

EPILOGUE

The Lost Readership of Galen's Περὶ Ἀλυπίας

Arabic Περὶ Ἀλυπίας: Did al-Kindî and Râzî Read Galen?

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The starting point of my question is a previous inquiry I made some years ago about two chapters of Oribasius' *Medical collections* on sexual pleasures (*Peri aphrodisiôn*). In a paper published in 2011,¹ I showed that both of the small chapters of *excerpta* drawn by Oribasius from Rufus and Galen were considered by Arabic scholars as independent short treatises written by two Greek authorities. They imitated them, giving birth to a specific literary genre *On coitus* (*Kitâb al-bâh*). We may count up to one hundred Arabic medical texts on that topic. Letters, short treatises, dialogues *On coitus* were produced by famous Arabic thinkers such as al-Jâhîz, Ḥunayn ibn Ishâq, al-Kindî, Râzî, Avicenna or Maimonides, each of them taking up, developing and amplifying every single remark or idea held *in nuce* in Oribasius' *excerpta*.

Considering the numerous Arabic texts dealing with the topic of dispelling sorrow or avoiding grief, I wondered if a similar relationship could be established between Galen's *περὶ ἀλυπίας* and the later Arabic production. We have a letter of Al-Kindî (ca 800–873) *On dispelling Sorrow*.² A chapter of Râzî (865–925) is devoted to this topic in his *Spiritual Medicine*.³ The physician

- 1 Pietrobelli, A., "La *scientia sexualis* des médecins grecs: histoire et enjeux du corpus *Peri aphrodisiôn*", *Métis* n. s. 9, 2011, pp. 309–338.
- 2 For the Arabic text, see Ritter, H./Walzer, R., "Uno scritto morale inedito di al-Kindî (Temestio Περὶ ἀλυπίας ?)", *Atti della R. Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, Memorie della classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, serie VI, vol. 8, 1938–39, pp. 3–63 or better Badawi, A., *Traité philosophiques par al-Kindî, al-Fârâbî, Ibn Bajjah, Ibn 'Ady*, Beirut, 1983³, pp. 6–32; for the English translation, see Adamson, P./Pormann, P., *The Philosophical Works of Al-Kindî*, Oxford, 2012, pp. 245–266). On this text, see also Adamson, P., *Al-Kindî*, Oxford, 2007, pp. 150–156; Butterworth, C. E., "Al-Kindî and the Beginnings of Islamic Political Philosophy", in *eiusd.* (ed.), *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy. Essays in Honor of Muhsin S. Mahdi*, Cambridge Mass., 1992 pp. 11–60; Druart, Th. -A., "Al-Kindî's Ethics", *The Review of Metaphysics. A Philosophical Quarterly* 47, 1, n° 185, 1993, pp. 329–357 and "Philosophical Consolation in Christianity and Islam: Boethius and al-Kindî", *Topoi* 19, 2000, pp. 25–34; Mestiri, S./Dye, G., *Al-Kindî, Le moyen de chasser les tristesses et autres textes éthiques*, Paris, 2004.
- 3 Chapter 12. For the Arabic text, see Kraus, P. *Abi Bakr Mohammadi Fili Zachariae Raghensis (Razis) Opera Philosophica fragmentae quae supersunt*, Cairo, 1939, pp. 15–96; for an English

Miskawayh (932–1030), in a section of his *Refinement of Character*,⁴ includes a discussion of how to prevent and cure grief. Such reflections can also be found in Ibn Gabirol's *Ethics*⁵ (XIth century) or Maimonides *Regimen of health*⁶ (XIIth century). Even in Christian Arabic literature the topic is well represented. The Copt Elias al-Jawharî (fl. late IXth century), Severus ibn al Muqaffa' (Xth century), and Elias bar Shinâya of Nisibis (975–ca 1050) wrote specific treatises on the dissipation of sorrows.⁷ Could Galen's *περὶ ἀλυπίας* underlie this flourishing literature, as Oribasius' chapters did for writing *De coitu*?

The problem is that the basis of sources among which the Arabs could pick is much wider than two small chapters. Galen, in his *περὶ ἀλυπίας*, gives an autobiographical adaptation of a prevalent philosophical genre. The story of this genre starts, as far as we know, with Antiphon the Sophist's *περὶ ἀλυπίας*⁸ (5th century BC). Among the lost ones, two are attested by authors living in the Hellenistic period (3rd–2nd century BC): one is by the famous Eratosthenes of Cyrene,⁹ the other by the Epicurean Diogenes of Seleucia, better known as Diogenes of Babylon.¹⁰ There is also a papyrological testimony mentioning a *περὶ ἀλυπίας* by an obscure Aristophanes the Peripatetic.¹¹ The only one preserved in Greek is by Maximus of Tyre.¹² Apart from these texts with the same title, there are many others dealing with the same issue: book three of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*¹³ or Plutarch's *On Tranquility of Mind*, developing the

translation, see Arberry, A.J., *The Spiritual Physick of Rhazes*, London 1950. On this text, see also Brague, R., *Razi, La Médecine spirituelle*, Paris, 2003.

4 For the Arabic text, see Zurayk (1967:217–222); for the English translation, see Zurayk (1967:192–196).

5 Wise, S. S., *The Improvement of Moral Qualities. An Ethical Treatise of the Eleventh Century by Solomon Ibn Gabirol*..., New York, 1902, pp. 78–81.

6 Bar-Sela, A./Hoff, H. E./Faris, E., 'Moses Maimonides' Two Treatises on the Regimen of Health *Fî Tadbîr al-Sihhah* and *Maqâlah fî Bayân Ba'd al-râd wa-al Jawâb 'anhâ*, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 54, 4, 1964, pp. 26–27.

7 Griffith, S. H., "The Muslim Philosopher al-Kindi and his Christian Readers: Three Arab Christian Texts on the "The Dissipation of Sorrow"", *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 78, 1996, pp. 111–127.

8 Ps.-Plutarch, *Lives of the Ten Orators*, 833c–d, see below n. 21.

9 Suda E 2898.

10 Goulet, R. (ed.), *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, t. II, Paris, 1994, p. 810.

11 *P. Oxy.* 3656, l. 12–15; see Goulet, R., *Dictionnaire*, tome I, 1989, p. 406.

12 See *oratio* 28 in Trapp, M. B., *Maximus of Tyre, The Philosophical Orations*, Oxford, 1997, pp. 231–236.

13 Graver, M., *Cicero on the Emotions. Tusculan Disputations 3 and 4*, Chicago-London, 2002, and D'Jeranian, O., *Cicéron. Du chagrin*, Paris, 2014.

genre of consolation.¹⁴ Consequently, we have to be more cautious in crediting Galen with a seminal influence on Arabic authors.

2. Many Orientalists (Bar-Asher,¹⁵ Druart¹⁶ or more recently Adamson¹⁷) who have worked on Arabic ethics have underlined that Galen was extremely influential in this field. P. Adamson¹⁸ stressed that Galen was “a direct source for much of al-Râzî’s *Spiritual Medicine*” and more generally, he attributes to Galen the introduction of a medical pattern to speak about the soul. The soul has to be cured from its illness or passions (fear, sorrow, anger, greed, etc.) by philosophy as well as the body has to be freed from pain, suffering and illness by medicine. According to Adamson,¹⁹ this medical view of Arabic ethics goes back to Galen. But it must be also specified that such an analogy is very ancient. It can be found for example in Cicero’s *Tusculan Disputations*,²⁰ in Epicurus’ metaphor of the *tetrapharmakon* or even earlier in Antiphon the Sophist, who erected a little house in the agora of Corinth to practice the art of *alupia*.²¹

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- 14 Boudon-Millot, V., “Un traité perdu miraculeusement retrouvé, le *Sur l’inutilité de se chagriner*: texte grec et traduction française”, in Boudon-Millot, V./Guardasole, A./Magdelaine, C. (ed.), 2007, pp. 72–123; and Nutton, V., “Avoiding Distress”, in Singer, P. (ed), *Galen. Psychological Writings*, 2013, pp. 45–106.
- 15 Bar-Asher, M. M., “Quelques aspects de l’éthique d’Abû-Bakr al-Râzî et ses origines dans l’œuvre de Galien”, *Studia islamica* 69, 1989, pp. 5–38 et 119–147.
- 16 Druart, Th. -A., “Al-Razi’s Conception of the Soul: Psychological Background to his Ethics”, *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 5, 1996, pp. 245–263 (p. 246, 248); Druart, Th. -A., “Philosophical Consolation in Christianity and Islam: Boethius and al-Kindi”, *Topoi* 19, 2000, pp. 25–34 (p. 25).
- 17 Adamson, P., “The Arabic Tradition”, in Skorupski, J. (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Ethics*, London-New York, 2012, pp. 63–75, (p. 64–65); Adamson, P., “Arabic Ethics and the Limits of Philosophical Consolation”, in Baltussen, H. (ed), 2013, pp. 177–96, (p. 177). More generally on Arabic ethics, see Gutas, D., “Ethische Schriften im Islam”, in Heinrichs, W. (ed.), *Orientalisches Mittelalter*, Wiesbaden, 1990, pp. 346–365.
- 18 Adamson, P., “The Arabic Tradition”, 2012, p. 69.
- 19 Adamson, P., *ibid.* p. 69: “Again, there is Greek precedent for this “medical” way of seeing ethics. [...] But the chief Greek model for this approach is Galen”.
- 20 Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, III, 3–5 (5–11).
- 21 Ps.-Plutarch, *Life of the Ten Orators*, 833c–d: [...] τέχνην ἀλυπίας συνεστήσατο, ὥσπερ τοῖς νοσοῦσιν ἢ παρὰ τῶν ἰατρῶν θεραπεία ὑπάρχει· ἐν Κορίνθῳ τε κατεσκευασμένος οἴκημά τι παρὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν προέγραψεν, δύναται τοὺς λυπούμενους διὰ λόγων θεραπεύειν “he invented a method of curing distress, just as physicians have a treatment for those who are ill; and at Corinth, fitting up a room near the market-place, he wrote on the door that he could cure by words those who were in distress” (ed. and trans. by Fowler, p. 350). On the medical model applied to ethics in Greek philosophy, see Nussbaum, M., *The Therapy of Desire*, Princeton, 1994.

On the other hand, before the discovery of Galen's *περι ἀλυπίας*, some editors or translators of the Arabic texts of al-Kindî²² and Râzî,²³ as well as M. Zonta²⁴ editing the Hebrew text of Ibn Falaquera, used to reckon in their prefaces or footnotes that Galen's *περι ἀλυπίας* was a source for the Oriental authors. If the editors²⁵ of *περι ἀλυπίας* have clarified the links between the fragment of Ibn Falaquera and the Galenic text, they have not shown any interest in al-Kindî and Râzî. Now that the *περι ἀλυπίας* has been discovered, edited and translated several times, these issues need a reappraisal. I would like to deepen the question: Are there hints of Galen's *περι ἀλυπίας* in al-Kindî and Râzî's texts? P. Adamson²⁶ has supposed that both authors had common sources they reworked. Could Galen be one of them? If so, what are the resemblances and the differences in the literary form used by our three authors? Do they prescribe the same remedies to cope with sadness and sorrow? What are their respective *technai alupias*? How did the Arabs adapt the Galenic ethics to their monotheist and Islamic context?

I will first briefly recall the evidence of the Arabic translation of the *περι ἀλυπίας*. Secondly, I will try to show the influence of Galen on the literary form of the ethical works of Al-Kindî and Râzî. Finally I would like to emphasize the inheritance or the rejection of the Galenic model by both Islamic authors.

1 The Arabic Tradition of *περι ἀλυπίας*

3. It cannot be denied that the *περι ἀλυπίας* was translated into Arabic and thus well-known and widespread in the Islamic world since Ḥunayn's translation. In his *Risala*²⁷ (n°120) first written in 855 and completed in 863, Ḥunayn asserts that there were two Syriac translations of Galen's booklet: one by Ayyub al-Ruhâwî or Job of Edessa, the other by Ḥunayn himself. Ḥunayn's translation

22 Mestiri, S./Dye, G., *Al-Kindî, Le moyen de chasser les tristesses et autres textes éthiques*, Paris, 2004, p. 28.

23 Brougnot, R., *Razi, La Médecine spirituelle*, Paris, 2003, p. 113, n.1.

24 Zonta, M., *Un interprete ebreo della filosofia di Galeno*, Torino, 1995, pp. 18–20.

25 Boudon-Millot, V., "Un traité perdu miraculeusement retrouvé, le *Sur l'inutilité de se chagriner*: texte grec et traduction française", in Boudon-Millot, V./Guardasole, A./Magdelaine, C. (ed.), 2008, pp. 72–123, (p. 86 n. 42); Boudon-Millot, V./Jouanna, J./Pietrobelli, A., Galien, *Ne pas se chagriner*, Paris, 2010, LXXIII, n. 76; see also Davis, D., "Some Quotations from Galen's *De indolentia*", in Rothschild, C. K./Thompson, T. W. (ed.), 2014, pp. 57–61.

26 Adamson, P., "Arabic ethics", 2013, p. 183.

27 Bergstässer, G., "Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, Über die syrischen und arabischen Galen-Übersetzungen", *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, XVII, 2, 1925, p. 40, n°120.

was made for Dâ'ūd al-Mutaṭabbib,²⁸ who was probably a physician working for the caliph Hârûn al-Rashîd and his wife Zubayda. One of Ḥunayn's pupil, his nephew Ḥubaysh, translated the *περὶ ἀλυπίας* from Syriac to Arabic for Muḥammad ibn Mûsâ,²⁹ the eldest of the three famous Mûsâ brothers, fond of mathematics, astronomy and mechanics, who sponsored Ḥunayn's activities.

But Ḥubaish's translation did not remain only in the Banû Mûsâ's private library. Both Mubashshir Ibn Fâtik from Cairo in the XIth century and Ibn 'Abî Uṣaybi'a, a physician who lived between Damascus and Cairo in the XIIth century, could provide a more or less accurate summary of Galen's booklet.³⁰ Maimonides's disciple, the Jewish writer Ibn 'Aknîn,³¹ settled in Fez (Morocco), could quote Galen's treatise in Hebrew at the end of the XIIth or at the beginning of the XIIIth century. So we may think that Ḥunayn's translation was available in Baghdad in the second half of the IXth century and that al-Kindî and Râzî could read it. Can we trace signs of Galen's *Περὶ ἀλυπίας* in their respective texts?

2 Formal Connections

4. There are *prima facie* noteworthy formal coincidences between Galen and both Arabic writers' text. In one of his paper on Arabic ethics, P. Adamson³² has stated that the literary form of Arabic ethical works often follows that used by Galen, but this statement was based on Galen's *On Character Traits* and *On the Error and Passions of the Soul* which were models for Râzî, Miskaway or al-Fârâbî. What about the *περὶ ἀλυπίας*?

The most obvious formal parallel is between Galen and Al-Kindî. *περὶ ἀλυπίας* and *On Dispelling Sorrows* are both short treatises in the shape of an epistle, whereas Râzî's *Spiritual Medicine* is a much longer and systematic essay. Unlike Galen's letter, Al-Kindî's does not rely on his own misfortune. We know

28 Micheau, F., "Mécènes et médecins à Bagdad au III^e/IX^e siècle. Les commanditaires des traductions de Galien par Ḥunayn ibn Ishâq», in D. Jacquart (ed.), *Les Voies de la science grecque*, Paris-Genève, 1997, pp. 147–179, (p. 159–161).

29 Micheau, F., *ibid.* pp. 167–169.

30 On these passages, see Meyerhof M., "Autobiographische Bruchstücke Galena us arabischen Quellen", *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 22, 1929, pp. 72–86 (p. 85); Boudon-Millot, V., "Un traité perdu", 2007, pp. 84–85; and Boudon-Millot, V. /Jouanna, J./Pietrobelli, A., *Ne pas se chagriner*, 2010, pp. LXXI–LXXIII.

31 Halkin, A. S., "Classical and Arabic Material in Ibn 'Aknîn's "Hygiene of the Soul"", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 14, 1944, pp. 25–147, (p. 60–65 and 110–115).

32 Adamson, P., "Arabic ethics", 2013, p. 177.

that the Banû Mûsâ brothers had developed a real hostility to al-Kindî and that they managed to get him beaten and maybe also jailed.³³ This allowed them to sequester his comprehensive library. We could have expected al-Kindî's epistle to start with a complaint about the loss of his books, but it did not. Like Galen's letter however, al-Kindî's is addressed to a good friend, "a beloved brother". Both Galen and al-Kindî wrote to fulfill the request of a friend:

Gal.: I have received your letter in which you invite me to show you what kind of training, what arguments or what considerations had prepared me never to be distressed.³⁴

Al-K.: May God keep you, beloved brother, from all vileness [...]. I understand that you ask me to put down in writing arguments which counteract sadness, show its weak spots, and fortify one, by possessing them, against pain.³⁵

And at the end of their letters both authors express in a similar way that they hope to have carried out their friend's request:

Gal.: Finally, while I believe I have responded completely to the question you raised about avoiding distress, I do hold the view, nevertheless, that this requires a further definition.³⁶

Al-K.: This is sufficient for what you asked me, even if there are many [other] possible points one could make on the subject. If the proposed aim has been achieved, we have arrived at the end of what was wanted, even if there are many [other] ways to reach the goal, ways which are nearly endless.³⁷

Furthermore both recipients are well-educated and persons with high moral standards:

Gal.: In writing for others on avoiding distress I have given you some advice that is superfluous for you, for I have been aware from the start that, both by nature and by education, you always prefer simple food and dress, and are most restrained in sexual matters.³⁸

33 Adamson, P./Pormann, P., *The Philosophical Works of Al-Kindî*, 2012, pp. XXII–XXIII.

34 Gal., *Ind.*, 1; tr. Nutton, 2013, p. 77.

35 Al-Kindî, *On Dispelling Sorrows*, prol.; tr. Adamson/Pormann, 2012, p. 249.

36 Gal., *Ind.*, 69; tr. Nutton, 2013, p. 95.

37 Al-Kindî, *On Dispelling Sorrows*, 13, 4; tr. Adamson/Pormann, 2012, p. 266.

38 Gal., *Ind.*, 79; tr. Nutton, 2013, p. 98.

Al-K.: An excellent soul and a just character like yours recoil from possessing vices and strive fortify themselves against the pains which they bring and against the tyranny of their rule.³⁹

Nevertheless these similarities make it hard to argue that al-Kindî read Galen. Most of al-Kindî's works are epistles addressed to members of the political elite. And the coincidence between the two recipients is to linked far more with the aristocratic status of writers and readers in Antiquity and Middle Ages than to a formal filiation. The fact remains that Galen's and Al-Kindî's letters are exceptions in their respective corpus: on the one hand Galen's letter is much more autobiographical, historical and philosophical than the rest of his surviving corpus; on the other hand, al-Kindî's epistle polishes a literary style, which stands out from the usual prose of "the Philosopher of the Arabs".

Galen, al-Kindî and Râzî use anecdotes in their demonstrations. From § 39 to § 45, Galen recalls two stories about of Aristippus of Cyrene: Aristippus' bag full of gold and Aristippus' lost field. In section 6 and 9, al-Kindî relates many different anecdotes, each one borrowed from Greco-Roman Antiquity: one invokes the last letter written by Alexander the Great to his mother Olympias;⁴⁰ another is about Emperor Nero's disappointment with the destruction of his crystal pavilion; a third story is about a Cynic Socrates, content with very little, if not with nothing. Râzî resorts also to some anecdotes about a childless philosopher or a woman afraid of giving birth. The topic of the loss of a child is also present in section 6 of al-Kindî. But none of these anecdotes is identical. None of the Arabic authors borrows his stories from Galen. Nevertheless Galen, al-Kindî and Râzî's anecdotes have parallels in Plutarch.⁴¹ It seems that they draw to a same common stock, conveyed from Hellenistic period up to Late Antiquity and Islamic world. All three texts also exhibit a gallery of philosophers, who are summoned for their exemplary conduct. Galen (§ 45) takes Crates and Diogenes as paragons of poverty, while al-Kindî (§ 9) chooses a

39 Al-Kindî, *On Dispelling Sorrows*, prolog.; tr. Adamson/Pormann, 2012, p. 249.

40 This letter belongs to the extensive apocryphal literature about Alexander the Great. It derives from one of the numerous versions of the *Alexander Romance*, wrongly attributed to Callisthenes. This letter of consolation can also be found in Hunayn's *Nawâdir al-Falâsifa*, in al-Mas'ûdi, al-Ya'qûbî or Mubashshir Ibn Fâtik; see Badawi, A., *Histoire de la philosophie en islam*, Paris, 1972, pp. 471–473. On *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, see Doufikar-Aerts, F., *Alexander Magnus Arabicus. A Survey of the Alexander Tradition through Seven Centuries: from Pseudo-Callisthenes to Şûrî*, Paris-Leuven-Walpole MA., 2010.

41 Galen's anecdote about Aristippus and his lost field is also related in Plutarch's *On Tranquillity of Mind* (469c–d). Razi's brief anecdote about the childless philosopher has a parallel in Plutarch's *Life of Solon* (6). The story of Nero and his crystal pavilion told by Al-Kindî can be found in Plutarch's *De cohibenda ira* (13).

Cynic Socrates living in a barrel. These common features did not prove a direct borrowing, since they are *topoi* of the ethical literature.

5. A more striking stylistic similarity appears between Galen and Râzî. Twice Galen quotes six verses pronounced by Theseus from a lost tragedy of Euripides to illustrate the exercise of *praemeditatio malorum*, which Galen says he used to practice every day:

As I once learned from a wise man,
I fell to considering disasters constantly,
Adding for myself exile from my native land,
Untimely deaths and other ways of misfortune,
So that, should I ever suffer any of what I was imagining,
It might not gnaw at my soul because it was a novel arrival.⁴²

Strangely enough, when Râzî mentions the same technique, he also quotes six verses, attributing them to an anonymous poet:

The wise man pictures in his soul,
The disasters before they fall on him
So, if they fall on him suddenly, he is not afraid,
Since he copied them into his soul,
He sees what is the latest end,
And make of this end a beginning (my transl.⁴³).

None of the editors⁴⁴ of *Spiritual Physicks* could identify the Arabic poet who composed those verses. Both poems express the same idea, even if the final message seems a bit different. It is really puzzling to see that the method of *praemeditatio malorum* is highlighted by some poetry in Râzî's text as it was in Galen with the words of Theseus. These verses could have been forged by Râzî himself but they are more likely Ḥunayn's translation of the Galenic quotation of Euripides. Such a hypothesis must be backed up, because the initial

42 Gal., *Ind.*, 52 and 77, tr. Nutton, 2013, p. 93 and 97.

43 For the Arabic text, see Kraus, P., *Abi Bakr Mohammadi Filii Zachariae Raghensis (Razis) Opera Philosophica fragmentae quae supersunt*, Cairo, 1939, p. 68, 8–10. I give here a new translation of these verses, the previous versified translation by Arberry (*The Spiritual Physick of Rhazes*, 1950, p. 71) is the following: "The man of prudence pictures in his soul/ Ere they descend, what mishaps may befall/ So, come they sudden, he is not dismayed, / Having within his soul their image laid. / He views the matter reaching to its worst, / And what must hap at last, faces at first".

44 Brague, R., *Razi*, 2003, p. 138, n. 161.

Greek text is quite different from the Arabic version. The context of enunciation is modified: the pagan figure of Theseus is not mentioned and the master/disciple relationship is obliterated. All misfortune's examples (exile, untimely deaths) are omitted and the discourse is more general. If the idea of anticipation of a future pain is preserved in the first four verses, the two last express a slightly different teaching. It seems that the translator rewrites the idea of not being chocked by a sudden misfortune in a exquisitely crafted sentence based on an antithesis between end and beginning.⁴⁵ Such a divergent translation is neither very helpful for editing the Greek Galenic text nor for choosing between the variants of the Euripides' fragment.⁴⁶ Ḥunayn's testimony is not as faithful as it is for medical texts. How to explain, if Ḥunayn is the translator, such differences in his translation of poetry?

First of all, it is a *topos* of Arabic literature that poetry is untranslatable.⁴⁷ The six verses given as an equivalent of Euripides's could in such a context illustrate Ḥunayn's virtuosity. The fourteenth-century historian al-Ṣafadī describes the translation technique of Ḥunayn in a famous passage:

The translators use two methods of translation. One of them is that of Yuḥannâ ibn al-Biṭrîq, Ibn al-Nâ'imah al-Ḥimsî and others. According to this method, the translator studies each individual Greek word and its meaning, chooses an Arabic word of corresponding meaning and uses it. Then he turns to the next word and proceeds in the same manner until in the end he has rendered into Arabic the text he wishes to translate. This method is bad [...]

The second method is that of Ḥunayn ibn Ishâq, al-Jawharî and others. Here the translator considers a whole sentence, ascertains its full meaning and then expresses it in Arabic with a sentence identical in meaning, without concern for the correspondence of individual words. This

45 Remi Brague (*ibid.*) wants to recognize a sentence attributed to Aristoteles in the last verses; he refers to Stern M. S., "The first in thought is the last in action. The history of a Saying attributed to Aristotle", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 7, 1962, pp. 234–252. But this *coda* could also be interpreted as a Christian rewriting.

46 On this problem, see Boudon-Millot/Jouanna/Pietrobelli, *Ne pas se chagriner*, 2010, pp. 139–142; and Lami, A., "Il nuovo Galeno e il fr. 964 di Euripide", *Galenos* 3, 2009, pp. 11–19.

47 Al-Jâhiz, in *The Book of Animals (Kitâb al-Ḥayawân*, ed. Cairo, 1, 75), could write: "If one were to transpose the wisdom of the Arabs [into another tongue], however, then the wonderful splendour of the meter would be lost, and those attempting to do so would not comprehend the meaning"; this translation is given by Pormann, P. E./Savage-Smith, E., *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, Washington D. C., 2007, p. 23 and p. 39, n. 29.

method is superior, and hence there is no need to improve the works of Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥâq.⁴⁸

Al-Şafadî refers to an old debate, as ancient as the translation itself, between the word-for-word (*verbum de verbo*) and the meaning-by-meaning (*sensum de sensu*) methods,⁴⁹ to praise the superiority of Ḥunayn over his colleagues and competitors. If such an assertion about the progress of Ḥunayn's method has to be tempered⁵⁰ and if Ḥunayn seems to endorse a much more literal technique in translating medical texts,⁵¹ these verses could offer a new aspect of Ḥunayn's philological talent. Ḥunayn is said to have known his Homer by heart⁵² and to have undertaken, during his imprisonment, a translation of the Bible in Arabic, which the historian and geographer al-Mas'ûdî⁵³ considered the best one available. If this translation is Ḥunayn's work, these Arabic verses provide new evidence of his multifaceted art of translation and we should consider it as a sign of Galen's influence upon Râzî.

6. As far as the literary form is concerned, we must also stress the differences between Galen and the others. Galen's *περὶ ἀλμπίας* is autobiographical and based on his personal experience, whereas al-Kindî and Râzî's texts are more general and neutral. At the end of his epistle (§ 11), al-Kindî offers a marvellous parable. Al-Kindî starts a long simile in which he compares our life in this world to a sea travel interrupted by a landing on an island. Some of the passengers stay in the ship when it drops anchor at the island, whereas others are distracted by the island's beauties, collecting stones, sea-shells and flowers. Some of these lovers of pleasures and distractions will miss the call of

48 This translation is borrowed from Rosenthal, F., *The Classical Heritage in Islam*, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1965, p. 17 and Pormann/Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, 2007, p. 27 and p. 39, n. 34.

49 The opposition between *verbum de verbo* and *sensum de sensu* translations is formulated by Cicero, *De optimo genere oratorum* (14) or Jerome, *Letters* (57). On this topic, see Brock S., "Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 20, 1979, pp. 69–87.

50 See Gutas, D., *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture. The graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbâsid Society (2nd–4th/8th–10th centuries)*, London-New York, 1998, pp. 142–143.

51 For some examples of Ḥunayn's technique in translating Galen, see Overwien in Gundert 2009, pp. 131–138; *eiusd.* "The Art of the Translator, or: How did Ḥunayn ibn 'Iṣḥâq and his School Translate", in Pormann, P. E. (ed.), *Epidemics in Context. Greek Commentaries on Hippocrates in the Arabic Tradition*, Berlin-Boston, 2012, pp. 151–169.

52 According to Yûsuf ibn Ibrâhîm, quoted by Ibn Abî Uṣaybî'a; see Strohmaier, G., "Homer in Bagdad", *Byzantinoslavica* 41, 1980, 196–200.

53 Strohmaier, G., s. v. "Ḥunayn b. Iṣḥâq al-'Ibâdî", in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, t. III, Leiden-Paris, 1971, pp. 598–601, (p. 599).

the captain and remain on the island for ever, without coming back to their homeland. Others will come back to the ship with their burden, getting the worst places to sit and being annoyed by the putridness of the flowers and sea-shells. Al-Kindî explains the parable: the ship is our life, the destination is the next world, afterlife, and one should not be attached to material and transitory goods. This parable does not come from Galen, but we find it in Epictetus' *Enchiridion* (§ 7).⁵⁴

These remarks show a variety of literary models interacting in al-Kindî's *On Dispelling Sorrows*. It is well admitted that the Arabs did not translate Greek literary texts such as theatre, novels or rhetoric to focus their interests and efforts on scientific texts, which were available.⁵⁵ But we have noticed here that philosophical and medical texts could be vectors for literary forms and not only for ideas. Except perhaps for Râzî, there is however no cogent proofs of the use of Galen's *περι ἄλυπίας*, as if the two Arabic authors had wanted to mask their debt towards Galen.⁵⁶

3 *Technai alupias*

7. Let us now consider more precisely the content of the texts and especially their *τέχνη ἄλυπίας*, the way they prescribe how to alleviate and dispell sorrow. As Adamson⁵⁷ noticed, the medical pattern is a *topos* of every *περι ἄλυπίας*: sorrow is a pain of the soul. Just as the body has to be cured from its pains by drugs, surgery or dietetics, the *περι ἄλυπίας* treatises display themselves as remedies for the soul. This analogy between the illness of the body and the passions of the soul, between the remedies of medicine and the consolation of philosophy is obvious in Râzî's title, *Spiritual Medicine*. Al-Kindî also endorses this analogy, but claims the superiority of the soul over the body, to defend

54 See Pohlenz M., "Die Araber und die griechische Kultur", *Göttingen Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 200, 10, 1938, pp. 409–416. It is not so surprising to find the Stoic Epictetus as a formal model of al-Kindî's epistle. Epictetus' *Enchiridion* has been commented by Simplicius (VIth century) and it was part of the basic Neoplatonic curriculum; see Hadot, I., *Le néoplatonicien Simplicius à la lumière des recherches contemporaines. Un bilan critique*, Sankt Augustin, 2014, pp. 149–152.

55 For a revision of the misconceptions about the Greco-Arabic translation movement, see Pormann/Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, 2007, pp. 27–29.

56 It is worth noting that al-Kindî tells the story of Nero and his crystal pavilion without mentioning his sources and omitting the name of the philosopher Seneca who was in discussion with Nero in Plutarch's account; see Badawî, *Histoire de la philosophie en islam*, 1972, pp. 469–471.

57 Cf. *supra* n. 18.

the preeminence of the soul's care over bodily cure and thus the primacy of philosophy over medicine:

Since sorrow is caused by pains of the soul; since it is incumbent upon us to remove pains of the body from ourselves by way of nasty drugs, cauterization, bandaging, abstinence and similar things which cure the body, and to bear the great expense consisting of the moneys owed to the person who cured the illness; and since the welfare of the soul and curing it from its diseases is superior to the welfare of the body and curing it from its diseases in the same way as the soul is superior to the body – for the soul rules and the body is ruled, and the soul remains while the body is obliterated ... Therefore it is much more incumbent upon us to improve the soul and cure it from its ailments than it is that we improve the body.⁵⁸

I would not, with Adamson, interpret this analogy as Galen's inheritance, because it is also, for example, the main point of Maximus of Tyre's *περὶ ἀλυπίας*, and because we can date it back at least from Antiphon (5th century BC). But another idea seems more Galenic.

The trigger of Galen's *περὶ ἀλυπίας* is, of course, the fire of 192 and the loss of his goods and books. Al-Kindî and Râzi and both give a first definition of sorrow in relation to the loss of beloved persons or objects:

Al-K.: Every pain for which one does not know the causes is incurable. We therefore ought to set out both what sadness is and what causes it in order to find a cure and to apply it with ease. Hence we say that sadness is a psychic pain occurring because one loses what one loves or is frustrate in obtaining what one seeks. Therefore, the causes of sadness are already apparent from what has just been said: it occurs because one loses what one loves or is frustrated in obtaining what one seeks.⁵⁹

Râz.: When the passion through the reason pictures the loss of a beloved associate, grief thereby follows ... Since the substance out of which sorrows are generated is simply and solely the loss of one's loved ones, and since it is impossible that these loved ones should not be lost because men have their turns with them and by reason of the fact that they are subject to the succession of generation and corruption, it follows that the man most severely afflicted by grief must be he who has the greatest

58 Al-Kindî, *On Dispelling Sorrows*, 4, 1; tr. Adamson/Pormann, 2012, p. 252.

59 Al-Kindî, *On Dispelling Sorrows*, 1, 1; tr. Adamson/Pormann, 2012, p. 247.

number of loved ones and whose love is the most ardent, while the man least affected by grief is he whose circumstances are the reverse.⁶⁰

In his *On the Errors and Passions of the Soul* and *περὶ ἀλυπίας*, Galen methodically seeks the causes of distress and his principal explanation is cupidity (φιλοχρηματία) and insatiability (ἀπληστία).⁶¹ Râzî is likely to have made his own this Galenic idea, including it in his very first definition of sorrow and Al-Kindî also points out frustration in obtaining sought after objects as a major cause of sadness.

Such an analysis leads to a similar set of advice. Through the example of Aristippus, Galen calls on us to forget what is lost and to focus on what is left. He exhorts readers to limit themselves to the necessary and to despise the superfluous. This precept that Galen inherited from his father can be found at the very beginning of Râzî's discourse. Râzî emphasizes that one should draw away from material and transient things or at least limit ones attachment to them:

It would therefore seem that the intelligent man ought to cut away from himself the substance of his griefs, by making himself independent of the things whose loss involves him in grief.⁶²

Al-Kindî gives a more Platonic and religious emphasis to this idea repeating that one must focus on the psychic goods and the immortal soul. He illustrates the notion of autarky through the zoological models of the “great whale and the marvellously created elephant”, which only need food and a shelter to have a good life without lacking anything (§ 10).

8. We can draw other parallels between the three *technai* against sadness. Galen, after his addressee, mentions as a counterexample the case of Philistides the grammarian, his companion of misfortune, who died of depression and distress after the loss of his books in the fire. According to al-Kindî, since the wise man yearns for happiness, it is a sign of ignorance and lack of intellect to be sad. Both Arabic authors recommend us to remember how limited past sorrows were and how they could turn to happiness again. They exhort readers

60 Râzî, *Spiritual Medicine*, 12; tr. Arberry, 1950, pp. 68–69.

61 Becchi, F., “La psicopatologia di Galeno: il *Περὶ ἀλυπίας*”, in Manetti, D (ed.), 2012, pp. 23–31; *eiusd.* “Dalla τέχνη ἀλυπίας di Antifonte al *περὶ ἀλυπίας* di Plutarco e di Galeno: evoluzione storica di un ideale di vita”, *Studi italiani di filologia classica*, n. s. 10, 2012, pp. 88–99; Kotzia, P., «Galen, *De indolentia*: Commonplaces, Traditions and Contexts», in Rotschild, C. K./Thompson, T. W. (ed.), 2014, pp. 91–126.

62 Râzî, *Spiritual Medicine*, 12; tr. Arberry, 1950, p. 69.

to keep in mind examples of the numerous sufferers of misfortune who have overcome pain and sorrow:

Al-K.: A nice method for this is to remember the things which made us sad in the past, and from which we were consoled, as well as the things which made other people sad, whose sadness and consolation we have witnessed.⁶³

Râz.: Moreover the loss of those things that are not necessary to the continuance of life does not call for everlasting grief and sorrow; they are soon replaced and made good, and this leads on to consolation and oblivion; gaiety returns, and things come back to what they were before the misfortune happened. How many men we have seen struck down by a terrible and shocking calamity, and presently pick themselves the blow fell, enjoying life to the full and entirely content with their circumstances!⁶⁴

Such advice could echo back to the reminder, at the beginning of Galen's letter, of the loss of his slaves during a major attack of the plague. Putting the present loss into perspective, all of the three authors intend to moderate the sadness, following the Aristotelian way of metriopathy.

When Galen reveals the secrets of his *alupia*, he enumerates his natural talent and his education, but as an example for others, he mentions his daily spiritual exercise of *praemeditatio malorum*.⁶⁵ Râzî also lists this training in his collection of remedies against sorrow:

After this it follows that a man should picture and represent to himself the loss of his loved ones, and keep this constantly in his mind and imagination, knowing that it is impossible for them to continue unchanged forever. He should never for a moment give up remembering this and putting it into his thoughts, strengthening his resolve and fortifying his endurance against the day when the calamity happens. That is the way to train and gradually to discipline and strengthen the soul, so that it will protest little when misfortunes occur.⁶⁶

If al-Kindî praises the power of habituation in ethical behaviour, he does not explicitly mention this method, he goes further in criticizing the process:

63 Al-Kindî, *On Dispelling Sorrows*, 6, 1; tr. Adamson/Pormann, 2012, p. 254.

64 Râzî, *Spiritual Medicine*, 12; tr. Arberry, 1950, p. 72.

65 See above n. 42.

66 Râzî, *Spiritual Medicine*, 12; tr. Arberry, 1950, p. 71.

For if we are sad before that which causes sadness occurs, then we impart to ourselves a sadness which might not occur because that which was going to cause sadness desists from doing so. Then we impart to ourselves a sadness which nothing else imparts to us.⁶⁷

Such a polemic can be traced back to a Hellenistic context. Al-Kindî's position was also Epicurus' feeling: Cicero⁶⁸ reports that the philosopher considered it pure madness to envision bad things that will probably never happen. According to Cicero, Epicurus was reacting against the teaching of the Cyrenaean school, which recommended the practise of *praemeditatio malorum*, considering the element of surprise as the major cause of distress. Râzî also adopts some Epicurian precepts when he offers distraction or prescribes non-exclusive attachment to fight against distress.

Reading those three texts, we can understand that all authors are attentive to the need to draw an eclectic panel of remedies or a spectrum of doxographical positions, in which they select examples and ideas to express a personal thought. In a doxographical sequence, Râzî juxtaposes the ways to protect from sadness before it happens and the means to repel it when it is happening. Some of his techniques are borrowed from Galen, Epicurus or Aristippus. P. Adamson has tried to identify every argument of al-Kindî's demonstration with Hellenistic references. Describing *On Dispelling Sorrows*, Adamson writes: "It blends together arguments, themes and gnomological materials beholden to several ethical traditions – Stoicism, Cynism (we find Socrates conflated with Diogenes) and Aristotelianism".⁶⁹ Already Galen defined his own position against the rigorism of the Stoic to endorse a more Cyrenaic inspiration. The material gathered by Cicero in the *Tusculan Disputations* links the *praemeditatio malorum*, as well as the examples of Socrates and Diogenes to the Cyrenaic school.⁷⁰ Galen twice mentions its founder Aristippus and he might have borrowed his diagnosis of insatiability (ἀπληστία) and his ideal of autarky from Aristippus as well.⁷¹

The major difference between Galen and the two Arabic authors is, however, that the physician of Pergamon gives a personal and self-centred version

67 Al-Kindî, *On Dispelling Sorrows*, 5, 3; tr. Adamson/Pormann, 2012, p. 253.

68 Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, III, 15 (31–33).

69 Adamson, P., *Al-Kindî*, p. 155.

70 Zilioli, U., *The Cyrenaics*, Durham, 2012, sp. 157–164.

71 Kotzia, P., "Galen, *De indolentia*: Commonplaces, Traditions and Contexts" (2014) in a brilliant paper has rendered the doxographical background of Galen's *περί ἀλυπίας* in connecting it with a Cynic, Cyrenaic and Stoic tradition. Kotzia attributes rightly the technique of *praemeditatio malorum* to the Presocratic Anaxagoras.

of the philosophical genre, whereas Râzî and al-Kindî's discourses are more universal. Râzî calls for common sense and stresses the notion of pleasure as the criterion of human existence to avoid sadness. Al-Kindî believes in the all-mighty reason. He delights in providing an irrefutable, mathematical demonstration and resorts heavily to his favourite technique of *reductio ad absurdum* to show that every distressful thought is a sign of lack of intellect. He displays a rigorous logic and rationalism, considering that the rational and immortal soul is the main essence of the person.

9. Let us turn back to our initial question: are there hints of *περί ἀλυπίας* in al-Kindî and Râzî's writings? I would say that Râzî had read and imitated the Galenic *περί ἀλυπίας*. The formal and thematic coincidences should not be fortuitous from such a connoisseur of Galen like Râzî. In Al-Kindî's *On Dispelling Sorrows*, there are no patent traces of any interest for the Galenic *περί ἀλυπίας* neither of a tribute to Galen. We could recall the fact that the Arabic translation of the treatise was sponsored by one of the Banû Mûsâ, Al-Kindî's enemies, and that the Nestorian school of Ḥunayn, specializing in the translation of medical texts, was in rivalry with al-Kindî's own circle,⁷² which translated mostly philosophical texts. Galen and Râzî are physicians who acknowledged a strong interaction between body and soul in the analysis and therapy of distress, whereas Al-Kindî did not care at all about physical health but praised a "thoroughly intellectualist ethics".⁷³ In his undertaking to reunite the Platonic demiurge and the God of the Muslims, he sometimes seems to borrow from the Galenic *De usu partium*. But his *On Dispelling Sorrows* betrays a rejection of the Galenic medical approach. Above all, he adapted the Greek philosophical tradition to the Islamic context in which he wrote.

Beyond the influence of Galen's *περί ἀλυπίας* on Al-Kindî and Râzî, I would like to conclude with another question: How could Presocratic, Cynic, Cyrenaean, Epicurean or Stoic materials reach Râzî and al-Kindî, since no translations of the Hellenistic authors are preserved in Arabic⁷⁴? What access did they have to a knowledge that we can nowadays only reach through Cicero or Plutarch? Questioning Galen's *περί ἀλυπίας* through the filter of the Arabic

72 Endress, G., "The Circle of al-Kindî. Early Arabic Translations from the Greek and the Rise of Islamic Philosophy", in Endress, G./Kurk, R. (ed.), *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism*, 1997, pp. 43–76.

73 Adamson, P., *Al-Kindî*, 2007, p. 150.

74 The Aetius Arabus, a Greek doxographical collection translated by Quṣṭâ ibn Lûqâ in the IXth century, provided the Arabic thinkers with access to Presocratic and Hellenistic philosophy, see Daiber, H., *Aetius Arabus. Die Vorsokratiker in arabischer Überlieferung*, Wiesbaden, 1980. But another way of access to this ancient doxography was Aristotle's neoplatonic commentators; see above n. 55.

authors seems to bring a new light to understand how each one, at a different level, inherited a doxographical set from the Hellenistic period and made it vivid, centuries later, to fit to their own context. Seven centuries separate Al-Kindî and Galen, the same time period as between Galen and Antiphon or Anaxagoras, and we should not forget that the Abbasid renaissance was the first to translate and assimilate the Greek pagan inheritance in a monotheistic context, long before the European Renaissance.

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