters’, or perhaps even *fi raqm*: ‘in number’; However, in Barhebraeus’ Arabic text the Syriac-Aramaic word *rukaba* has been transcribed in Arabic characters (i.e. the friend or foe principle): ‘qua compositions’, ‘arrangements’, ‘combinations’. This specific meaning also occurs in the *Organon*, cf. Maya Goldberg, “Between Aristotle and Evagrius: A Reassessment of the Spiritual Epistemology of Simeon d’Taibutheh,” (paper read at the XI. Symposium Syriacum, The University of Malta, Valletta, July 16–8, 2012).

⁵⁴) For a comparison to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī’s *Commentary on the Prognostic*, cf. Joosse and Pormann, “‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī’s *Commentary*,” 262.

⁵⁵) Klamroth, “Ueber die Auszüge,” 201–2.

headers, namely *rutba* ('rank' or 'level'), could indicate that he found the latter in his *Vorlagen*, but decided to leave the other seven out in his abridgment. In 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādī's long preface (which is based on an even longer introduction in his *Commentary on the 'Aphorisms'*) the eight main points are, however, fully discussed: 1) intention; 2) usefulness; 3) division into parts; 4) where it belongs; 5) reading order (or level of difficulty); 6) title; 7) didactic method; and 8) authenticity (or authorship). But 'Abd al-Laṭīf follows a different order than Stephen of Alexandria here.⁵⁶ Regarding point five, 'its level' or 'reading order' [*hē taxis* or *al-martaba*], 'Abd al-Laṭīf avers that "it [the *Prognostic*] needs to be read after the book of *Aphorisms*, because it is confined to knowing the subsequent and accompanying symptoms of acute diseases. Afterwards one ought to read the book *On Acute Diseases*, because it contains their treatment." Remarkably enough Barhebraeus attaches a higher value to the *Prognostic*: according to him, it ranks above the *Aphorisms*. The reading order of medical texts and handbooks was not a matter to be taken lightly for it was considered an important factor in medical education. 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādī already explained elsewhere that adopting an incorrect reading order could hinder medical students from successfully rounding off their training which could scar them for life.⁵⁷ And his predecessor Ibn Hindū, the author of the aforementioned textbook *The Key to Medicine and a Guide for Students*, explains this in the following way by stating that

Each field of knowledge has several parts, like the parts of the body. Should a student deviate from the proper order of things, he would end up having something like a body with misplaced parts, the head being put in place of the foot and the foot taking the place of the head. As no benefit can be had from such a body, no use can be made of such a discipline.⁵⁸

3. Barhebraeus explains that he wrote the commentary at the behest of friends who read and liked his abridgment of the *Commentary on the 'Aphorisms.'* They urged him to combine the latter with an abridgment of the *Commentary on the 'Prognostic.'* 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādī's preface starts off with a similar wording, namely

After I finished with Hippocrates' book, entitled the *Book of Aphorisms*, someone to whom I am deeply obliged, as his love and wishes are pure and sincere, and whose

⁵⁶ Joosse and Pormann, "'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādī's *Commentary*," 262–3.

⁵⁷ That is, in the medical section of his *Kitāb an-Naṣīhatayn*, or *Book of the Two Pieces of Advice* (an ed. and annotated English transl. by Joosse is forthcoming in *Beihfte zur Mediaevistik: Band 18* (2013)).

⁵⁸ Tibi and Savage-Smith, Abū al-Faraj 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Hindū: *The Key to Medicine and a Guide for Students*, 54.

character has been formed in the mould of virtue, requested me to [also] follow this method in the *Book of Prognostics*. For it comes after the *Book of Aphorisms* in importance and rank. I acceded to his request, and followed up on what he had said, hoping thus to obtain recompense and a good reputation.⁵⁹

Ibn an-Nafis's preface merely states that he was inspired to write a commentary on the *Prognostic*, because of the fact that his earlier commentary on the *Aphorisms* had met with so much success, and that he is going to follow the same method as he has previously done. Ad-Dakhwār's introduction is of a completely different nature and must thus be considered irrelevant here. If we do not consider the contents of these introductions a *topos*, our singular conclusion must be that three out of four authors, composed a lemmatic commentary on both the Hippocratic *Aphorisms* and the *Prognostic*. Regarding the same subject, Bos and Tzvi Langermann observed that "the 'order' to write, not by a superior but by an equal, is a very common theme in introductions."⁶⁰

The commentaries on the *Aphorisms* by respectively 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādi and Ibn an-Nafis, have been preserved in their entirety.

We commenced this paper by referring to a passage from a modern French novel in order to provide a clarification on the topic of the prognostication of life and death, and further to provide an elucidation of the concepts *automaton* and *theion*. The latter deals with the issue of patients' dying as a result of a divine factor present in diseases. The second lemma of the Hippocratic *Prognostic* likewise deals with this topic. It would therefore be instructive to study this passage in Barhebraeus' newly found abridgment, and compare it to the other extant Arabic commentaries. This may present us with a good insight into the working method of Barhebraeus; what his precise sources were, and how he utilized them. But before proceeding therewith, it would be prudent to revert back to the root, and to survey that text which all Arabic commentators on the *Prognostic* used as a starting point, that is, Galen's commentary thereon.

Unfortunately, Galen hardly deals with the specific subject in his *Commentary on the Prognostic* (205: 28–209: 6) and limits himself to the discussion of the disagreements of certain commentators as to what constitutes the "divine element" in diseases, for some of them believe that ailments trouble men because of divine wrath, but they fail to demonstrate whether Hippocrates shared this opinion. Some say epilepsy or love are "divine" diseases. And again others consider the critical days "divine." Galen draws the conclusion that all of these so-called commentators are storytellers and talk nonsense about the divine, and that

⁵⁹) Joosse and Pormann, "Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġhdādi's *Commentary*," 276.

⁶⁰) Bos and Langermann, "The Introduction of Sergius of Rēsh'ainā," 181.

with his saying “divine”, Hippocrates merely aimed at the state of the atmosphere around us. He briefly spoke about this topic in the *Aphorisms*, but in the *Epidemics* he dealt with it very fully. In the *Prognostic*, however, he omits it in spite of its relevance to the subject in question. Galen presumes that Hippocrates did not include teaching on epidemic diseases because of the magnitude of the subject.⁶¹ Stephen of Alexandria (*Hipp. com. prog.* I 17) chiefly reiterates the Galenic position and repeats that Hippocrates treated the matter fully in several other works, but in the *Prognostic* he had no wish to go into detail.⁶²

Let us now turn to the newly recovered commentary by Barhebraeus (fol. 3b–4a) which runs as follows:

قد زعم قوم أن المرض السهاوى ما سببه سخط الله تعالى وقال آخر أن الصرع مرض سهاوى
وسمى آخر العشق مرضاً سهاوياً فأما جالينوس فقال إنا لم نجد أبقراط يذهب في شي من كتبه
إلى أن الله فاعل مرضاً بتة بل وجدناه في كتابه المرسوم عليه في المرض الإلهي يرد على من اعتقد
ذلك قال وكذلك أقول متحر بأن أبقراط لم يعن بالشئ السهاوى الافساد الهواء الذي يعم بلدة
ما فيوباً به أهلها بأجمعهم وسببه اختلاف أشعة الكواكب لاختلاف أوضاعها وقد وصف أمره
في كتاب الفصول في جمل وجميزة وفي كتاب ايذميا أي الأمراض الوافدة بكلام طويل وأما في
هذا الكتاب فقد نبه على وجوب معرفته ولم يبسط القول فيه خشية الاسهاب

Some people have claimed that the cause of a heavenly disease is the wrath of God [*sukhbī allāh*], the Most High. Other [people] have said that epilepsy [*as-ṣarʿ*] is a heavenly disease. Others [again] have called love [*ʿiṣq*] a heavenly disease. Galen said: “we did absolutely not find in any of Hippocrates’ books that he held the view that God was the originator of disease, but in a book composed by him on the divine disease [*al-marād al-ilāhī*] we found him refuting those who firmly believe therein.” He [Galen] said (and I also say [this] having examined [the matter under consideration myself]) [*wa-ka-dhalika aqūlu mutaharrin*]: “that Hippocrates did not mean by [*lam ya’ni bi*] “something heavenly” [here] the corruption of the air that affects some village and infects all of the people therein, and which is caused by [the fact that] the stars all radiate differently because of their different positions [in the firmament]”. He [Hippocrates] described this matter in the *Book on Aphorisms* in short [*fi jumal wajiza*], but in the *Book on Epidemics*, that is on epidemic diseases, at length [*bi-kalām ṭawīl*]. However, in the present book he [only] informed about those matters he considered relevant. He does not expound about it in detail and not at great length for fear of being long-winded [*khashya al-ishāb*].⁶³

⁶¹ Jenner, *A Study of Galen’s Commentary*, 117–20.

⁶² Duffy, *Stephanus the Philosopher*, 55–64.

⁶³ I would like to thank my learned colleagues Bilal Ibrahim (McGill University, Montreal, Canada), Nahyan Fancy (DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana, U.S.A.), and Walid Saleh (Univer-

From the above it becomes quite clear that Barhebraeus mainly draws on Galen's commentary here and that he quotes Galen nearly verbatim. The view that God was not the originator of disease of course finds its origin in the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease* where it is stated that epilepsy "is not any more divine or more sacred than other diseases, but has a natural cause, and its supposed divine origin is due to men's inexperience ... Other diseases are no less wonderful and portentous, and yet nobody considers them sacred."⁶⁴ The middle part dealing with the radiation of the stars and their detrimental influence on the air surrounding us is not derived from Galen's commentary, but seems to be borrowed verbatim from the commentary of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī which reads:

By saying 'If there is also something heavenly [*samāwī*] in the disease' he [Hippocrates] talks about epidemic diseases [*al-'amrāḍ al-wāfida*] that are caused by the corruption of the air. This corruption is due to the fact that the stars all radiate differently because of their different positions [in the firmament]. Therefore, the physician ought to know the epidemical diseases that generally affect a nation in order to counter them before they occur.⁶⁵

Barhebraeus does not seem to have used one of the other commentaries here: Ibn an-Nafis mostly paraphrases some central ideas already found in Galen's commentary, although in a different and much more concise manner. The second part, however, not only shows him elucidating the meaning of the word 'heavenly,' but also how a Qur'anic verse could be used to illustrate his point. 'Alī ad-Dakhwār's commentary merely refers to the miasmatic corruption of the air, humoral pathology and the transfer of diseases from one place to another by observing that:

إن كان معها شيء سماوي وقد اختلفوا في الأمر السماوي هنا على وجوه كثيرة فالذي وقع الاتفاق عليه من جالينوس وشيعته إنه الهواء المحيط بالأبدان وإنما كان سموياً لأن هبوبه لا علم للإنسان بوقته ولا بما يصحبه مما يكون فيه من الكيفيات الرديئة أو الوبائية بخلاف معرفة البلدان فإن امزجتها ثابتة لها

sity of Toronto, Canada) for discussing this passage with me during our stay at the Department of Near Eastern Studies of the University of California, Berkeley (U.S.A.) last year.

⁶⁴ Hippocrates, *The Sacred Disease*, in Loeb Classical Library: *Hippocrates with an English translation*, Volume II, ed. and transl. by W.H.S. Jones (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1923), 127–83, esp. 139–41.

⁶⁵ Joosse and Pormann, "Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's *Commentary*," 283.

They disagree in the matter of ‘heavenly’ here in many ways. Those who reached an agreement about it, namely Galen and his followers, [stated] that the air surrounding the bodies rather is ‘heavenly’ because people have no immediate knowledge of the blowing of the winds and [they] are not acquainted with the bad or pestilential conditions thereof. Apart from this, [they are lacking] knowledge of the [different] countries and their specific constitutions [that is, the temperaments].⁶⁶

The theory of miasmatic corruption of the air can also be traced throughout the oeuvre of Barhebraeus: it is amongst others found in the *Butyrum sapientiae* parts on Ethics and Metals (Mineralogy) and in his *Ethicon*.⁶⁷

Before concluding this paper, let us now briefly turn to the beginning of lemma I.4 of the Galenic text. Galen speaks here about the third useful aspect of prognosis: if a patient dies and the physician predicted this correctly, he will not be blamed. Galen explains the third aspect here by telling the following tale (*Hip. Prog. com.* 200: 9–13):

A certain physician unwittingly took to the baths a young man who had just begun to perspire with a syncope-type sweat. When this sweating grew heavier the physician congratulated himself on having acted at exactly the right time, but shortly afterwards the young man died, and the physician was actually accused by his relatives of having killed him.⁶⁸

This anecdote is lacking in the commentaries of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī and Ibn an-Nafīs, but is present in those of Ibn ad-Dakhwār and Barhebraeus. Ad-Dakhwār, like Galen, introduces the story at the beginning of the first lemma. However, Barhebraeus has inserted it at the beginning of the second lemma.

Barhebraeus’s rather jerky version runs as follows (fol. 3b, lines 8–11):

ولا يكون كالطبيب الغبي المعاصر لجالينوس وهو الذي أدخل فتى مريضاً إلى الحمام فلما بدأ العرق فيه وهو يسر بكثرة مات فإله من أهله مكروه عظيم كثر همهم عليه انه قتله

... And he should not be like the ignorant physician [*aṭ-ṭabīb al-ghabīy*], a contemporary of Galen, who brought an ailing young patient [*ṣatan marīḍan*] to the bath. When the young man started to sweat a lot, [the physician] became very glad about this, but [instead of recovering] the young man [suddenly] passed away. Thereafter, [the physician] received much unpleasantness from the family [of the deceased man] and their distress increased over the fact that he [the physician] killed him [the young man].

⁶⁶ Muḥammad et al., *Kitāb Sharḥ Taqdīmat al-maʿrifa li-d-Dakhwār*, 150, line 9–151, line 2 (English transl. by Joosse).

⁶⁷ Joosse, *A Syriac Encyclopaedia*, 216–17, esp. footnote 50.

⁶⁸ Jenner, *A Study of Galen’s Commentary*, 110.

Barhebraeus without any doubt follows Galen's commentary here and slightly reshuffles the materials as he found them in the short Galenic text. We learn from both texts that the patient is a juvenile. And Barhebraeus, because he gathered his information from Galen's version, moreover assumes that the physician in charge is a contemporary of the great doctor from Pergamum in Asia Minor.

Ibn ad-Dahkhwār's version reads:

For instance, the following happened to one of the stupid physicians. When he saw a patient whose temperature had subsided and whose body had become cold—the reason for this being that the innate heat had grown weak—he [the physician] thought in his ignorance that he [the patient] had recovered. Therefore, he prescribed [going to] the bath for him. When he [the patient] entered, his strength weakened, and he sweated a lot. Therefore the physician was happy in his foolishness, as he firmly believed that a discharge of sweat indicates recovery and health. He [the physician] said to the family of the patient: 'He has sweated, and has made a full recovery.' Yet, when he finished sweating, the patient's strength subsided, and he died. The physician met with a lot of ignominy on behalf of the family. Know that sweat that indicates death has certain signs, and sweat that indicates recovery has [also] certain signs.⁶⁹

His version is clearly more flowing and also more elaborate, but does not present us with additional information about the physician. It also does not refer to the age of the patient, but still is far more detailed and adds certain medical information, which contributes to a better understanding of the text. It might well be the case that Ibn ad-Dahkhwār now and then embellished his commentary by adding the fruits of his own experience as a practical physician.

In summary, by looking at the *Vorlagen* of Barhebraeus' *Prognostic* commentary we have performed step one. Step two and three should deal with respectively the *Umfeld* and the *Nachleben* of Barhebraeus' medical work. In the first case we should for instance take a closer look at the Syriac-Aramaic material on *Prognosis*. This is unfortunately rather limited. However, MS Paris, BnF, arabe 6734 presents us with a Syriac and an Arabic translation of both Hippocrates' *Aphorisms* and *Prognostic* in parallel columns. The text is dated to 1205 AD and it is expected to derive from Galen's commentary. The translator is likely to be Ḥunayn. The text of the *Prognostic* in this MS has not yet been studied.⁷⁰ In

⁶⁹ Muḥammad et al., *Kitāb Sharḥ Taqdimat al-ma'rifa li-d-Dahkhwār*, 148, lines 6–14 (English transl. by Joosse and Pormann), cf. esp. Joosse and Pormann, "Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's *Commentary*," 257–8.

⁷⁰ Grigory Kessel, "Manuscript Evidence for Galen in Syriac," to appear in John C. Lamoreaux, *Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq on His Galen Translations*, Eastern Christian Texts, vol. 3 (Provo: Brigham Young University Press).

the second case we should determine whether or not Barhebraeus' medical work stood the test of time and if it lived on in history. This would, of course, for the most part be science fiction, since the study of post-classical Arabic medical texts is still in its infancy. But the data are slowly oozing through. Snippets of Barhebraeus' medical works (including remarks on his commentaries on Hippocratic texts) for example seem to have been the subject of discussion in the *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* ("The Classification of the Facts") by Rashīd ad-Dīn Ṭāḥib a.k.a. Rashīd ad-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Hamadānī (1247–318), a Persian physician of Jewish origin at the Ilkhanid court who was also the author of an enormous Islamic history, the *Jāmi' al-tawārikh* ("Compendium of Chronicles" or "Universal History").⁷¹ Rashīd ad-Dīn and Barhebraeus were near contemporaries and the latter, moreover, often resided in Maragha, the usual residence of the Ilkhans under Hulagu, where he may have met some or all of the great Persian scholars of his time.

Conclusion

From the late eighth century, when the *Prognostic* was first rendered in Arabic, until the late thirteenth century, when Ibn an-Nafis and Barhebraeus wrote their commentaries on this work, generations and generations of Arab physicians, Christians and Muslims alike, read, studied, and engaged with this seminal Hippocratic treatise.

Here we could only offer a preliminary survey of Barhebraeus' abridged commentary on the Hippocratic *Prognostic*. Therefore, it is impossible to reach a final conclusion now, and it is much too early to tell whether his short commentary contains innovative and refreshing materials and whether it will offer us mind-boggling new insights and interesting expatiations on certain topics discussed therein. At this stage, we are, however, not willing to consider that Barhebraeus spread medical knowledge under his name all over the medieval Middle East without making one simple contribution to medicine himself, and without having any impact on later physicians in the Arab world. Only future research into the medical works of Barhebraeus and into post-classical Arabic medicine could reveal whether or not Barhebraeus contributed original ideas to medicine,

⁷¹ This extraordinarily important information (that I was alas not able to verify) was communicated to me by Salam Rassi of Wolfson College (The University of Oxford). The *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* (*The Classification of the Facts*) by Rashīd ad-Dīn Ṭāḥib a.k.a. Rashīd ad-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Hamadānī will be edited by Judith Pfeiffer of The University of Oxford. Cf. also the fairly recent monograph on Rashīd ad-Dīn by Dorothea Krawulsky, *The Mongol Ilkhāns and Their Vizier Rashīd al-Dīn* (Frankfurt am Main [a.o.]: Peter Lang, 2011).

and whether or not he was able to exercise any influence on subsequent generations in the area of Arabic medicine.⁷²

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⁷² Much work on the Arabic *Taqdimat al-ma’rifā* tradition has been done and still has to be done. Yet, we can already perceive that most of these commentaries deserve wider scholarly attention. To conclude, it is necessary to mention that an edition and translation of Galen’s Arabic commentary on the *Prognostic* is being prepared by Christine F. Salazar. The present author is currently finalizing a critical edition, English translation and study of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡhdādī’s commentary on the *Prognostic*. There already exists a fairly good edition of ‘Alī ad-Dakḥwār’s commentary by Māhir ‘Abd al-Qādir Muḥammad et al. (Alexandria, 2000), but which is unfortunately not much known, not widespread and rather difficult to obtain. Ibn an-Nafīs’ commentary has not yet been edited, but it has been rumoured that Yūsuf Zaydān, the director of the Manuscript Center and Museum affiliated with the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and also a renowned novelist, will make this his task. Barhebraeus’ *Talkhīṣ* also deserves further investigation, and I fondly cherish the hope that this may happen sooner or later or at least in the not so distant future.

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