

Abstracts

The Portrayal of the Good Ruler
by the Almoravid *faqīh* Abū Bakr al-Murādī (d. 1095)

AMANDINE ADWAN

Islamic mirrors for princes illustrate the principles of good governance through the use of maxims and anecdotes inherited from the Greek, Indian and Persian civilizations as well as the Islamic tradition. As the study of the treatises composed in the Muslim West has been overshadowed by research on the oriental ones, this contribution addresses the portrayal of the good ruler according to the *Kitāb al-Ishāra ilā Adab al-Imāra* by the *faqīh* (jurist) Abū Bakr al-Murādī al-Ḥaḍramī, a North-African author of Yemenite descent. This work, considered the first ethico-political treatise written in the Maghreb, was composed at the request of the Almoravid sovereign Abū Bakr b. ‘Umar (r. 1056-1087). Our analysis highlights the virtues expected of a good ruler as well as his ability to adapt pragmatically and to reconcile ethical and political instincts to remain in power. Among the virtues which al-Murādī emphasizes as necessary to exercise power, special attention is given to his definition of major concepts such as *ṣabr*, *ḥilm* and *ḥazm*. The prominent place given by al-Murādī to reason and reflection can be explained by his interest for *kalām*-literature (speculative theology). The maxims and proverbs used by al-Murādī to illustrate his advice are largely borrowed from the gnomological corpus ascribed to ancient sages, rather than to the Quran or to the *ḥadīth*. This point might seem odd since the Almoravid sovereigns are usually considered as pious rigorists. Rather than making reference to the political context of his time, al-Murādī borrowed from works composed long before him, mainly the *Ādāb al-Kabīr* of Ibn al-Muqaffa’ and the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Sirr al-Asrār*.

Retour sur la biographie de Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (m. 873) :
Que nous apprend un manuscrit inédit du *Ādāb al-Falāsifa*?

EMILY J. COTTRELL

The paper offers the first analysis of an unpublished manuscript of the *Ādāb al-Falāsifa* by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq. The manuscript, preserved in Tehran, is copied in an early type of Kufic corresponding to the style of some 2nd AH/8th CE and 3rd AH/9th CE copies of the Quran. It is one of the very few examples of non-Quranic manuscripts in Kufic. The date offered by the manuscript's colophon (Dhū al-ḥijja 249 AH/ between Jan. 15th and Feb. 12th 864 CE) corresponds with its script, but a careful analysis of the artefact demonstrates that the manuscript was made as a facsimile of an earlier original, copied during the lifetime of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq. Excerpts of the manuscript are published here for the first time.

This version of the *Ādāb al-Falāsifa* differs in several aspects from the text known to us in the recension made by Muḥammad al-Anṣarī which Badawī published in 1985. The Tehran version overlaps with al-Anṣarī's text, as much as it offers parallels with the Spanish and Hebrew translations of the *Ādāb al-Falāsifa*, which themselves offer parallels and divergences to the text of al-Anṣarī. Further parallels are shown to exist with a London manuscript of the *Ādāb al-Falāsifa* pointing to the existence of several intermediary recensions of the text. Ishāq b. Ḥunayn, who was Ḥunayn's son and a translator himself, is suggested to have played a role in the development of intermediary recensions and in the composition of the version known to al-Anṣarī.

“Give us immortality!”

The Contest between Alexander and the Brahmins in the Arabic Tradition

FAUSTINA DOUFIKAR-AERTS

Alexander's encounter with the Indian Sages, the Brahmins or Gymnosophist, is a wandering motif occurring in many writings. Arabic versions can be found not only in Ibn Hishām's *Kitāb al-Tījān* as transmitted from Wahb ibn Munabbih's *Kitāb al-Mulūk al-Mutawwaja*, in 'Umara ibn Zayd's *Qiṣṣat al-Iskandar* and Pseudo-Aṣma'ī's *Nihāya*, but also in the 'Quzmān' *Alexander Romance*, in al-Hamadhānī's *Kitāb al-Buldān*, in Mubashshir's *Mukhtār al-Ḥikam*, and in *Sīrat al-Iskandar* transmitted by al-Ṣūrī. The analysis of these texts in comparison with the Brahman stories in the *Alexander Romance* in Syriac and Ethiopic reveals interesting parallels, as well as contrasting elements. A detailed review of the key elements is presented in an annexed table.

In broad lines, the story brings back Wisdom to its essence, in the world of the Sages, and confronts the ‘normal’ world with vital questions about worthwhile and senseless exploits. The transmission of the text in different contexts, Jewish, Christian and Muslim, shows that it has been used to convey similar or different purposes. “Give us immortality” is the key sentence and core of the episode.

The Image of the Sage in the Pseudo-Ammonius’s *Ārā’ al-falāsifa*

JANIS ESOTS

The paper addresses the image of the sage (*ḥakīm*) in the Pseudo-Ammonius *Ārā’ al-falāsifa* (‘Opinions of the Philosophers’). This doxographical text was translated into Arabic sometime in the middle of the 3rd AH/9th CE century and allegedly represents a summary of the views of the ancient Greek sages (the ‘philosophers’) on a number of issues related to God’s unity and the creation of the world. The only surviving copy of the work is part of a unique Istanbul manuscript (Aya Sofya, 2450, fol. 107a-135b) discovered by Samuel Miklos Stern in the middle of the 20th century CE and consequently published by Ulrich Rudolph in 1989, together with an annotated German translation.

The Pseudo-Ammonius portrays the ancient sage as professing the Creator’s unity in incontrovertible terms, dismissing all attempts to ascribe Him an equal or an antagonist. According to the Pseudo-Ammonius, the community of sages agrees on most major issues and differ only in minor details. They firmly propound the world’s creation from nothing (*ex nihilo*) and believe that God is inaccessible to both the intellect and the soul. The sages further discuss the relationship between truth and wisdom (*ḥikma*) stating that while the former can be both luminous and tenebrous, the latter can only be luminous and is therefore superior to the over.

The contribution further traces the impact of the Pseudo-Ammonius’s doxographical treatise on later Muslim authors – in particular Abū al-Ḥasan al-‘Āmirī and Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī. It is argued that the image of the ancient sage it offers was purposefully created by the translator/adaptor according to the intellectual debates of the Islamic world in the middle of the 3rd AH/9th CE century.

The Hundred Sayings of 'Alī
GERALD GROBBEL

One of the greatest Arabic writers of all time, the Basrian Mu'tazilite al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 868) supposedly collected one hundred sayings ascribed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the fourth caliph (r. 656-661) and the first imām of the Shiites. The authenticity of this collection has not been proven so far and the wisdom sayings ascribed to 'Alī raise a number of questions which need to be addressed methodically. As the first known mention and excerpts of the work appear no earlier than al-Tha'ālibī (d. 1038), a number of issues should be researched before ascertaining the plausibility of the attribution to al-Jāḥiẓ. Its translation by Rashīd al-Dīn Waṭwāṭ in the early eleventh century shows that the text enjoyed some popularity at the time of al-Tha'ālibī.

Before addressing the contents, we study the transmission of the text according to the manuscripts and verify the traditional chain of transmitters attached to the text. The milieu in which the text was transmitted and the geography of its diffusion are used to verify the likelihood of the attribution of the text to Jāḥiẓ. Once then can the question of the origins of the collection and its audience be answered. Specifically, do the sayings belong to literary circles or to a specific Shiite environment where the prominence of 'Alī's wisdom was highlighted? Does the text include specific Shiite positions or generally Islamic ones? Do the sayings show the influence of Sufism or that of the philosophical-ethical tradition?

This World and the Next:
al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869) on the Wisdom of Rule by Islam
PAUL L. HECK

Scholars of varied religious traditions have sought to show the harmony of human wisdom and divine revelation. It is important to examine every case on its own terms and in its own context. I consider one example from the third Islamic century: a treatise on the ethics of governance, "This World and the Next" (*Risālat al-ma'āsh wa-l-ma'ād*), by the celebrated littérateur al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869). It is well-known that he aimed his theological polemics at fellow Muslims with anthropomorphist beliefs. At the same time, he engaged a wider milieu that was religiously diverse, one in which the philosophical criterion of universal agreement was used to defend the truth of one's religion. According to this criterion, a claim was considered to be true if all peoples of sound mind accepted it. This criterion shapes the argumentation that al-Jāḥiẓ advances in the above treatise,

namely, that Islam aligns with the psychological motives at work in human ethics that all peoples accept. He is thus suggesting that rule by Islam has a universal mandate on the basis of a philosophical criterion. In sum, the treatise shows the marks of the epistemological questions of the period that featured in theological debate and that al-Jāhīz introduces into the “science” of the ethics of governance.

Wild Lions and Wise Jackals:
Killer Kings and Clever Counsellors in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*
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Kalīla wa-Dimna is one of the most successful books in history. Its title comes from the names of two of its characters, Kalīla and Dimna, both jackals at the court of a lion. A quintessential work of advice literature, it envelops political and other guidance in the form of fables. It aims to educate rulers in an entertaining manner, but it also teaches their advisers how to tame and guide the powerful. It begins with a series of introductions. These include the story of its origin in India, the account of its appropriation and an intellectual autobiography by Burzawayh/Burzōy, the physician who created the Pahlavi (Middle Persian) version. Ibn al-Muqaffa' (ca. 103-139 AH/721-757 CE), the secretary who authored the Arabic version on the basis of the Middle Persian text, also added his introduction, which functions as a ‘user guide’ soliciting the reader to comprehend and apply the wisdom contained in the book. The Arabic text is the source of a large number of versions in a multitude of languages both in Islamdom and Christendom. Translated between languages and cultures and repeatedly re-written and re-edited, the text has been in continuous change. Even today, new versions in various languages are being published.

This present study focuses on three key phases of the formation of the text: the Indian *Pañcatantra* (reconstructed from the extant variants), the Pahlavi (which is lost, but proven by previous research to be relatively faithfully followed by the ‘Old Syriac’ version) and the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* (which exists in multiple variants). The goal is to explore the relationship between rulers and advisers as presented in these versions. What can continuities and alterations in these texts tell us about similarities and differences between their civilisational contexts? What do the idealised, manipulative or brutal images of rulers and courtiers depicted in the fables reflect about the political concepts and lived realities of the elites of different premodern societies? And, finally, what can *Kalīla wa-Dimna* still teach us today about the nature of power and the interactions in its aura?

Die Wurzeln der politischen Theorie des Islam
MIKLÓS MARÓTH

The “Oration in Praise of Emperor Constantine (*De laudibus Constantini*)” composed by Eusebius for the thirty years of Constantine’s reign, is an exposition of Eusebius’ political theology. The text offers a unique harmonization of philosophical ideas –which at the time were part of the Pagan rhetorical model (*paideia*) taught in rhetorical school– with theological ones based on the Christian faith. In Eusebius’ conception, the qualities of the rulers are made heavenly virtues and Stoic ideas are used to affirm the community of the human and the divine. Eusebius is also familiar with Neoplatonist canonical lists of definitions of philosophy, but he reinterprets philosophy as a “universal wisdom” accessible solely to the king next to normal, human wisdom. This higher wisdom is emanated on the emperor directly from God as a means to keep his country prosperous; in exchange, the king must conform to divine virtues.

A full analysis of Eusebius’ speech is provided in relation to its Neoplatonic sources (Plotinus in particular). This Christian reinterpretation of the Hellenistic theory of kingship was passed onto Umayyad ruling elites via court secretaries whose education included the vestiges of Byzantine-Christian *paideia*. From thereon, it formed the backbone of Islamic political treatises well into the Middle Ages and beyond. Two channels helped the dissemination of the Byzantine theoretical model: the gnomologies and their popular adaptation of practical philosophy and ethic, and a spurious epistolary novel purportedly transmitting letters exchanged between Aristotle and Alexander. The letters were quoted and paraphrased in the Eastern and in the Western Islamic courts, and they were eventually fused with Quranic interpretations of divine kingship and guidance, allowing rulers and their helpers to be seen as acting on divine right.

Das Stilmittel der *Chrie* im veränderten arabischen Kontext
GERHARD STROHMAIER

The *khreia* was, in Greek and Roman Antiquity, a short narrative which included a brief dialogue or described a peculiar situation concluded by the witty saying of some famous personality. The saying seemed in this way as being spoken out of the window of the given framework and directly addressed to the reader. It was a typical representative of the Greek mind and usually contained a moral or practical advice. Inserted into a larger text its author could use the *khreia* as a more drastic expression of his own opinion, as Galen did when quoting a saying of

Diogenes of Cyrene ridiculing the Eleatic school for whom the understanding of the eternally unmovable Being meant that one should see all movement as an illusion.

A graffito from Herculaneum dated 79 CE shows by its literary style that it was taken from some collection of wise sayings. These so-called gnomologies found their way into Arabic, where they were valued for their rhetorical cleverness as well as for the information they provided about the sages of pre-Islamic antiquity. The witty flavour of the Greek gnomologies was probably often lost to Arabic scholars who sought factual information and were not aware of their pseudo-historical context.

Aphorisms engraved in philosophers' signet-rings:

Ps-Ḥunayn b. Ishāq's *Ādāb al-Falāsifa* and Persian-Arabic Wisdom Literature

MOHSEN ZAKERI

This is a re-edition, translation, and analyze of the contents and impact of a short chapter of the *Ādāb al-falāsifa* ('Aphorisms of the Philosophers'), heretofore wrongly attributed to the Nestorian scholar Ḥunayn b. Ishāq. *Ādāb al-falāsifa* is a composite work prepared by one Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Anṣārī (4th/10th c.), who, in compiling his book, adopted and adapted the contents of several earlier independent gnometic treatises, including one *Nawādir al-falāsifa* by Ḥunayn b. Ishāq and one *Nawādir falsafiyya* by his son Ishāq b. Ḥunayn. The popularity of the chapter *Nuqūsh fuṣūṣ khawātīm al-falāsifa* "Engravings on the gems of the signet-rings of philosophers" in medieval times is highlighted and traces of its currency in later collections of sapiential wisdom such as Miskawayh's *Jāwīdān khirad*, Mubashshir b. Fātik's *Mukhtār al-ḥikam*, Ibn Hindū's *al-Kilām (al-Kalim) al-rūḥāniyya*, are so forth demonstrated.

Piety, Wisdom, and Power in the Arabic *Alexander Romance*

ZACHERY DAVID ZUWIYYA

One of the central episodes in most of the versions of the Arabic *Alexander Romance* is the hero's encounter with the pious tribe of the Brahmans in India. They pose a series of questions with the intent to show the futility of his ambition to conquer the world. In some versions, Alexander's performance in the dispute reveals how wisdom can trump piety. For example, in one text from the Hispano-Arabic tradition, he wins the debate by concluding that just as the waters do not

move without the wind which is set in motion by God, he does not do anything except by the will of the Almighty. By virtue of his intellect he conquers the Brahmins and does not need to destroy their lands. The theme of Alexander's superior wisdom is carried through to the end of the romance and he dies a natural death. However, in other versions of the Arabic *Alexander Romance*, his dispute with the Brahmins ends inconclusively and the hero, in anger or frustration, uses his army to overcome them. His wisdom is inferior to their piety. Although he wins by virtue of force, in the long run his lack of subtle understanding leads him astray. Consequently, some Arabic authors portray a hero dominated by ambition who eventually dies an artificial death, poisoned or struck down by illness.

The paper studies the relationship between piety, wisdom, and power in the Arabic *Alexander Romance* with particular focus on the episode of the Brahmins to determine the extent to which the nature of the dispute(s) between a pious tribe and a wise king has affected the conclusion of the work. Does the author manipulate Alexander's responses in such a way as to later be able to condemn his ambition or to celebrate his deeds?