THE INTRODUCTION OF SERGIUS OF RĒSH’AINÂ TO GALEN’S COMMENTARY
ON HIPPOCRATES’ ON NUTRIMENT

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Abstract

MS New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America 2761, preserves an Arabic version in Hebrew characters of Galen’s commentary to Hippocrates On foods, including an introduction by Sergius of Rēsh’ainâ, who translated the Greek into Syriac. Neither this translation nor the introduction had been known to exist. The introduction, which follows the canonical eight-fold formula of accessores ad auctores, is an extremely rich document for the history of commentaries to scientific texts. Sergius’ observations on the similarities in elusive writing between Hippocrates and Plato are particularly interesting.

Introduction

MS New York, JTSA 2761

MS New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America 2761 is an important codex containing parts of several medical or medical-philosophical treatises, some of them unique, all of them transcriptions of Arabic texts into Hebrew letters.

The texts are written in two columns per page, each of about 30 lines. Unfortunately, the upper left hand corner has been torn off, so that the exterior column has only about 27 legible lines; for some lines, only one or two words can be deciphered. A full and definitive description of the contents of the manuscript must be deferred to some other occasion. For now the following brief account must suffice. The first ten or so folios contain remnants of a didactic poem on medicine and philosophy, as well as the opening pages of what appears to be a tract dealing chiefly with medicine. The introduction to this tract, however, which one of us (Langermann) plans to study in a separate article, recounts a very interesting and unusual cosmogony. There follow some portions of the Galenic corpus, includ-
ing the end of On Medical Experience (al-Tajriba ‘l-tibbiyya), and the
beginning of Galen’s commentary to Hippocrates’ On Nutriment
(Kitāb ‘l-Ghidhā). The great bulk of the codex is taken up by por-
tions of al-Zahrawi’s Kitāb ‘l-Taṣrif.

The text which we present here, and which is found (in the cur-
rent pagination) on ff. 8b–10a, is the rendering into Arabic of the
introduction of Sergius of Rēsh’ainā to his Syriac version of Galen’s
commentary on the Hippocratic treatise On Nutriment. As far as we
have been able to determine, Sergius’ translation is not recorded in
the literature, and there are no other copies known to us, in either
Syriac or Arabic, of this text.1 The translation into Arabic is attrib-
uted to one Yūsuf ibn Khāj (licet al-Khūrī?), also otherwise un-
known. The manuscript was inspected by a scholar whose identity is
unknown to us (perhaps Alexander Marx?) in the 1920s. His atten-
tion was attracted by the very odd name of the translator into Ara-
bic, and he addressed a query concerning this matter to one of the
leading scholars of the epoch, Gotthelf Bergsträsser. Bergsträsser’s re-
ply was copied onto one of the first leaves. It reads:

‘Prof Bergsträsser writes (17.X.26): Was den Uebersetzungsnamen
ihrer Handschrift anlangt, so kommt wohl nur Jusuf an-Nāqil im
Betracht. Ibn Uṣāibī’ā I 201 f.: الناقيل التألف والال بال
verstümmelt zu
und dies dann falschlich als Vaternname angelasst.’

Abū Ya’aqūb Yūsuf bin ʿĪsā, known as an-Nāqil (‘the translator’)
was from Khuzistan and a student of bin ʿAbīr̄ābākht.2 Ibn Abī
Uṣāibī’ā had a low opinion of his work. In our view, the translator
whose name is garbled in the opening sentence is likely to have been
Yūsuf al-Khūrī, who is known to have translated Galen’s book on
simples into Arabic.3

1 Ḥunayn’s version of Galen’s commentary, not extant, is noted in Fuat Sezgin,
Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, vol. 3 (Frankfurt 1970), 137. The latest inven-
tory of Syriac versions of Galenic writings is Rainer Degen, ‘Galen im Syrischen:
Eine Übersicht über syrische Überlieferung der Werke Galens’, in Vivian Nutton
3 Concerning Yūsuf al-Khūrī, cf. Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, Risāla, no. 53 (Ed. G.
Bergsträsser, Ḥunain ibn Ishāq. Über die syrischen und arabischen Galen-Übersetz-
ungen. (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes hrsg. von der Deutschen
Morgenländischen Gesellschaft. XVII. Band. No. 2). Leipzig 1925). According to Ḥunayn his translation of On simples is of a poor quality (khabitha radī’ā). See as
well G. Strohmaier, ‘Der syrische und der arabische Galen’, Aufstieg und Niedergang
der Römischen Welt, hrsg. v. W. Haase u. H. Temporini, Teil II, Bd. 37. 2. Berlin,

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Sergius asserts that he has translated this book for a ‘brother’ who, out of ‘love for all knowledge that the soul requires’, requested Hippocrates’ book On Nutriment in particular. The ‘order’ to write — given here, though, not by a superior but by an equal — is a very common theme in introductions. Sergius goes on to say that he did not want to undertake the task out of fear of incurring ‘the envy of those who are not satisfied by anything other than amassing money.’ Apologies of this sort are common in Syriac literature. However, we have not found any other case where the writer expresses his fear of avaricious envy; does this mean that Sergius was well-paid for this translation, and feared the envy of his rivals?

The ‘Alexandrian’ Introduction

The bulk of the introduction concerns the merits and utility of On Nutriment, the Hippocratic corpus and the place of On Nutriment therein, and Hippocrates’ mode of exposition in this and other works. These and other related topics are developed within the structure of the seven- or eight- part introduction that is traditional among ‘the Greeks’, as Sergius explains: ‘It is the custom of the Greeks, when beginning commentaries to the books of the ancients, to lay down at the beginning of the books, eight headings, by means of which will become clear their aim, the reasons [for writing them], their strength, their limit, their author, their number (?), how they were executed, and where they are to be read [i.e. place in the curriculum?] by means of which [information] they encourage people to read it, once they have been given to hear what wonderful things, hidden secrets, and enormous benefits are in it.’

The introduction divided into seven or eight parts is indeed a tradition that developed in late antiquity among commentators to books of science and philosophy. The tradition was continued by Syriac, Arabic, Hebrew and Latin authors. Jaap Mansfeld in particular has made some very close studies of this literary phenomenon; however, he has not paid much attention to the medical literature.

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Galen lived several centuries before Philoponus and other commentators of late antiquity. However, Mansfield has included Galen’s two essays, *De Ordine librorum* and *De Libris propria*, in his study. He observes that Galen does not apply a *schema isagogicum* and only incidentally avails himself of a technical vocabulary. Nonetheless, one may conclude that the following introductory issues are relevant in relation to his own works: (a) general matters, such as the distinction between the sects, the systematic classification of the treatises, the work that has to be studied first (which is not the same for all readers); (b) particulars, for example, the purpose, or theme, of each individual work, or the author’s motive for writing it (which sometimes explains the book’s utility, as in the *On Proof*), the question of authenticity, the position of the treatise or monograph in the order of study and the reason for or explanation of its title. 8

A little further on Mansfeld summarizes: ‘Summarizing this evidence concerned with both general and particular issues to be found in Galen, I find that several general and the great majority of the particular issues of the later *schemata isagogica* are anticipated in his autobibliographies and commentaries, and sometimes in his other works as well. The clarification of what is unclear, the various modes of expression or elucidation, the aims and qualifications of the exegete, the proper qualifications of the students, the theme of the work, the intention of the author (of the treatise or of the commentary), the utility of the work, its authenticity (or that of its parts), its title and its division into books or sections, the systematic ordering of the individual treatises as well as the order of the study of the works of Hippocrates (and Galen himself) are discussed whenever necessary.’ 9

In the passage that we have just cited, Sergius refers explicitly twice to the eight-part introduction, but, as we shall see, he goes through the gamut of topics to be covered two or three times, and there is some inconsistency in the number of topics to be covered

9 Ibid., 173.
and their rubrics. As we shall see, Palladius, in his unpublished commentary to Hippocrates’ *Aphorisms*, also presents multiple and inconsistent lists, and so also does Abū ’l-Faraj ‘Abdallāh Ibn ’l-Ṭayyib in the introduction to his commentary on Aristotle’s *Categories*.

Sergius first exhibits a list of eight themes or ‘headings’ (*ru’ūs*, a literal translation of the Syriac *kefalaia*, itself a Greek loan-word) that ‘the Greeks’ traditionally cover in their introductions to commentaries. The themes have names but no explanation, and their meaning is not always clear. They are the following:

1) their purpose (*gharaḍ*)
2) their ‘causes’ (*asbāb*)
3) their strength (*quwwa*)
4) their ‘limit’ (*muntahā*)
5) their author (*mu’allif*)
6) their number (*‘idda*)
7) how they were executed [method of exposition?] (*kayfiyyat ‘amaliḥā*)
8) where they are to be read (*mawdī‘u qirā‘ātiḥā*)

All prologues begin with the purpose. ‘Causes’ may refer to the reason or cause (*zi‘iz*) for the title, also a regular feature. Rubric five, ‘author’, most likely refers to the authenticity of the work. If the sixth heading is to be read *‘idda* (so we prefer), then it refers to the number of chapters into which the book is divided. The eighth item most likely refers to the place of the work in the order of study of the writings of a particular author.

A little further on Sergius presents the list again, this time with a short explanation of each rubric. Unfortunately, only the last three are legible in our fragment, but their intentions are clear enough, and they conform to the full discussion that follows in the introduction. These are: (6) the parts into which the book is divided; (7) to which branch of knowledge the science (taught in the book to be commented upon) belongs; and (8) which type of instruction the author will employ. After twice displaying lists of topics that he plans to cover, Sergius begins the introduction proper; he works his way through the list, going into as much or as little detail as he sees fit.

Published studies on this *topos* examine a wide variety of literary creations but, as we have already said, medical works have for the most part been neglected. Mansfeld briefly discusses Stephanus of
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Athens’s commentary on Hippocrates’ Prognostics (written roughly between 550–650), whose introduction reflects the schema found in commentaries to Aristotle. It opens with this sentence: ‘Let us also this time begin with the eight headings which are the customary prolegomena for each work: the intention, the usefulness and so on’. Practically the same sentence stands at the beginning of the Palladius/Stephanus commentary on On Fractures, where each of the points is then discussed at appropriate length. It is thus particularly appropriate to bring into the discussion here, and to discuss at some length, an as yet unpublished introduction to a Hippocratic text, namely Palladius’ commentary on the Aphorisms. This text is not extant in the original Greek, but an Arabic translation, as well as two different Hebrew versions prepared on the basis of the Arabic, are available.

Palladius goes through no less than three lists of topics to be covered. He says that they number eight, and, in fact, we find eight items in the first two lists; however, it seems that only seven are covered in the third list. In fact, all three lists differ from each other in some way. A similar inconsistency is found in the introduction of Abū ’l-Faraj ‘Abdallāh Ibn ’l-Tayyib to his commentary on Aristotle’s Categories. Abū ’l-Faraj lists ten items that are traditionally brought up for discussion in the introductions to Aristotle. However, in his rather lengthy exposition, items four and five switch places.

In both Palladius and Sergius, the first list displays simply eight topics — single words whose meaning in this context is not always clear. Palladius then presents a second list, in which the eight topics are clarified by means of short phrases (ten words or less); this feature too has a parallel in Sergius. These are the same eight topics that Palladius names in the first list, but their order is different. Finally, the third time around, Palladius — again, just like Sergius — gives not just a list, but a full discussion of the topic.

For purposes of comparison with Sergius’ incomplete text, as well as the intrinsic importance of this hitherto unpublished material, we shall survey here the eight topics that appear in Palladius’ introduction; some of this will prove to be useful when we return to Sergius and sketch out the full treatment he gives in his third listing. Our translations in Palladius’ first list are influenced by his later elabora-
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tion upon these rubrics. In list II our translations are somewhat free, since a literal English translation would be dense and in some cases simply impossible.

list I

1  importance (*himma*)
2  benefit (*manfa‘ā*)
3  relationship (*nisba*)
4  genre (*sanf*)
5  composition (*tālīf*)
6  soundness (*ṣibha*)
7  pedigree (*isnād*)
8  method (*tadbīr*)

list II

1  it should have some importance
2  it should also be of benefit
3  it should be related to something
4  (6) it should be sound
5  (4) it should belong to a known literary genre
6  (5) it should be composed of different parts
7  it should trace back to one of the aspects of wisdom
8  it should have a method that is manifest (literally 'described')

list III

(1) The importance of the *Aphorisms* lies in its comprehensiveness. (2) Its utility comes to the fore in its suitability for both skilled and unskilled readers. (3) Palladius states at the outset that it (the *Aphorisms*) is related to Hippocrates' 'method' (*tadbīr*). He explains that the Hippocratic corpus divides up into four categories: (a) books concerned with the action of people, e.g., *On Prognosis*, which explains how we may foretell medical developments on the basis of symptoms now present; (b) books concerned with the action of substances, e.g. *On Barley Water*; (c) books that concern that which affects us from without, e.g. *Airs, Waters, and Places*; (d) a method for writing a book, such as the *Aphorisms*, which is divided into short statements. Clearly the criterion for establishing the fourth category differs from that employed for the first three. (4) 'Soundness' may mean here authenticity, one of the standard *topoi*, since Palladius remarks here that the soundness is connected with Hippocrates' reputation. He mentions four books — the same four noted under the previous rubric as exemplars par excellence of the Hippocratic corpus — that are utterly indispensable and have no substitute.
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(5) The *Aphorisms* is the key to medicine, and it must be read first. Hence this rubric addresses the common theme of the place of the book in the order of study. (6) Composition: Hippocrates wrote the book in the form of concise aphoristic statements, and Galen later organized it into seven sections. (7) The *Aphorisms* trace back to the branches of medicine, theory and practice. (8) The method is subtle (*latif*). Hippocrates employs three methods: (a) prolix narrative (*hadith*); (b) concise, aphoristic remarks; and (c) a combination of the first two.¹⁵

Let us return to Sergius. After displaying the second list of eight topics, Sergius describes briefly the range of material covered in *On Nutriment* — not just nutrition, but also bone-setting and embryology. Perhaps this is related to the first topic, the book’s utility; but it is only after these remarks that Sergius informs us that he will now list the book’s uses, and they are many:

i. Some patients avoid drugs completely.
ii. Foods penetrate and work from within in a fundamental way that drugs do not.
iii. Foods are appropriate for sound bodies as well as for the sick.
iv. The physician who knows how to make proper use of foods needs nothing else.
v. The indigent have no choice but to rely upon foods.
vi. Mistakes in nutrition are not as damaging as those involving drugs.
vi. Travellers, or someone who finds himself in a place where drugs are unavailable, must rely upon foodstuffs.

Sergius concludes that *On Nutriment* is indispensable, much as Palladius had said about the *Aphorisms* in (4) above, but for different reasons.

The second item is the reason for the book’s title. This is a very common theme in the prologues, but Sergius’ explanation here is not clear to us. The third topic is the division of the Hippocratic corpus. According to Sergius, some Hippocratic writings discuss natural things (humours, chyme, foetus, etc.), while others treat of unnatural things (fevers, fractures, etc.). *On Nutriment* deals with both. This rubric is thus close in structure to Palladius’ ‘relation’ (3), but the contents are entirely different. The fourth rubric is preserved very

¹⁵ *Mutandi mutatis* this remains the scholarly evaluation of the Hippocratic corpus. Jacques Jouanna, *Hippocrates* (Baltimore and London 1999), writes (p. 57): ‘the diversity of the corpus derives from the various audiences aimed at by the treatises…Certain treatises are addressed to a broad readership composed of both specialists and lay people; others are aimed at a specialist readership.’
imperfectly, but it addresses the place of the book within the Hippocratic corpus.

The fifth item is the book’s authenticity, again a common theme, and one that Palladius seems to have addressed in his (4). Sergius cites the book’s conciseness and depth, the strength of the arguments as well as the testimony of Galen — all testify to the book’s authenticity. The sixth concerns the book’s division, or composition (Palladius sixth topic too); but rather than discussing the chapters, Sergius talks about the range of subject materials covered: nutrition in general and the nutrition of individual organs; classifications of foodstuffs; embryology; and more on food. The seventh is similar to Palladius’ ‘lineage’ (seventh on his list as well); Sergius speaks about theory and practice. The eighth item, again just like the eighth item in Palladius’ list, is the mode of composition. Exactly like Palladius Sergius says that some Hippocratic writings are concise, others prolix, yet others, a mixture of the two. On Nutriment is concise, and deliberately difficult of comprehension. It is addressed only to a serious audience, to those willing to invest the time and effort to fully fathom the subject. Hippocrates employs here the same style as Plato, and for the same reasons; we shall devote the next section to a closer examination of this comparison between the two great authorities. This judgment is confirmed by Jacques Jouanna, who describes On Nutriment as a collection of ‘intentionally enigmatic aphorisms.’

One key topos of the ‘Alexandrian introduction’ receives very brief treatment on the part of Palladius, and none at all from Sergius (in the part of the introduction that we have recovered), and that is the order of study, in particular the order of study of the texts that make up the Hippocratic corpus. Interestingly enough, we do have a detailed account of this from an early Arabic source, the Kitāb al-Nāfi’ of Ali ibn Riddān (d. c. 1061). The one manuscript accessible to us, Dublin, Chester Beatty Ar. 4026, is missing the relevant section, but we do have a reliable report based upon another manuscript, Cairo, Egyptian National Library Tibb 483, in the monograph of Joseph Schacht and Max Meyerhof. According to Ibn Riddān,
Hippocrates left us no instructions concerning the proper order of study of his writings, since he (Hippocrates) preferred to rely upon oral instruction. Ibn Riḍwān then proposes what seems to him the proper course of study; it comprises the following texts (the titles are given exactly as they appear in the monograph), in this order: *On the Foetus; Nature of Man; Airs, Waters, and Places; Aphorisms; Prognostic; Gynaecology; Epidemics; On Humours; On Nutriment; The Physician’s Office; On Joints; On Wounds of the Head.*

**Plato and Hippocrates**

In the section of the introduction that treats of the mode of exposition, Sergius draws a parallel between the very concise, hence at times enigmatic or even esoteric style, that Hippocrates chose to employ in *On Nutriment*, and Plato’s style:

‘Hippocrates [composed] his books according to this method only because that was what he had to do. Hippocrates said, “Let books be written for people according to their capacities”. Plato said, “The two opposites should not be joined together. Let not the pure become contaminated by the impure. For when you mix sweet water with water that contains mud, you putrefy the water, and it is not good anymore. If you teach the wicked (*ţalāţ! līcet ūţāţ), he will mock and ridicule you. In general, only those possessing sound eyesight benefit from light.”’

The connection between Hippocrates and Plato and, in particular, the dependence in some measure of the latter upon the former, has been much discussed. The link between the two has a solid basis in a passage from the *Phaedrus* 270 C-D, where Plato cites Hippocrates — more precisely, ‘Hippocrates and the truth’ — for the principle that the physician must know the nature of the human body, and especially the precise nature of each of its parts, in order to treat the patient successfully. This idea has important implications for Plato’s philosophy. It was Galen who pressed the connection between the two hoary authorities most vigorously. Overall Galen felt that Plato took some of the most important points of his doctrine from Hippocrates. He wrote an extensive work on the agreement be-

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18 It is not certain where the quotation from Plato ends; it is quite possible that the last sentence in our citation is due to Sergius.
between the doctrines of the two thinkers, which was translated into Arabic, though this translation is no longer extant. 21

Nonetheless, we have not been able to find the apothegm attributed to Plato in any genuine Platonic writing, or in any of the many doxographies and other repositories of Platonic wisdom. This is not very surprising; there are many examples of sayings attributed to Plato that display what seems to be authentic Platonic teachings, but whose precise formulation is not found in any of Plato’s writings. 22 One can find remarks that are suggestive of the saying found in our text. In *Phaedo* 67 B, for example, Socrates argues that if we maintain our own purity, ‘we shall probably reach the company of others like ourselves and gain direct knowledge of all that is pure and uncontaminated — that is, presumably, of truth.’ 23 The gist of this statement is found in Abū ’l-Faraj’s introduction to his own commentary to the *Categories*: ‘As for Plato, it is found in statement, “Let only the pure approach the pure.”’ 24 Al-Bīrūnī cites from the *Phaedo* passages that have no exact equivalent in the Greek text; his editor and translator, Edward Sachau, speculates that he may have seen some as yet unidentified recension. 25 We may if we like indulge in a similar speculation concerning Abū ’l-Faraj’s source.

Abū ’l-Faraj’s introduction is very relevant for another reason. He too cites Hippocrates and Plato back to back. However, there is an important difference in the point which each author ascribes to the two sages. The passage from the *Phaedo* quoted by Abū ’l-Faraj concerns the individual’s preparation for his own study, and the impurities that are warned against are those of the body. The individual is warned to restrain his impulses and desires. The sayings of

22 On this see the classic study of Franz Rosenthal, ‘On the Knowledge of Plato’s Philosophy in the Islamic World’, *Islamic Culture* 14 (1940), 387–422.
23 Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Bollingen Series LXXI (Princeton 1961), 49; the translation is by Hugh Tredennick.
24 Ferrari, *Kategorienkommentar*, 10 (Arabic).
25 See E. Sachau, *Alberuni’s India*, vol. 2 (London 1910), 277–8. Some of the citations from *Phaedo* agree well with the Greek, but others do not; Sachau suggests that they derive ‘from a work in which text and commentary were mixed together, and the original form of the dialogue changed into a simple relation.’ This is of course pure speculation; no such recension of the *Phaedo* is known to exist. In an earlier passage from the same book, Sachau encountered three citations from Plato, only one of which matched the Greek dialogues. He queried the great historian of Greek philosophy E. Zeller, who suggested in response that the problematic passages are likely to derive from a commentary to the *Timaeus* by some Christian author, as e.g. John Philoponus."
Hippocrates and Plato in Sergius’ introduction, by contrast, address the issues of writing for and teaching others. Immediately after citing from Plato, Sergius adds, ‘But as for Hippocrates, it is found in his statement that unclean bodies only add evil, the more they are nourished’. In his usage, nourishing unclean bodies is a metaphor for ‘feeding’ the ignorant ideas that they are not able to cope with.

The Hippocratic Corpus

There are several short lists of Hippocrates’ books in Sergius’ introduction, as well as occasional references to single works. Some of the titles pose problems. Titles generally begin with fi, corresponding to the Greek peri; if this preposition is followed by a string of nouns, we cannot always be sure if one or more different books are intended. Thus, for example, [On] the Nature of Man is surely an independent treatise, even though the fi is missing. However, in the case of On Blood, Semen, The Composition of Organs, and The Formation of the Child (Fi ‘l-Dam wa-l-nuţfa wa-tarkib al-a’dâ’ wa-kawn l-tišf), we are not sure how many different books are mentioned. Here follow the names of the books and our identifications or conjectures. They appear in our list in the order in which they appear in the text. We refer whenever possible to Jacques Jouanna, Hippocrates (n. 15 above) and to the third volume of Fuat Sezgin, Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums (n. 1 above) for further bibliography.

On Seasons. Probably identical with Fi Ma’rifat fusuul as-sana; Sezgin, p. 43.
On Temperaments. (Fi ‘l-Amzija). This is most likely to be the known work On Temperaments, called in Arabic Kitāb l-Ahlāt (Sezgin, 35).
On Blood, Semen, The Composition of Organs, and The Formation of the Child (Fi ‘l-Dam wa-l-nuţfa wa-tarkib al-a’dâ’ wa-kawn l-tišf). The first of these (‘On Blood’) is likely to be Sayalān ‘l-dam, not known in the Greek, but known (by title alone) in Arabic (Sezgin, 46). On Semen is probably identical with the Greek Peri Gones (On Offspring, or On Seed) and the Arabic: (Fi ‘l-Ajinna, or, al-Janīn; Sezgin, p. 38, no. 10).
On Water, Air, Earth and Countries (Fi ‘l-Mā’ wa-l-hawā’ wa-l-ard wa-l-buldān). This is the very famous Airs, Waters, and Places, which

26 Ibid. The citation, which is from Aphorisms II.10, appears in a variety of late antique and Islamic sources, which are listed by Ferrari in her note 3. To these may be added Galen, On simples (Kühn XI, 457), who adds that the same applies to souls: ‘nourishing words’ are very harmful to impure souls.
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went under different names in antiquity. Galen preferred to call it *Dwellings, Waters, Seasons and Countries.*27 The title as it appears in Sezgin, 36, is *Kitāb l-ahwiya wa-l-azmina wa-l-miyāh wa-l-buldān.* See also Jouanna, 374–5.

*On Bones and Bandages* (*Fi l-Iṣām wa-l-aḍmīda*). This work also appears in the list of Ibn Rīḍwān (above, p. 188). We tentatively suggest that it is probably identical with the work called in Greek *Kat' Ietreion (In the Surgery)* which, according to Galen, might be more appropriately called *Notes on Bandaging.*28 The traditional Arabic titles are *Kitāb Qātīyatīyūn* or *Ḥānūtat-tabīb* (Sezgin, 36).


*On All Types of Pains* (*Fi Jamā’ anwār ‘l-awjā’*). *Ameliorating Uteri* (*Fi? ‘Īslāb ‘l-arbām*). This would seem to be one of Hippocrates’ books (or perhaps a section thereof) on sterile women (volume 8 in the edition of Littré).


*Aphorisms* (*Kitāb al-Fuṣūl*) (Sezgin, 28–32).

*Prognosis* (*Kitāb Taqdimat al-‘ilm*). The usual title for this book in Arabic is *Taqdimat al-maṣāf.*

*Bonesetting* (*Kitāb al-Jabr*). This work went under several titles in Arabic — *al-Jabr, al-Kasr,* and *al-Khal* (Sezgin, 44). See next item.

*On Joints* (*Kitāb al-Mafṣāl*). See Jouanna’s list, no. 43, pp. 402–3, where *On Fractures/On Joints* is listed as a single entry. *Kitāb al-Mafṣāl* is known in the Arabic literature as a separate treatise (Sezgin, 45).

*Epidemics* (*Kitāb Abīdhimīyā*). Sezgin, 34.

*Acute Diseases* (*kitāb al-‘ilal al-ḥāddā*). See Sezgin, 33, whose sources all call this treatise *al-amrād al-ḥāddā.* See next item.

*On Barley Water* (*Fi l-Kashk*; note that the usual title for this work in Arabic is *Kitāb Mā’ al-shu‘ār,* registered by Sezgin, 33). This is the title sometimes given to *On Acute Diseases,* in Greek as well as in Arabic (See Sezgin, 33); however, from the context it seems that Sergius has in mind a separate treatise, perhaps a section of *On Acute Diseases* that circulated independently.


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The Text

The text has been copied out, line by line and column by column. Lacunae are indicated by three dots (...). On a few occasions we suggest a correction to the text within square brackets [ ] immediately after the word or words that appear to be corrupt.

[1a]
 inadvertent [solution]
Letter, [Fig. 9:728] of the book, to [Aschdor,] known to [the people and] in [the city of] Galatia, [to] the [translator] [of the book], Samuel, [the] son of [Rabbi] [Simon][a].

[1b]....

[...]...
THE INTRODUCTION OF SERGIUS OF RĒSH'AINĀ

The introduction of Sergius of Rēsh'ainā, a Kharabite commentator and a significant figure in the history of the Syriac language and literature. His works are pivotal in understanding the early development of Syriac literature and its influence on later Christian literature.

[2a]...

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The text continues with a detailed examination of Sergius' commentary approach and his influence on the development of Syriac literature. It highlights his contributions to the preservation and dissemination of ancient texts, particularly the works of the apostles and early Christian figures.
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לאמא נר נשא חצריא אביו מברךנא ליב
אצמא לא יתעמלין אוילריה פסקahkanוק לא
יקדרין או יסיוו ברבריה אוילרסיבב
למערפתהו רמיסט אייל ויאפקעה עליל
שוחתהו ונידעם הנה יברחיית הב
ולו פקא פיארינק אולימן ונהו אלכנב אול
תחא אולראזא ואלוושהו ונוית איילעעאא אי伧עכלה
כתי איולאדריה אולומאמפקה הלך קחNonce
Prefab לכהלכ קלחואנא צל האלמהף
אלדבר איא עגעל הב מוכראל לא עלי דאלל

[2b] יילו קפת טאמוד אולנדא אולמעאשף מחקה
כובמא ממקודיא אדכר’ אול שיא בנ本案
ולא עספה … איילה ביומנה והדר…
 znaleźć מאלсерיב וחקדריה…
עליג אגו נגרקאלליח מתקשה הברואת
אלאמעמא אוצפיו פאלאדריה אלאמקק
וללנמאו עללחתהו קמא אולברקראם פלו
כמת אולפני פיטכות אדו’ לא תערפ ה’ai:
אפר בכר איילסיב ולהות אדאר מבריב
קור ניא סתקיבר ממע לאמעאשף הל יוהוח
אלפי ספרא אוליאשא אוצפיו פסא אולפקרה
 пом אל קיידרעל יאלבכר אייליזוריאו למקנה
ונלאיהו עללמודהו פסיונט ביאלאדיאן
עא舊כ’ פאלאמעמא אפור קע חבל אייאלאריוה לו
יבר איליצלוד יחל’. ווא קע פאלאגייה פפulton
אלטרו (אםדריא) לא יעבר איליצלוד: יﮎר תעש בחדה
אלטבאד איצ’: אילאמאמרים פס אולבר אייבאנר
אלedReader אלקרורע צייר אולואנטעם. ווא איינה
אבלערמע ומע ילאך פי מינו איינה אייה
פרס אأدראזא פיפ reklודיב עליוה אוליאלאריא
PostBack אדריאזא לילטיבליא עליוה אוליאלאריא
ואמענה עלאדות סויבלייט עאד אסטראן ען
אליאלארות לייר(2)ألיאלארות (ביוולה באליאלארות) ודלך ויאליסבר אולאמאר
ירואל יוער אוליפ نتي אאליאלארות אמסל ל何もסילה
פי לעסאלו אילסיב מן אצוייו בא יפי איילזוארית
ואלאראה לי חמק דלך פסא אוללאצא אמן
משבעא פיס אילהאי אולקאוֹניא: أيילאعطמאו
פי אדאר יכר הדוה避け דא מניayette בא פי
קוק ידיארי: הפרפהו דלך מיה טאמב אולאלאריכל(3)
יאלאאהו מיה ויהא אולאנדרו בוול גא אראיאזא

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[3a]

... welche die Könige von Rēš’ainā und von der ganzen Welt ...
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In the introduction, Sergius of Reshaina presents his work, which is dedicated to the study of the Torah and Talmud.

The text begins with an acknowledgment of the work's intent, emphasizing the importance of understanding the laws and traditions presented.

Sergius highlights the need for readers to engage deeply with the text, urging them to ponder its teachings carefully.

Throughout the introduction, Sergius stresses the importance of learning from the past and building upon it.

The text concludes with a blessing for the students who will read and study the work.

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[4b]

The introduction of Sergius of Resh'ainā

[5a]

The introduction of Sergius of Resh'ainā
We present a fairly literal translation of the text. In those places where the text is abstruse, but we feel that we can suggest its intention, we offer a paraphrase within square brackets. Lacunae in the manuscript, and obvious corruptions or passages that could not be translated have been indicated by an ellipsis (...). Other than those paraphrases, and the analysis offered in the introductory essay, we add no annotations.

[1a] This is Hippocrates’ book On Nutriment with the commentary of Galen, translated by the translator Yusuf ibn Khāj [licet al-Khūrī?]. Sergius said: Let us begin, with the help of God, to write what Galen explained concerning Hippocrates’ book On Nutriment. He [Sergius] said: Dear brother, since you asked me and requested of me many times that I translate for you some of the books of the Greeks into Syriac, but especially the treatise that Hippocrates composed about foods, and this was on account of your love for all knowledge that the soul requires, I assented and will not deny you that which you asked for and requested; for it is one of the things that are required.

I did not want to do any of this, because I know the censure and rebuke that will come upon me due to the envy of those who are not satisfied by anything other than amassing money. This is so because they do not seek the same gain as those who are in search of knowledge [and] who do not have material possessions that might be a
substitute for it [i.e. seeking knowledge]. I also beseech you not to neglect seeking beneficial knowledge…

[1b] …inquired into the books that he wrote in all their varieties. Among them, On Seasons, and among them, On Temperaments, and among them, On Blood, Semen, The Composition of Organs, and The Formation of the Child; On Water, Air, Earth and Countries; On Setting Bones and Bandages; On Ulcers; and On All Types of Pains; Ameliorating Uteri; On the Nature of Man. After he had written this, he realized that there still remained the loftiest and most excellent of them, namely, that which cannot be done without, and no one is free of need of it: that is to say, nutriment. Maintenance (reading *qawām*) of every living thing depends upon it. From it, the embryo receives its coming-to-be and growth; by its means, the organs manifest their actions; through it, health is sustained, and the substance of man endures until the end of the life-span to which it can reach. An animal cannot endure if it is worn out due to a lack of food. Therefore, (?) he composed this book, making it a treasure or a precious object of value. Since it is the custom of the Greeks, when beginning commentaries to the books of the ancients, to lay down at the beginning of the books, eight headings, by means of which will become clear their aim, their causes, their strength, their limit, their author, their number (?), how they were executed, where they are to be read [i.e. place in the curriculum?], by means of which [information] they encourage people to read it, once they have been given to hear what wonderful things, hidden secrets, and enormous benefits are in it.

Let us therefore talk about the explanation of these headings in connection with this book, so that we may know what each one of them makes incumbent upon us. These are the headings: The first, it informs us of Hippocrates’ opinion. The second

[2a]…

The sixth, regarding every part into which this book is divided. The seventh will make clear to which of the branches of knowledge this book belongs. The eighth will declare which type of instruction Hippocrates employed in this book, that is, whether he wished to explain in this book the cause [?, i.e. final cause] of food, the purpose of its kinds, their transformations, powers, action, benefits and harm, but he had no choice but to go beyond its boundary [strict boundary of this field, as explained in the next sentences, e.g., dealing with bone-setting and embryology]. And the doctrine concern-
ing the types of maladies that come about on account of an excess of food, or on account of its poorness, its quality, its quantity, in its clearest [formulation?]. And the doctrine concerning the setting of broken bones, the number of days [required] for them to heal, and on the coming to be of the fetus and its conception. And on its movement within the womb, the completion of its perfection; and he explained its coming out [of the womb], along with the number of days, [he explained] each of these. He then went back and completed this topic (?; i.e. alimentation). These are the benefits procured by the person who reads this book. For we see many people who, when they take sick, not only do they not take drugs — they cannot bear to hear them mentioned! Due to his knowledge of the types of food, the doctor is able to accommodate their desire, to feed them what is needed, so that they are helped by it. Indeed, were they given to drink all of the appropriate drugs for feverish maladies, pain of the liver, spleen, head, stomach, and all of the internal organs, but they had not the food appropriate for these, their pains would stay as they are. Even though drugs cure from the outside, they do not penetrate [so that?] their power [may] set in. However, food that is fitting transforms into laudable [i.e. salubrious] chyme. If it is applied to … pain, it is beneficial … as necessary. Therefore, health is preserved by means of the types of foods. In addition, drugs are not proper for sound bodies, as Hippocrates said in the Book of Aphorisms. Therefore, one ought to count this book as the most excellent of the books on medicine, because, if the physician knows it and is able to extract from it useful things, he does not need anything else. Moreover, there are some indigent among the populace, and those who cannot take drugs because of the trouble involved (li-ma‘unihā, lic. ma‘unatihā?), their high cost, or their unavailability, and they can make do with food instead of drugs. Also in case of a mistake: if it happens in connection with drugs, the patient can hardly escape [death or serious injury]. However, should it happen in connection with foods, then, the patient rarely will perish. Voyagers on land and at sea, who cannot [obtain] any of the other types [of remedy], may profit from this book. Moreover, if the person comes to a place where the drugs that he requires are not to be found, then he will necessarily have need of foodstuffs. Therefore, it is requisite upon the physician to have knowledge of this book.

Indeed, praise is due to the physician who does without drugs, but replaces them with foodstuffs: that is the skilled physician! Perhaps it would even be better and more excellent for the physician to spend his effort upon foodstuffs than to spend his effort upon that which

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has [both] alimentary and pharmaceutical [properties], were that possible; for [otherwise] the cure will be effective only insofar as it possess both of these powers. And perhaps it would be better to spend his efforts on things possessing both alimentary and pharmaceutical [properties] than it would be to spend his effort upon whatever has a purely pharmaceutical power. For this reason the physicians of [al-hākil] were praised, since, whenever they found the foodstuff [that had the sought-after therapeutic properties?], they had what they wanted, [3a] and even if it fell short of the [desired] action, they exerted no effort at all on drugs. [This last sentence is clearly mangled, and we have no idea what Sergius means to say here.] Therefore, the physician should not habituate bodies to drugs when illnesses set in them. They have praised the physician when he does with foodstuffs what another cannot do with drugs with regard to curing illnesses and taking care of the sick.

Now, then, it is known that this book is not just beneficial like the other books, but rather it is something that one simply must possess. The heading of this book is written, ‘On Nutriment, by Hippocrates’. He [Hippocrates] disliked prolixity. Even had he wanted to relate the types of food, and their individuals are very many [i.e. the very many classes of individual foods], he would hardly have been able to encompass them. Who indeed is capable of describing the classes and individuals? Therefore, Hippocrates, who knew medicine, and, along with medicine, the science of how to express oneself [literally: the science of speech], did not apply this definition, but rather stamped this book with this name. He called it by this name only because people, many in number, composed many books, even if (?) they had not just given names to the beginnings of their books and names to their books. [There are many books on foods, and it is important to know that this one is by Hippocrates?] He meant by it, that which most people recognize, but they do not know what they require of it. [People will immediately know that this is a book on an important subject that probably conveys information that is much needed.]

You ought to know that all of Hippocrates’ books were composed in two different ways. One of these is to inform about natural things, that is, humours, powers, the fetus, the nature of man, chymes, the types of food, and the like. The other way concerns things that are unnatural [i.e. beyond the bounds of healthy nature], such as the types of fever, broken bones, prognosis for perdition or sound health, the fluctuation [i.e. inversion] of temperaments, and, in general, all things similar to these. Accordingly, he composed this book accord-
ing to these two ways, concerning natural things, and those that are unnatural [literally: 'lie outside of nature']. Healthy people…

[3b]…

…Therefore, this book is the fourth of Hippocrates' books, after which he [the medical student?] reads [advanced texts?]. Know that he [it?] was called by the name Hippocrates...He composed books, some of which are almost like others. This is the reason why the commentators had some doubts and could hardly distinguish the one from the other.

As for us, we say — and it is the truth — that this book is by the Hippocrates who wrote On Prognosis, the Aphorisms, On Bone-Setting, On Joints, Epidemics, and Acute Diseases. We know this, because of its conciseness and wariness of prolixity, along with the depth of understanding and the rarity of anything superfluous, yet concerning this [issue], there is argument that is more correct and more firm. This is the testimony of Galen and his commentary to it, among all of them.

This book is divided among three issues. The first is the nutrition of the general populace, their food and its action, the organs that are nourished by it, its benefit and harm. The second is the classification of the types of food. Included in this is the clarification, which of them are moist and which dry, knowledge of smells and tastes; the classification of the organs that are harmed by them or benefit from them; and the diseases that are produced by them [foodstuffs]. The third is the formation of the embryo, how many days it takes for it to be completed, how many days it moves within the womb, and in how many days it will be birthed, as well as the explication of the difference between male and female. He then went back to the general topics, describing the types of foods, and explaining their benefits and harms. He could…

[4a]…

…from among those who wrote books …he explained
…three parts of science. For part of science is that which points to logic and intellectual understanding. Part of it points to work with the hands [surgery]. The third concerns making use of both kinds. You will find most of Hippocrates’ books to be according to this description. One (?) of them is On the Nature of Man, and some are different from that book. [such as] [On] Fractures and Bone-setting. However, that which is comprised by On barley water indicates two kinds. For that book comprises knowledge of fever and reasoning
about it on the basis of its actions, then the judgement about them as to what reasoning mandates, and then, after that, mention of the barley water, its preparation, and the other things that are do be done with the hands.

Now this book has two kinds of science and practice. When he talks about food and its utilization for nourishing the organs, causing them to grow during the period of growth, and replenishing that which wastes away of them, during the period that that [is applicable, i.e. maturity], [all of ] this is to be done on the basis of investigation and reasoning. When ‘sweet’, ‘not sweet’, ‘sweet in potentia’, ‘sweet in actu’, and the like are mentioned, this too is to be done by way of reasoning. However, the pastes, oils, and all the like that [are used to] bandage, bind and cure, they are the work of the hands, [though] falling under [the rule?] of reasoning, for it [reasoning] is secondary to it [practice in these matters].

It is known that this book encompasses these parts. The physicians at the time of Galen made a greater division of science [or: knowledge]. However, those who were in the time of Hippocrates made use of knowledge only according to three divisions — either because they were sparing with words but deep in their concepts [4b], so that one would rely upon one's understanding [as in the English expression, ‘a word to the wise…’], or else they were prolix and lengthy in their words, intending the opposite of what was thought in the first [case]; or they combined both of these.

Hippocrates […] composed books according to this method, such as On [Fractures] and Joints and Epidemics; and he composed a book on diseases that passed by him and he inspected. He composed another book [perhaps: other books], similar to this with regard to their great prolixity and length. Since their discourse is lengthy, not much understanding is needed [since everything is set forth at length]. However, his On Nature, On Temperaments, and Aphorisms are much deeper and much more abstruse, because he made them concise and succinct. But as for On Barley Water, and what was said about ulcerations in the head, and ulcerations in the entire body, as books two and six of Epidemics, they comprise a combination of both methods; however, they contain a discourse that does not require great understanding.

You ought to know that this book [i.e. On Nutriment] is one of the books that he wrote with conciseness. Scholars did not compose their writings according to this tendency out of their stinginess and meanness with regard to knowledge. Instead, they did all of this [deliberately], not relying upon a lucid discourse. For when a lazy per-
son is given a succinct discourse, he becomes impatient, and his misgivings divert him from it. Such a person is not to be counted in the file of scholars. Hippocrates [composed] his books according to this method only because that was what he had to do. Hippocrates said, ‘Let books be written for people according to their capacities’. Plato said, ‘The two opposites should not be joined together. Let not the pure become contaminated by the impure. For when you mix sweet water with water that contains mud, you putrefy [5a] the water, and it is not good anymore.’ If you teach the wicked (†alâni!? licet žallâmi??), he will mock and ridicule you. In general, only those possessing sound eye-sight benefit from light. For this reason, when people who are eager to seek out and to understand get hold of this book, they gladden and rejoice in it, because of the hidden secrets and concealed, profound things that it contains.

I will clarify a little here, and you will thus know the genus and forms [perhaps one ought to read šanf; ‘species’]. That is, he calls that thing ‘genus’ which characterizes many things whose natures are distinct, one from the other. For the ox, the horse, and the ass all have in common and share in vitality [being animals is more precise here], but are different in species. So also the fig, acorn, and bread are all called (?) food, but each one is different from the other. Know this, so that you do not become mistaken in it.

Sergius’ introduction is complete. This is the beginning of the book of Hippocrates with the commentary of Galen.