

IBRAHIM BEN MRAD (ed.), *Kitāb al-I'timād f al-adwiyah al-mufradah* (The Reliable Book on Simple Drugs). By Abū Ja'far Aḥmad Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn Al-Jazzār (369 AH/979-980 CE). Edited by Ibrahim Ben Mrad, London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, Centre for the Study of Islamic Manuscripts, 2019, (1090 pp). (Edited Texts Series).

By a curious analogy to the local medical tradition (often styled «Medical School») of Qayrawān, Ibn al-Jazzār has been certainly privileged both by Fortune and by contemporary research—and yet the exact details of his workmanship, the extent of his indebtedness to his immediate predecessors Ibn 'Imrān and Ibn Sulaymān and, more generally, the identity of his sources, remain to be defined. Beginning in his own lifetime his works (just like those of his forerunners) were divulged and read beyond the Ifrīqī boundaries (with a particularly critical reception in Andalus), and in the next century his influence would extend (just like theirs) even farther in Latin, then Hebrew and Greek garb. In modern times virtually all his extant output has been edited, including his medical opus magnum, *Zād al-musāfir*, edited first in Tunis by al-Suwaysī and al-Jāzī (al-Dār al-'arabiyya lil-kitāb, 1986–1989) and which shall hopefully be made available in its entirety in a definitive multilingual annotated critical edition-cum-translation in the next years (see Books 1–2 edited in their Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin versions by Bos, Käs, and McVaugh, Leiden – New York, Brill, 2022). Five years ago also his foundational monograph on pharmacognosics, *Kitāb al-I'timād*, saw the light in a critical edition prepared by Ben Mrad. There can be little doubt that he was probably one of the best-suited candidates to edit this text given his previous work thereon (of which the reader will be often reminded in the footnotes) and his undisputable expertise in the field of Arabo-Islamicate (and particularly Qayrawānī) pharmacognosics. This fruit of his scholarship shall hardly disappoint any well-informed reader and, despite a few contentions concerning the editorial choices that I shall sample below, the edition under review represents a huge step (for some readers perhaps the definitive one) beyond the facsimile reproduction issued by the Institut für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften (Frankfurt, 1985) and al-Qashsh's polemical version (Beirut, 1998). The latter's pseudoedition of the text (and, by the way, the annoying commercial strategy of which it is a clear exmple) is the object of a well-deserved criticism on pp. 89–92, but I must confess that the reiterated denunciation of his piratical plagiarism of the editor's findings ends up being a little too

insistent. Somewhat ironically, in etymological matters Ben Mrad often reproduces some suggestions without however citing any source for them and he often refers his reader to his own *Muṣṭalah*, in which no sources are ever adduced to support the linguistic ascription of the borrowings. Furthermore, since no dictionaries are mentioned for either Persian or Syriac, one may surmise that all data related to those two languages has been borrowed from previous authors with no due acknowledgement...

Let me deal first with the editor's Introduction before delving in some detail into Ibn al-Jazzār's text itself as published here. Were I to characterise it in just two words, I should probably describe it as unevenly informative. Side by side, in seamless juxtaposition, the reader must expect to find a lengthily developed and doubtfully pertinent apology on Ibn al-Jazzār's Sunnism (pp. 37–39) and the reascription of *Kitāb al-farq* to the Qayrawānī physician rather than to al-Rāzī as assumed by its editor Qaṭāyah (p. 23 n. 1). Ben Mrad also identifies quite forcibly the text preserved in Bursa, Haraççioğlu MS 1126, fols. 125r–171v with Ibn al-Jazzār's *Bughyah* (pp. 25–29). To the best of my knowledge that treatise in eighteen chapters arranged according to the ailments from top to toe is still referred to as unidentified or anonymous (see the edition of Ibn Janāḥ's *Talkhīṣ* by Bos, Käs, Lübke, and Mensching, Leiden – New York, Brill, 2020, p. 103). It may be worth comparing it to the passages quoted therefrom by Ibn Janāḥ and by Ibn Samajūn (listed in Bos *et al.* 2020, pp. 133–134) as well as with the recipes explicitly borrowed from it by al-Zahrāwī for his *Taṣrīf*. On a side note that affects the whole of the book, the bibliography seems to reflect a much earlier phase in its preparation (the most recent item mentioned dates from 2012) and even up to that date it is shockingly defective, especially with regard to German-language literature. Thus, Ullmann's survey is missing (but Sezgin's in turn is quoted) and so is Dietrich's *Dioscurides Triumphans* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), the absence of the latter being particularly detrimental as far as phytonymy and botanical identification are concerned. Moreover, not only does Ben Mrad make no use of Käs' monograph on minerals (*Die Mineralien in der arabischen Pharmakognosie*, Mainz, Harrassowitz, 2010) but even his edition-cum-translation-and-study of Ibn al-Jazzār's *Khawāṣṣ* (Mainz, Harrassowitz, 2012) is ignored and that text is listed on p. 29 as lost in Arabic and extant only in Latin and Hebrew translation. To the catalogue of omissions one ought to add Löw's classical *Aramäische Pflanzennamen*—an absence which, together with that of Dietrich's aforementioned book, is hardly justifiable in a work that lays so much stress on botanical identification and interlinguistic transmission. In any case, the criterion

for omission or exclusion does not appear to be linguistic or ideological, given that there is no mention at all of Ibn Juljul's oeuvre (which was entirely edited by Garijo long before this 2012) nor of Ibn Samajūn's *Jāmi'* or Ibn Wāfid's *Mufradah*, to name only three main Andalusī authors of pharmacognostical texts whose output is both directly and indirectly linked to the materials transmitted in *Iʿtimād*. I am only too aware of the negative consequences of limited availability to specialised literature, yet the fact that the editor does not even take into account the existence of some of these texts would seem to betray a possible methodological (rather than simply stochastic) flaw.

On pp. 41–79 *Iʿtimād* is introduced to the reader through its fortunes beyond the Arabographic tradition, both in Latin (pp. 54–59) and Hebrew (pp. 59–60) translations. Then its explicit sources are dealt with some detail, but without further elaboration, on pp. 65–79. Let it be noted the editor's open disagreement on pp. 78–79 with regard to the conventional narrative according to which Ibn Sulaymān would have arrived in Qayrawān while Ibn ʿImrān was still alive. In Ben Mrad's view al-Isrāʾīlī would have studied under Ibn ʿImrān in Egypt and found his teacher already dead when he settled in Qayrawān. Whether Ibn al-Jazzār's «Ishāq» refers always to Ibn Sulaymān as affirmed by the editor on p. 79 requires further scrutiny, as does whether the Iṣṭifān collocated with Alexander (of Tralles) in the lemma on pellitory (entry [239] on pp. 816–817) is actually Alexander's father Stephanos as asserted on pp. 73–74—the passage, in fact, is probably rather an echo from al-Ṭabarī's *Firdaws* IV.ii.5 (= ed. Ṣiddīqī p. 145<sub>16–17</sub>).

The description of the manuscripts on which the present edition is based is found on pp. 79–92. According to the editor there is one single complete copy (the Ayasofya manuscript facsimiled by the Frankfurt Institute) and four fragments of different length held in Algiers, Florence, Tunis, and London. To the direct transmission of the text one must add several abridgements and reworkings that are given due consideration by the editor (see pp. 86–88). It is to be regretted, however, that the almost complete, and overall fairly correct, Judaeo-Arabic copy preserved in Munich (= BSB, Cod. Arab. 976) could not be incorporated into this edition and that no advantage was taken from the secondary transmission (in the form of explicit quotations in later authors) of the text. The reading *שאה בשר* on BSB fol. 11v 7 lends even more forcefulness to the editor's clever emendation of the Persian synonym recorded in *Iʿtimād* [40] for *iklīl al-malik* (see p. 235<sub>2</sub>). For [43] *anzarūt* «sarcocolla» on p. 245<sub>2–3</sub> the text transmitted in BSB fol. 12r 17–18 includes an allegedly Syriac synonym *אבסופעלס* that is apparently missing from all other copies and which is reminiscent (at least in its ending) of the form *فعلس* that Ibn Juljul

would have recorded (in some work other than his *Tafsīr*) as «Rūmī» according to the *ʿUmdah* [329] (= ed. Bustamante, Corriente, and Tilmatine p. 25<sub>31</sub>).

The critical edition of the text (on which see below) is complemented with no less than eleven indices spanning from page 945 through page 1061 and covering terminology both Arabic or Arabicised and non-Arabic, authors, places, and books cited in the text. On a rather aesthetical note, the book is overall well-designed and typographically pleasant, with the always-annoying exception of segments in non-alifatic script. The effort to render Greek words in their original alphabet has not always paid off and their orthography is often less than acceptable, especially with regard to accents. Fortunately such a chimaera as λτοςσφαᾶ (sic, to be read ᾶσφαλτος) on the main footnote to [191] on p. 682 is just an isolated mishap. It would have been also desirable that binomial names of plants should had been given in their standard form rather than in roman (ie non-italic) characters and with all-caps abbreviations for their authorities.

It shall come as no surprise that editorial decision making should become a thorny question and a subject of contention in a text of this nature. It is precisely because of the importance of this matter and out of respect for the editor's work that I elaborate my criticism in the following lines beyond the usual limits of a cursory review. Some general indications on editorial criteria are presented on pp. 92–95 and one must concede that the edited Arabic text stands out for its correctness—a quality that should not always be taken for granted—even where the testimony of the manuscripts is far from transparent. For some unexplained reason the extensive vocalisation of text promised by the editor in the Introduction stops abruptly and definitely with Book 2.

Footnotes are rich and follow the format introduced by Ben Mrad in his own edition of Ibn al-Bayṭār's *Tafsīr* (Carthage, Bayt al-Ḥikma, 1990). Several different hermeneutical layers coexist there that include not only variant readings but also cross-references, sources (Dioscorides in both Greek and Arabic, Galen's *Simpl. med.* only in Greek, although variants and divergences from the source are rarely indicated), lexicographical explanations, and identifications of a few place names (mark particularly p. 816 n. 7). The segment of the footnotes that could be labelled as the critical apparatus is of the non-abstract kind and sometimes fringes on verbosity. Despite the editor's evident sensitiveness regarding philological matters, variant readings are not always registered in the footnotes, which in a few instances bears on the actual form of a plant name. To give one characteristic illustration of this uncertainty, when dealing with ἐπίθυμον in entry [167] on pp. 613–615 no variants are provided for the name of this plant (but in MS I the word

is entirely undotted) and the reader may thus be unaware of the possibility (or rather plausibility) that Ibn al-Jazzār may have used not *af(i)thīmūn* but rather the widespread form *afīth(i)mūn*. In the same lemma no justification is given for preferring *iqrīṭīsh* and *iqrīṭīshī* on 613<sub>4</sub> over the forms in *-s-* transmitted (apparently) at least by MS I. By the same token, the reader is left in the darkness about the actual forms in which the Rūmī synonym قرفسيا for [82] *bisbāsah* is transmitted and how close it may have been to Greek καρπήσιον (see p. 359<sub>2</sub> and p. 360 n. 2). Equally inaccurate is, in entry [203] on *kamāfītūs*, the fixation of the word المفترش on p. 711<sub>2</sub>; no footnote informs the reader that MS I reads rather *al-mutafarris* (undotted). Additional examples of the partial reliability of the would-be critical apparatus can be found on p. 815 n. 1 (the reading allegedly transmitted by the Istanbul manuscript happens to be remarkably different, see Sezgin's facsimile p. 147<sub>18</sub>) or on p. 432 n. 42 and p. 887 n. 1. Even within the limits imposed by mechanical typography (undotted words fare particularly badly and only the undotted *f/q* seems to have been available to the editor) such information should have been registered in a more systematical way. In any case, the marking of the consonants of the variant readings as *muhmalah* is inconsistent and often ambiguous, and as a result the reader is catered for with a great deal of editorial choice instead of original readings. Incidentally, the typically western (but also ancient eastern, as shown by Leemhuis) dotting of *f/q* can hardly be described as specifically Tunisian («الطريقة التونسية») as on p. 83.

On a different level, let it be noted that nowhere does the editor hint to a hierarchy regarding the quality of the text transmitted by the different manuscripts. Furthermore, no difference is made concerning the establishment of the text between its direct transmission and its reworkings whenever a given reading (even if secondary and late) suits the needs of the editor. In practice this results in the likelihood that some later additions with minimal manuscript support may have crept into the text, eg the Rūmī synonyms *ashbaṭilla* (ie *\*spatella*) for [79] *wajj* «sweet flag» (p. 352<sub>2</sub>) or *shawāda* for *bizraqātūnā* «fleawort» in [132] (p. 504<sub>1</sub> and n. 4), which are both exclusive to MS J (the former is well attested since early Andalusī texts, the latter only in the *ʿUmdah* in the form شودة). On p. 701<sub>1</sub> the synonym قضاب for [198] *ʿaṣā al-rāʿī* «knotgrass» is retrieved from MS L (see p. 701 n. 6).

A different sort of problems arise from time to time from the traditional preoccupation with grammatical correction (which most often translates into a «normalisation» of the received text according to the editor's particular knowledge of the rules of the *ʿArabiyyah*). It is perhaps unwarranted overediting to impose the

«correct» marked accusative instead of the unmarked form shared by all witnesses twice in [155] on p. 575<sub>4-5</sub> (see also n. 44–45) and a third time in [167] on p. 614<sub>8</sub>. It is also only on the basis of alleged grammatical correctness that in [62] *'aqīq* (p. 299<sub>4</sub> and n. 5) the form *khawāṣṣ* transmitted solely by MS J is preferred to the majority reading *khūsūṣiyyāt* (add כְּרוּצִיָּאָת in BSB fol. 16v 5), the latter being in fact quite characteristic of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Aḥjār* from which the passage is quoted. In the case of منقي الرياح in [189] on p. 678<sub>2</sub>, MS I reads quite unproblematically منق للرياح and the phrase does not seem to be used here as a proper name but rather as a qualification.

The same editorial attitude inspires etymology-driven interventions in the text such as the one found in [243] on p. 827, where the edition reads بطرلاون even if no manuscript shows an ending ون. On p. 830<sub>2</sub> the text is edited against the evidence of all manuscripts, which actually agree with the source of the passage (there are other instances of alteration of reading shared by all witnesses and even against the actual source of the passage, see a clear example on p. 830<sub>2</sub>). The urge to emend the plant names according to their etyma is most conspicuous (and also most harmful) in what concerns alloglottic nomenclature. The Greek name of *'aṣā al-rā'ī* «knotgrass» is reconstructed against all witnesses (and therefore probably against Ibn al-Jazzār's knowledge) on the sole basis of the original form πολύγονον (see p. 700 n. 3). In [166] on *dārṣīnī* «cinnamon» a Rūmī قنممن is likewise ingenuously recreated from a variety of forms that do not seem to lend themselves easily to such a manipulation (see p. 608 n. 4).

The etymological criterion is moreover applied in a rather inconsistent way. In [65] for *ṭarakhshaqūn* (which Ben Mrad edits as *ṭarakhshaqūn*, see p. 307 n. 1) a Persian etymon in *-ūj* (namely *\*ṭalkh shukūj*, silently borrowed from Meyerhof?) is identified but nevertheless the author considers the form in *-ūn* the primary and therefore preferable one and those in *-ūq* (= MSS BIL) a «deturpation» (see p. 306, add טרכשקון in Munich fol. 17r 5, and cf. further Ibn Janāḥ, *Talkhīs* [414] = Bos *et al.* 2020, p. 581). In [229] he edits *ādharyūnah* (the word is entirely undotted in MS I) and yet on pp. 748–785 n. 3 he favours Persian *ādarbūya* as the original form of this name adducing some external support from al-Bīrūnī's *Ṣaydanah*. Likewise, for [237] *mishk-ṭarāmsḥīr* / *mishkiṭrāmsḥīr* (see p. 802 n. 1) the form in *-gh* transmitted by MSS IQ is confirmed as authentic and yet priority is given to that in *-r* because it is closer to the Syriac etymon. Now, Ibn al-Jazzār certainly knew no Syriac and the origin of the word may be ultimately Persian as suggested by MacKenzie *apud* Dietrich 1988, pp. 378–380 n. 2 (cf. also Bos *et al.* 2020, pp. 703–705). It may even happen that editorial choice goes against the



majority reading without any etymological justification whatsoever, as for instance the form خسرادار in [187] *khulanjān* (see p. 673 n. 2), or the Amazighic synonym for [175] *nānkhuwāh* that is edited as اصريلال despite the fact that the word originally has *aṭ-* (as acknowledged on p. 636 n. 9).

It is a hard truth that the application of the etymological criterion requires a sound familiarity with the specialised lexicon of the different languages involved in the transmission or, in its defect, at the very least the diligent consultation of lexicographical sources. Now, neither of these two requirements appears to have been fulfilled to a degree that could be deemed acceptable—and the *Iṭimād* is, like most pharmacognostical treatises, quite an exacting text in this regard. In [16] on p. 174 n. 3 the reading لادنون discarded by the editor is certainly a genuine one (it transcribes quite regularly λάδανον) and needs no forced emendation to match the Greek variant λῆδον (incidentally, for the transliteration of the Syriac synonym see ܠܕܗܢܐ *lādhānā* in Löw, *Aramäische Pflanzennamen* [79] p. 127, also Payne Smith, *Thesaurus* 1894 s.v. ܠܕܗܢܐ). In [38] on p. 230 n. 1 the transcription of the Syriac name of «maidenhair fern», ie ܘܚܕܐܝܢܐ (cf. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus* 2690 s.v.), is not only left unemended against the editor's general criterion but it is further vocalised as if it were chaste Arabic. The treatment of Syriac phytonymy could indeed have been easily improved by a simple look to of standard lexicography. In [265] *shubrum* «spurge» (probably *Euphorbia pithyusa* L., see p. 887 n. 3) there was no need to disregard the reading of the copy-text, since there is enough documentation for Syriac ܘܫܒܪܘܡ, which was often glossed precisely as Arabic *shubrum* (cf. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus* 1273–1274 s.v.). Besides, the parallel locus indicated by the editor in al-Bīrūnī, *Ṣaydanah* s.v. شبرم (= ed. Said p. 391<sub>18</sub>) ought to be read as ܘܫܒܪܘܡ (recorded also in Payne Smith, *Thesaurus* 1274). As shown by such examples, a combination of self-confidence concerning linguistic matters and limited resort to dictionaries is repeatedly projected into the text in the form of disputable choices. There is no other explanation for such remarks as the one on p. 528 n. 2 about [140] *rāziyānaj* «fennel», where the Persian synonym *barhiliyā* provided by Ibn al-Jazzār is affirmed by the editor to be rather Syriac, which is true (cf. ܘܪܙܝܢܐ mentioned alongside ܘܫܒܪܘܡ in Payne Smith, *Thesaurus* 587) but the word is also recorded as a Greek borrowing by Persian lexicographers, cf. Vullers, *LPLE* I 230b s.v. Or for [143] *sāsāliyūs* on p. 535<sub>2</sub> (and n. 2), when a possibly original connection to the Nabataean tradition backed by at least two manuscript witnesses (and quite likely also by another two) is banned from the text into the footnotes because the word «is unrelated to either Nabataean or Persian». Whatever the actual origin of the name, the editor fails to inform the reader that the same

form is classified as Syriac in the *'Umdah* (see ed. Bustamante, Corriente, and Tilmatine [4579] p. 530<sub>9</sub>).

Both Ibn al-Jazzār's original text and Ben Mrad's painstaking edition would deserve a far more extensive commentary than is possible in this review. A further selection of passages may be useful, however, as a representative sample of both the kind of problems posed by the text and the editor's solutions to them.

In [19] on p. 183<sub>2</sub> *ḥuḍaḍ* is said by the author to be made of roots of turmeric, which are referred to as *darsawīq*, however such a form is not transmitted by any of the manuscripts (add תרסין ב in BSB fol. 7v 25) and it has been actually retrieved by the editor from the *'Umdah*, where it is considered to be a Syriac synonym for turmeric. A Syriac form ܕܪܫܩ *darshaq* is indeed attested alongside ܕܪܫܐ *zarshaq* (see Löw, *Aramäische Pflanzennamen* [197] p. 257; Payne Smith, *Thesaurus* 1162 s.v. ܕܪܫܐ). On the other hand, given that the product itself is mentioned here as *kuhl khawlān*, it is not impossible that the synonym provided by Ibn al-Jazzār might reflex λύκιον rather than λογγίτις as asserted by the editor. A similar case of external reconstruction is found in [138] *marw* (p. 524<sub>1</sub> and n. 17): the form of the Ifrīqī synonym fixed by the editor corresponds neither to any manuscript witness nor to an actual emendation thereof, but rather to Leclerc's choice in his French translation of Ibn al-Bayṭār's *Jāmi'*.

When dealing with silver in [22] *fiḍḍah* on p. 194<sub>1-2</sub> silver cadmia (described as «silver dross as early as it comes out from the mine») is ascribed a synonym that Ben Mrad reads as *ḥajar qashfah* on the basis of the equivalence *qashfah* = *qishrah*. Now, this synonym is actually a crux of transmission (to the variant readings reported here add תסנת in BSB fol. 8v 16). Both the reading itself and its etymology are considered «rätselhaft» by Käs (see *Die mineralien*, p. 274 n. 2), who suggests a derivation from Greek ἔλκυσμα (> \*[al]qusmah). I would further argue that the reading transmitted by MS I seems to point towards *fisqah* (cf. √fsq «to go forth from another thing in a bad or corrupt manner», eg فسقت الرطبة عن قشرها in Lane, *Lexicon* 2397c s.r.) or even *fashghah* (by analogy to a similar substance in plants?). In any case, the exact form of this name remains doubtful.

In a paradigmatic passage that involves a much wider problem of transmission, within [24] *ushnah* on p. 194<sub>1</sub> the tree name *ḥawar* does certainly correspond to the mention of white poplars (δένδρα λεύκινα) in Dioscorides' *Materia medica* 1:21 βούον (= ed. Wellmann, vol. 1, p. 27<sub>6</sub>), but one ought to bear in mind that (1) all extant copies of *I'timād* read *shajarat al-jawz* «walnut tree» here (add BSB fol. 8v 28; the undotted script of MS I is scarcely probative of anything) and (2) it is this reading that Ibn al-Jazzār may have found in his source, since



such a correct copy of Iṣṭifan's translation as the Paris manuscript transmits *al-jawz* here (cf. BnF MS Arabe 2849 fol. 7v 11).

To [45] *uṣṭūkhūdūs* on p. 253 n. 9 the editor appends an auto-referential note on *fayqalah* «head, capitulum [of a flower]», for which, regardless of the plausible existence of such a metathetical form, a more conservative *qayfalah* is attested by Ibn Janāḥ, *Talkhīṣ* [893] as a generic name for flowers with quills on their tops (cf. Bos *et al.* 2020, pp. 1025–1026). As a matter of fact, on p. 420 n. 5 *qayfalah* is affirmed by Ben Mrad to be a permissible reading supported by three different manuscript witnesses that transmit forms beginning with *q-*.

In [84] *zarāwand* on p. 367<sub>3</sub> (also n. 4) the majority reading (*i*)*bn Rustam* as an Amazighic synonym for «birthwort» (= MSS ILQ as well as שגרה אבן רסתם in BSB fol. 21v 6, also easily emended from من رستم in MSS DM) is discarded, perhaps unnecessarily, in favour of برستم from MS L (the latter form being a secondary development of the former).

Nothing informs the reader that at least MS I (see facs. p. 53<sub>11</sub>) reads الفاونيا in the lemma for [98] *fāwīnā* on p. 404<sub>1</sub> (add אפאוינא in BSB fol. 24v 3, corrected on the right margin). While *fāwīnā* is certainly a genuine and widely spread variant for this phytonym, in the absence of any information on the actual readings of the manuscripts one cannot but wonder whether Ibn al-Jazzār might had received a more conservative form of Greek *παιωνία* (cf. Syriac ܦܳܐܳܘܳܢܳܝܳܐ).

In [131] *qanṭūriyūn* «centaury» on p. 500<sub>1-3</sub> (also n. 2), on the one hand the ascription of Ibn al-Jazzār's synonym to the Rūmī language would apparently solve a crux presented by ms I at this locus; however, this glottonym is exclusive (once again) to ms J, whereas MSS DM have *andalusiyyah* instead. On the other hand, given the vacillation regarding /s/ (= probably /sh/) and /j/ in the transcription of Rūmī words, it is worth noting that *sinṭūriyah* / *sinṭawriyah* is attested to by MSS IQL (but not by the Judaeo-Arabic copy, cf. גנתוריה in BSB fol. 32r 6). For the moment being, neither the identification of the language alluded to by Ibn al-Jazzār nor the exact form of the name of this herb in his original text can be considered established beyond doubt. Particularly *jintawriya* (with an initial *j-*) should not be accepted without taking into account the informed discussion on the transmission of this phytonym in the commentary to Ibn Janāḥ, *Talkhīṣ* [857] and [946] (see Bos *et al.* 2020, pp. 993–994, 1065). Mark, on a tangential note, that within the same entry [131] on p. 503<sub>6</sub> (and n. 43) there is better evidence for an original reading الشَّقِّ (add ללשק in BSB fol. 32r 25).

Being as it is a methodological attitude towards the received text, unjustified overedition may sometimes extend naturally beyond the limits of nomenclature.

Thus, in [139] *shibbith* «dill» on p. 525<sub>6</sub> (also n. 9) the editor acknowledges that all six manuscript witnesses read unanimously *al-bawl* (add בול ב in BSB fol. 33v 19), and so does the parallel passage in Ibn al-Bayṭār's *Jāmi'* too—yet this is substituted for in our text by the original reading *al-laban* (= γάλα) of the source (ie Iṣṭifan's translation of Dioscorides' *Materia medica*). Similar instances are: an unnecessary addition in [155] *lawz murr* «bitter almonds» on p. 572<sub>4</sub> (and n. 8); in [156] *kabar* «caper tree» on p. 576<sub>3-4</sub> (and n. 6) the choice between *ṣahrā'* «desert» (= MSS IQ and also צהרא in BSB fol. 37r 19) and *ṣakhr* «rock» (= MSS JL) appears to have been made on the basis of the editor's own knowledge of the distribution of this species (which may well be right in view of *ṣakhr* in a direct quote of this passage in Ibn Samajūn's *Jāmi'* (cf. facs. vol. 4 p. 28<sub>14</sub>)).

It would be truly unfair to close this catalogue of problematic loci without an allusion to a few instances in which Ben Mrad's well-trained instinct and long-honed skills succeed to contribute additional light to some obscure lexeis of the Arabic pharmacognostical tradition. His note on the synonym *nuwwār al-ijjāyin* transmitted exclusively by MS J for [45] *uṣṭūkhūdūs* (see p. 251<sub>2</sub> and n. 2) must now be combined with the evidence gathered in Bos *et al.* 2020, pp. 233–234 in their commentary to Ibn Janāḥ, *Talkhīṣ* [28] (although whether this Romance synonym was originally included in *I'timād* remains to be confirmed). Likewise, the edited reading of the Rūmī word *qābnūs* on p. 264<sub>2</sub> (see also n. 2) for [49] *shāhtaraj* «fumitory» is well supported by the manuscript evidence and confirms the ingenuous intuition of the editors of the *Talkhīṣ* that the corrupt synonym transmitted in the Istanbul copy concealed a transcription of Greek *καπνός* (see Ibn Janāḥ, *Talkhīṣ* [986] *shāh taraj* = Bos *et al.* 2020, p. 1105).

Ben Mrad's should not be the last edition of Ibn al-Jazzār's *I'timād* but he has certainly paved the way for a future (and hopefully definitive) edition-cum-translation of this unvaluable hallmark of Qayrawānī pharmacognostics. In the meantime, this ought to be *the* authoritative version of the text to be consulted and cited (with a few critical remarks) as largely superior to any of the manuscript copies identified so far. The editor must be thanked for his effort, and it is only to be lamented that this book, like other publications of Al-Furqān's Centre for the Study of Islamic Manuscripts, has not gained a much wider circulation and remains hardly available outside the United Kingdom.

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