

Teaching and Learning by the Book at the Turning Point Between the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Eras

A Source of Information on Methods and Scientific Controversies

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Orient & Méditerranée

Médecine grecque et littérature technique

Outline

Introduction

Purpose of the Training: Galen's Books

How Galen's Books Were Used in Discussions and Seminars

Boundaries Between Confessions

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Around the 13th Century

Abundance of books and interreligious debates

Dominant Features

1. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a’s *‘Uyūn al-anbā’* as an illustration of a time and a place where first-hand resource materials were abundant in number and easy to get in libraries.
2. As‘ad al-Dīn Ya‘qūb ibn Ishāq al-Maḥallī (Jew)^a:
 - Instant access to Aristotle’s *On Generation and Corruption*.
 - Topic: a dispute on a purely philological issue between scholars.
 - Place: the *maḡlis* of Muḥaddab al-Dīn (Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a’s master) in Damascus (created by the Ayyūbid ruler al-Malik al-Ašraf [d. 635/1237])
 - Interreligious debate.

^aGannagé 2011: 250–4.

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Uyūn al-anbā'

Three Distinct Lists of Galen's Books (1/3)

List 1 (I, 90.21–101.14)

1. Follows Ḥunayn's *Risāla* "to the letter" (Bergsträsser).
2. No authorship: "As to Galen's treatises, they are very abundant in number; here follows the list of those *I could find scattered among people* (*mā wağadtu-hu... muntaširan fī aydī l-nāsi*), which have been translated into Arabic by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq and others, with an indication of Galen's purpose in each of them." (I, 90.21–23)
3. A list taken as a working paper to draw an inventory of available books.

Uyūn al-anbā'

Three Distinct Lists of Galen's Books (2/3)

List 2 (I, 101.24–102.9)

1. Authorship mentioned: “Ḥunayn Ibn Ishāq said: ‘We have also found other books which bear the name of Galen but are not his’”. (I, 101.15–16)
2. Content: same books as those mentioned by Ḥunayn in the Appendix he wrote eight years later his *Risāla*.^a

^aBergsträsser 1932.

Uyūn al-anbā'

Three Distinct Lists of Galen's Books (3/3)

List 3 (I, 102.10 sqq.)

“I say: this is the bulk that can be mentioned of Galen's books, either authentic (*al-ṣahīḥa*) or falsely attributed (*al-manḥūla*) to him, [...] He [Ḥunayn] was by then forty-eight years old, but he lived up to seventy years, so he must have found also many other books of Galen [...]. Likewise, *we have found* a number of books of Galen, or attributed (*mansūbun*) to him in the translation of Ḥunayn Ibn Iṣḥāq or others — and *they are not at all mentioned* in Ḥunayn's *above quoted work*.^a [...]” (102.10–15)

^aViz. the *Appendix* (namely list 2).

Content of the Lists

1. Strongly abbreviated down to a mere list of items.
2. Elements of relevance: title, number of books, availability in Arabic, authenticity.
3. As a whole, a true list of what actually may have been available:
 - *On Pulse, against Archigenes*: “untranslated” (H) but *mentioned again* in IAU's third list.
 - Commentary on Hippocrates' *AWP*: H: three parts. IAU: *we have found too some mss. in four parts* (but inauthentic).
 - *On Lethargy according to Hippocrates*: H: untranslated. IAU's third list: “One book on Lethargy”.
 - etc.

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Teaching

Ya'qūb and Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a

Narrative 1: Muwaffaq al-Dīn Ya'qūb ibn Siqlāb (d. 625/1228)

1. Christian, in-depth knowledge of Greek, direct access to Galen's books in Greek, expert in the translation of Greek words into Arabic, *wa-kāna [...] mutqinan li-l-lisāni l-rūmiyyi wa-ḥabīran bi-luḡati-hi wa-naqli ma'nā-hu ilā l-'arabiyyi*. (II, 215.17–19)
2. Ibn Abī Uṣaybī'a studied under him. The Christian (master): ability of scrutinizing the sources. (Method: explaining Hippocrates by Galen, quoted at length.) The Muslim (disciple): then checks the text and consigns it to memory.

Research

Ya'qūb and Muḥaddab al-Dīn

Narrative 2

On many occasions, when he [viz. Ya'qūb] was staying in Damascus, he met the master (*al-šayḥ*) Muḥaddab al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥīm ibn 'Alī at the place where the physicians sat in the Sultan's residence and both used to discuss research issues with regard to medical subjects. The master (*al-šayḥ*) Muḥaddab al-Dīn was clearer in his speech, stronger in eloquence, and better in research, while the practitioner (*al-ḥakīm*) Ya'qūb was more steady, more distinct in speaking and could draw on a wider tradition (*awsa'a naqlan*) because he was in the position of an interpreter who <was able to> recall what Galen had mentioned about medicine in all of his books (*bi-manzilati l-tarġumāni l-mustahḍiri li-mā dakara-hu Ġālīnūsu fī sā'iri kutubi-hi min šinā'ati l-ṭibbi*). (II, 215.5–10)

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Structures

1. Examples such as the narrative involving Ya'qūb and Muḥaddab al-Dīn show that permanent structures for teaching/research in which Muslims and *dimmīs* could meet existed.
2. At the same time other structures were obviously reserved for Muslims, such as Muḥaddab al-Dīn's charitable endowment (*waqf*), to which he appointed Šaraf al-Dīn al-Raḥbī as lecturer.

Cases of Explicit Reluctance or Aversion

Raḍī al-Dīn al-Raḥbī (534/1139–631/1233)

The Shaykh Raḍī al-Dīn told me: “All those who studied under me and resorted to me were helpful and the people benefited from them.” Then he gave me the names of many of them who were distinguished and prominent in the art of medicine. Some were already dead, while others were still alive. He said that he did not teach to any *ḍimmī* [viz. any Jew or Christian] at all the art of medicine, nor did he to anyone who was not worthy of it, for he hold true science in high dignity and importance. He told me that all his live he never taught to any *ḍimmī* except two and no one else: the wise ‘Imrān al-Isrā’īlī and Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥalaf the Samaritan, after they pressed him by all means and tried persuasion on him, in such a way that he could not turn them down. Both became talented and excellent physicians.. (II, 193.26–32)

Thank you

Many thanks for your attention!

Do not hesitate to write to me if you are interested or if you have any suggestions to make.

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