Ibn Buṭlān, a Physician on the Move between the Byzantine and Islamic Worlds

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In this paper, I introduce a novel perspective on the Baghdadi physician Ibn Buṭlān, analyzing how he flexibly deployed his Christian identity, his Baghdadi medical education and connections, and his knowledge of the Greek and Arabic traditions to gain employment and fame as he traveled across both the Byzantine and Islamic worlds. Ibn Buṭlān is known to scholars of medieval Arabic medicine and literature as an exemplary Arabic litterateur of the Islamicate world. However, his actions and career as a Christian Arabic author – including his authorship of a treatise on the Eucharist for the Byzantine patriarch in the midst of East-West schism in Constantinople in 1054 – are much less well understood. In this paper, I show how Ibn Buṭlān marketed his Baghdadi intellectual heritage as he traveled across the Islamic world. Furthermore, I show that he converted to join the Byzantine church and became a Byzantine monk. This enabled him to join other Arabic-speaking Christian scholars active under Byzantine rule in the city of Antioch, and to market his Baghdadi heritage to new Byzantine audiences, both Arabic- and Greek-speaking. I argue that, by composing Arabic texts and instructing students in Antioch, he helped instigate a wider, long-lasting Byzantine interest in the Greco-Arabic medicine of Baghdad.

Keywords: Greco-Arabic translation, Baghdad, Constantinople, Antioch, Melkite, Byzantium, ʿAbbāsid Caliphate, History of Medicine

The Baghdadi physician Ibn Buṭlān was an expert in the Arabic medical-philosophical traditions that had developed from the Greco-Arabic translation movement, the Arabic literary tradition, and the nearly millennium-old East Syrian Christian scholarly tradition. In 1049, he embarked on a journey from Baghdad, becoming known as a prototypical traveling physician in medieval Arabic literature for his journeys through Syria, Palestine, Egypt,

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and Constantinople, until his death in Antioch in 1066.[1] Ibn Buṭlān repeatedly traversed political and religious borders across the Byzantine and Islamic worlds, in the process both undergoing transformations and transforming his surroundings. Most notably, he became a Byzantine monk and joined the Byzantine Melkite community of Antioch. This Eastern Christian community under Byzantine rule benefited from being in communion with the Byzantine imperial church, from their knowledge of both Arabic and Greek, and, in the 11th century, from the immigration to Antioch of Eastern Christian scholars like Ibn Buṭlān and Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī.

This article uses Ibn Buṭlān's career as a lens to view the mobility and flexibility of patronage of Arabic-speaking physicians in the medieval Middle East.

An East Syrian Physician of Baghdad

Born in early 11th-century Baghdad, Ibn Buṭlān was the star pupil of ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 1043), the leading physician and philosopher of his era in Baghdad.[2] Ibn al-Ṭayyib practiced medicine and taught at the celebrated ʿAḍudī hospital,[3] in addition to composing philosophical and scientific works, including commentaries on Aristotle, Galen, and Hippokrates. He was a leading figure in the »Baghdad School« of Aristotelian philosophy, which had a fierce rivalry with the Khurāsānī school led by Ibn Sīnā.[4] Ibn al-Ṭayyib reportedly »revered [Ibn Buṭlān], extolled him, and held him above his other disciples«, instructing him in the *Posterior Analytics*, likely as part of a wider philosophical curriculum.[5] While in Baghdad, Ibn Buṭlān wrote the dietary manual *Taqwīm al-Siḥḥa*, which was being studied at the ʿAḍudī hospital, where he had likely worked with Ibn al-Ṭayyib, during Ibn Buṭlān's lifetime.[6] This text would be popular for centuries in both Arabic and its Latin translation.[7] Likely around the same time, he composed his *Treatise on Buying Slaves and Inspecting Servants*, a text which used racialized physiognomy to advise Islamicate elites about which slaves to purchase.[8] Armed with his training by Ibn al-Ṭayyib and his plentiful connections to Baghdadi

1 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38; Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 294-315; Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*; Conrad, Ibn Butlān in Bilād Al-Shām.

2 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38.1; Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 223, 314-315; Samir, La place d'Ibn at-Ṭayyib.

3 Faultless, Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 667.

4 Pines, La ›Philosophie orientale‹; Ladjal, Philosophical conflict; Ferrari, Abū l-Faraǧ Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

5 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 314-315.

6 The earliest manuscript fragment of this text, held in private hands, contains a note saying that it was read in the ʿAḍudī hospital on 14 May 1057: Christie's Auction House, A section from possibly the earliest recorded copy.

7 E.g., among the many manuscripts of the text, expensive and illuminated copies of the *Taqwīm* were commissioned as prestige objects by 13th-14th-century rulers as disparate as the sultans of Ḥamā and the Visconti of Milan: Bertiz, *Picturing Health*; Hoeniger, Illuminated *Tacuinum Sanitatis*; Mane, *Le travail à la campagne au Moyen Âge*, 58-60.

8 Ibn Buṭlān, Risāla jāmiʿa li-funūn nāfiʿa, ed. Hārūn; Sanagustin, *Médecine et société*. I intend to investigate this text in the future for the light it shines on medieval Islamic conceptions of race.

elites across confessional lines, Ibn Buṭlān presented himself as a preeminent scholar of the Baghdadi scholarly tradition.

While in Baghdad, Ibn Buṭlān was also trained in the East Syrian Christian scholarly tradition by both Ibn al-Ṭayyib and Elias of Nisibis. In addition to being a philosopher and physician, Ibn al-Ṭayyib was also a high official in the Church of the East, who helped systematize the East Syrian tradition in Arabic by translating and codifying large chunks of the exegetical and canon law traditions of his church.[9] We will see that Ibn Buṭlān's text on the Eucharist shows the influence of Ibn al-Ṭayyib's exegesis, indicating that he likely studied Christian texts with Ibn al-Ṭayyib. Additionally, a series of theological questions posed by Ibn Buṭlān to Elias of Nisibis indicates that Ibn Buṭlān also studied with this major East Syrian bishop, theologian, and historian of the era.[10] He addressed Elias as his teacher, using language fitting for a bishop in his Christian sect. He called himself »your poor and sinful student«, and called Elias »my pure teacher«, »your holiness«, and »your excellence«, likened him to a »thirteenth Apostle«, and implied that he could work miracles.[11] He asked Elias to resolve significant uncertainties that might lead him to deny Christ or espouse atheistic discourse – an unusual subject for a medieval Christian Arabic text, including topics as fundamental as contradictions in the Bible about forgiveness and punishment, the reality of the resurrection, and the nature of Christ's glorified body.[12] We will see that the habit that Ibn Buṭlān displayed here of playing devil's advocate would repeatedly get him into trouble. At the same time, his apparent willingness to challenge his own East Syrian religious norms may have facilitated his eventual conversion to Byzantine Orthodoxy.

An Expert in the Baghdadi Medical Tradition

Across his writings, Ibn Buṭlān interweaved anecdotes of ancient Greek and recent Baghdadi physicians as part of his self-presentation as an authority on the modern medicine of Baghdad and the scientific trajectory through which it had developed. Furthermore, Ibn Buṭlān's knowledge of the Arabic medical tradition that had developed in Baghdad in the wake of the Greco-Arabic translation movement enabled him to travel extensively across the Islamic and Byzantine worlds. These travels earned him further fame as a scholar and, in the process, gained him further anecdotal knowledge of contemporary physicians.

In basing his authority on the Baghdadi medical tradition, Ibn Buṭlān came into conflict with those who had competing claims of medical expertise, such as Ibn Riḍwān, the leading physician in Cairo. Ibn Riḍwān considered himself the true heir to the ancient Greek medical tradition. He was a rare autodidact in the Islamic world whose knowledge came from personal study of Arabic translations of ancient Greek texts.[13] As a result, he developed a model of scholarly authority derived from his perceived understanding of studying ancient texts

9 Faultless, Ibn al-Ṭayyib, 668-669.

10 Samir, Elie de Nisibe; Samir, Les apories.

11 Samir, Les apories, 379.

12 Samir, Les apories, 379-383.

13 Das, Hippocratism of ʿAlī Ibn Riḍwān, 156-159, 167-177; Reisman, Medieval Arabic medical autobiography, 559-569.

that contradicted the Baghdadi model of Ibn Buṭlān, who prized the living Arabic medical tradition he was trained in, which had already incorporated knowledge from and, in his estimation, even surpassed that of the ancient Greeks.

The dispute between the two began in 1049, when Ibn Buṭlān harshly condemned a Galenic treatise written by a student of Ibn Riḍwān's, the Syrian Miaphysite al-Yabrūdī. After Ibn Buṭlān arrived in Cairo not long thereafter, the two physicians exchanged a series of verbal ripostes. Although Ibn Riḍwān convinced Cairo's medical community to eject Ibn Buṭlān from the city by 1050, this dispute would become foundational to Ibn Buṭlān's later scholarly reputation. The treatises they wrote against one another would become famous in the medieval Islamic world, quoted extensively by Ibn al-Qifṭī and Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, as well as in modern scholarship, immortalized in a 1937 book-length publication by the prominent orientalists Joseph Schacht and Max Meyerhof.[14] What began as a dispute over a minor point of Galenic medicine would quickly devolve into a much larger debate about education, scholarship, and authority in the Islamicate scholarly world.

Aileen Das has argued that Ibn Riḍwān presented himself as a peer to Galen, who aimed, like Galen, to provide an exegetical model of the Hippokratic corpus.[15] In works such as his *Useful Book on the Teaching of the Medical Art*, he criticized innovations made from the Greek medical tradition by Arabic authors, like Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq (d. 873), Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 925/935), and Ibn Buṭlān's teacher ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Ṭayyib – whom he declared a mere sophist.[16] To Ibn Riḍwān, Ibn Buṭlān was a typically problematic Baghdadi scholar, whose knowledge came from the garbled tradition he inherited.[17]

Ibn Buṭlān directly challenged Ibn Riḍwān's critiques of him and the Baghdadi medical tradition. He mocked Ibn Riḍwān's pupils as foolish and derided their attempts to serve Buyīd aristocrats in Baghdad.[18] He called Ibn al-Ṭayyib »our *shaykh*«,[19] invoking his teacher as a hallowed authority. He pointed out Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq's essential role in transmitting Greek science into Arabic.[20] He ridiculed Ibn Riḍwān's attempts to find contradictions between Galen and Ḥunayn as a misunderstanding based on comparing dissimilar things, like legal prescriptions given by two Ḥanafī judges about two separate groups called Ṣābians.[21] He not only accused Ibn Riḍwān of plagiarizing Ibn Baks's *Doubts against Ḥunayn*, but then derided that text, saying that Ibn Baks was a near-blind, shaky-handed drunk whose medical knowledge was laughed at in Baghdad.[22] As a *coup de grâce*, Ibn Buṭlān pointed to Ibn Riḍwān's Arabic

14 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*.

15 Das, 167-177.

16 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.2, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 14.25.9; Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 20-29, 43.

17 Das, Hippocratism of ʿAlī Ibn Riḍwān, 156-159, 167-177.

18 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 58, 59 (Arabic).

19 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan,* 51, 54 (Arabic).

20 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan,* 56 (Arabic).

21 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan,* 66-67 (Arabic). On Ṣābians, see Van Bladel, *From Sasanian Mandaeans to Ṣābians of the Marshes*.

22 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 68-70 (Arabic).

monolingualism as proof that the latter could not even access the ancient Greek texts that he claimed to be studying directly, but knew them only in Arabic translation.[23] He scorned Ibn Riḍwān's inability to even pronounce the Greek names of Galen's late antique commentators. He argued that apparent contradictions between Greek and Arabic medical texts resulted from the slightly differing meanings of Greek and Arabic medical terms, giving Greek terms as examples.[24] Ibn Buṭlān argued that his Baghdadi Galenic education was ideal, in that he could draw directly on the ancients (in Greek if necessary) in addition to centuries of Arabic scholarship upon them.

This tactic helped Ibn Buṭlān convince later medieval scholars of his reliability as a source on the ancient physicians. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa began his section on the Alexandrian commentators in his *The Best Accounts of the Classes of Physicians* by quoting the list Ibn Buṭlān had given when mocking Ibn Riḍwān's inability to pronounce their names.[25] In his *History of Learned Men*, Ibn al-Qifṭī referenced Ibn Buṭlān's statements on minor ancient authors and treated him as an authority on Greek medicine. After quoting Ibn Buṭlān about Proklos the Successor, he said, »Ibn Buṭlān was well-read in the sciences of the ancients, their books, and in reports about them, not at all suspect in what he relates«, echoing this praise after referencing Ibn Buṭlān about Nikolaos of Damascus.[26] In contrast to his esteem for Ibn Buṭlān, Ibn al-Qifṭī deemed Ibn Riḍwān an unoriginal scholar whose works contributed little beyond their compilations of previous sources, derisively saying that: »[Ibn Riḍwān's] students used to relate from him risible medical arguments, astronomical doctrines, and logical pronouncements, if the transmission was accurate.«[27] His opinion on Ibn Riḍwān was likely influenced by Ibn Buṭlān's polemics, which Ibn al-Qifṭī quoted extensively in his *History of Learned Men*.[28] As David Reisman has argued, both Ibn al-Qifṭī and Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa likely gave their rhetorical support to Ibn Buṭlān over Ibn Riḍwān because the former supported their own projects of valorizing the long history of Arabic medicine as a continuation of

23 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan,* 59-60 (Arabic).

24 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan,* 59-60 (Arabic).

25 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 6.1.1; Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 59-60 (Arabic).

26 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 336 ,89. Both statements of Ibn Buṭlān conflated these ancient scholars with their namesakes from Laodikeia. Ibn al-Qifṭī conflated Proklos of Athens with Proklos of Laodikeia, a 4th-century Neoplatonist, whose commentary on Pythagoras' *Golden Verses* was synthesized by Ibn Buṭlān's teacher, ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Ṭayyib: Westerink, Proclus commentateur des ›Vers d'or‹, 78-61; Ibn al-Ṭayyib, *Proclus' Commentary on the Pythagorean Golden Verses*, ed. Linley; Izdebska, Man, god and the apotheosis of man. Either Nikolaos of Laodikeia or his earlier contemporary, Nikolaos of Damascus, authored Aristotelian commentaries that were translated into Syriac and Arabic: Herzhoff, Wer war der Peripatetiker Nikolaos, 165-142. Yāqūt also preserved this section, though the modern edition copies transliteration errors. Yāqūt gives Theophilos (توفلس) of Laodikeia instead of Proklos (برقلس), a transcription error caused by their similar consonantal skeletons. Moreover, Yāqūt attributed it to »Ibn Faḍlān« (d. 960 CE) instead of »Ibn Buṭlān«, although al-Qifṭī independently confirms that this came from Ibn Buṭlān's geographical missive to Hilāl: Yāqūt ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, vol. 4, ed. Wüstenfeld, 339; Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 298-297.

27 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 444.

28 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 298-314; Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 30-32.

Greek medicine, a continuity that Ibn Riḍwān's arguments against the utility of the Baghdadi medical tradition sought to disrupt.[29]

Ibn Buṭlān's knowledge of the Greek tradition was complemented by his authority in the Baghdadi medical tradition, a fact that is most visible in his *Why Physicians have Changed to a Cooling Treatment*. In this work, Ibn Buṭlān argued for novel medical treatments developed by recent Baghdadi physicians that yielded improved results over ancient Greek practices. Though *Why Physicians* is no longer extant, later biographical dictionaries extensively quoted its anecdotes about Baghdadi physicians. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa quoted *Why Physicians* to start his entry on Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ḥarrānī (d. 975/980), which describes how al-Ḥarrānī used bloodletting to heal the Būyid Abū Ṭāhir ibn Baqiyya after he had had a stroke and become unconscious – a practice in line with Ibn Buṭlān's wider arguments in *Why Physicians*.[30] While this anecdote erroneously convinced Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa that Ibn Buṭlān had studied with Abū al-Ḥasan, in actuality, Ibn Buṭlān related this story of the earlier physician as part of his corpus of Baghdadi medical knowledge.[31]

Moreover, Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa brought multiple passages from *Why Physicians* together in his entry on Ṣāʿid ibn Bishr (fl. 11th c., first half), a figure whom Ibn Riḍwān implied was one of Ibn Buṭlān's Baghdadi teachers.[32] This set of passages began with Ibn Buṭlān's identification of Ṣāʿid ibn Bishr as an innovator in some medical methods he was discussing, namely: »he would treat patients by bloodletting, giving them cooling and moisture-inducing remedies, and not allowing them to take food.« Due to his success, »[Ṣāʿid] became the chief physician upon whom kings depended for their regimens.«[33] Ibn Buṭlān reported that the *raʾīs* Abū Yaḥyā told him in Mayyāfāriqīn that Ṣāʿid was called to cure his father, the vizier Abū al-Qāsim al-Maghribī, because baths, enemas, and hot potions had proven ineffective. Ṣāʿid gave the vizier iced water, bled him, and forced him onto a cleanse in which he ingested only nutritious fluids – a treatment which revitalized him.[34] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa concluded this set of quotations by paraphrasing another anecdote from Ibn Buṭlān about Ṣāʿid curing the scorpion bite of the Shīʿī jurist, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā.[35] Later, in his entry on the philosopher Abū ʿAlī ibn Zurʿa, Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa once again quoted *Why Physicians* to explain how Ṣāʿid had developed new cool and dry treatments for treating Ibn Zurʿa for hemiplegia, after older, renowned Baghdadi physicians had made no headway with treatments prescribed by the ancients.[36]

29 Reisman, Medieval Arabic medical autobiography, 559-60, 567-69.

30 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.8.2.

31 Schacht and Meyerhof point out the chronological impossibility of Abū al-Ḥasan teaching Ibn Buṭlān: Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 59 n. 2.

32 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan,* 108.

33 Translation adapted from Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 3.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.13.2.

34 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.13.3.

35 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.13.5.

36 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.23.2.

Beyond these quotations from *Why Physicians*, Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa repeated Ibn Buṭlān's recounting of a meeting between two famous 9th-century intellectuals, the East Syrian physician Yūḥannā ibn Māsawayh and the Arabic litterateur al-Jāḥiẓ.[37] He further quoted Ibn Buṭlān's rendition of a humorous poetic exchange about laxatives between the East Syrian translator Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn and the ʿAbbāsid vizier al-Qāsim ibn ʿUbaydallāh in his *Banquet of Physicians*.[38] By integrating medical history into his medical texts, Ibn Buṭlān established himself as an intellectual historian. In doing so, he helped mythologize Baghdadi scholarship, thereby buttressing his argument to Ibn Riḍwān that one should learn medicine from experienced teachers in a developed tradition, as was the case in Baghdad.

Soon after Ibn Buṭlān left Cairo, he arrived in the Byzantine capital of Constantinople. Ghars al-Niʿma al-Ṣābiʾ (d. 1086/7), the son of Ibn Buṭlān's former Baghdadi correspondent Hilāl al-Ṣābiʾ, narrated a story told to him by Fakhr al-Dawla Ibn Jahīr (d. 1090), the founder of the Banū Jahīr bureaucratic dynasty:[39]

> [Fakhr] said: »I went to the Emperor of the Romans, on a mission for Zaʿīm al-Dawla, Abū Kāmil Barakat ibn al-Muqallad, the emir of the Banū ʿUqayl. I saw Ibn Buṭlān, the physician, there; he was friendly to me, was at my service, and treated me with deference. One day, I said to him: ›I passed by Ṭarsūs and saw that the tomb of al-Maʾmūn was unkempt and dilapidated, and it grieved me. If the emperor were to order that it be rebuilt, it would be a good action, and he would be praised.‹ He said to me, ›Let me tell you something curious. I saw the tomb while traveling to this emperor, and I wanted to urge him to this noble deed. One day, I was determined to do this, and I began to recount the merits of al-Maʾmūn and his beautiful feats, which might inspire someone like this emperor toward what I wished for the tomb. However, all I could cite were mistakes, blunders, or errors from the shamefulness of al-Maʾmūn. In response, he laughed and jeered. As it was unfeasible to do what I wished, I desisted, with no way left to achieve what I wanted.‹ Then, in my dream that night, I saw al-Maʾmūn saying to me: ›May God not reward you well on my behalf. My merits and good deeds have spread across the earth, yet you have gained neither a story, nor a tradition, nor a report about me. May God disfigure you.‹ I woke up troubled, and I remained amazed at what had happened to me.«[40]

The above-quoted anecdote, which aimed to mock Ibn Buṭlān's claim to be a local son and historian of ʿAbbāsid Baghdad, continued by explaining how Fakhr al-Dawla successfully persuaded Monomachos to build a lavish domed shrine at al-Maʾmūn's tomb by praising his wisdom as a judge through comparison to al-Maʾmūn. This story fills a lacuna in our knowledge of the tomb of al-Maʾmūn in Ṭarsūs.[41] Putting aside the apparent bias in favor of

37 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 8.26.12.

38 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 8.30.5.

39 Pomerantz, Error and the Abbasid Performer; Hanne, The Banū Jahīr.

40 Ghars al-Niʿma al-Ṣābiʾ, *al-Hafawāt al-Nādira*, ed. al-Ashtar, 115-117.

41 See Cooperson, Grave of Al-Ma'mūn in Tarsus. Unaware of this report, Cooperson discussed how 14th-century Islamic sources indicate that a building had been built over al-Maʾmūn's tomb during the Christian occupation of the city from 965 to 1275, which by the 14th century included a church.

Fakhr al-Dawla, if we take this story at face value, it would have to have occurred between 1050 and 1052, when Zaʿīm al-Dawla was the ʿUqaylid emir.[42] It is thought-provoking to contemplate how Ibn Buṭlān might have attempted to compare al-Maʾmūn, a figure closely associated with the ʿAbbāsid translation movement, with Monomachos, an emperor famed for his patronage of Byzantine intellectual culture.[43]

A second source corroborates Ibn Jahīr's interactions with Ibn Buṭlān in Constantinople, c. 1051-1052. Ibn al-Athīr reports that Ibn Jahīr publicly feuded with the ambassador of the Marwānid emir, Naṣr al-Dawla (d. 1061), in Constantinople. Ibn Jahīr thought that he should take precedence over the Marwānid ambassador because Naṣr al-Dawla paid tribute to the sovereign he represented, the ʿUqaylid emir.[44] As we will see, Ibn Buṭlān was likely the Marwānid ambassador whom Ibn Jahīr attempted to chastise. This fact would explain why Ibn Jahīr depicted Monomachos mocking Ibn Buṭlān, but being persuaded by his own arguments about rebuilding al-Maʾmūn's tomb.

There is ample evidence of Ibn Buṭlān's connections to the Marwānid emirate and the scholars there. As we saw, he related stories about Ṣāʿid ibn Bishr and the vizier Abū al-Qāsim, as recounted by the latter's son, the *raʾīs* Abū Yaḥyā, in Mayyāfāriqīn. It was conversations between this same Abū al-Qāsim and Ibn Buṭlān's teacher, Elias of Nisibis, in Mayyāfāriqīn in 1026, that formed the basis for Elias's *Book of the Sessions*.[45] Elias himself was bishop of Nisibis, also under Marwānid rule. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa also informs us that Ibn Buṭlān was a close friend of ʿUbaydallāh ibn Jibrāʾīl ibn Bakhtīshūʿ (d. 1058),[46] a scion of the great Bakhtīshūʿ East Syrian medical family.[47] Like Ibn Buṭlān, ʿUbaydallāh was an elite Christian Arabic litterateur and physician who helped transmit Baghdadi knowledge to new centers in the 11th century. After his father Jibrāʾīl ibn ʿUbaydallāh (d. 1005) had ended his illustrious career at the Marwānid court, ʿUbaydallāh worked his whole life in Mayyāfāriqīn as a physician and as an author of medical and literary texts, under the patronage of the Marwānid Naṣr al-Dawla.[48] It is not hard to see what ʿUbaydallāh and Ibn Buṭlān had in common: both were East Syrian Christian physicians and masters of Arabic literature who spread the Baghdadi tradition outside Baghdad.

However, the clearest piece of evidence connecting Ibn Buṭlān to Naṣr al-Dawla is his *Banquet of Physicians*, which he dedicated to the emir in September 1054 from Constantinople.[49] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa connected Ibn Buṭlān with Marwānid medical culture so thoroughly that he mentioned Ibn Buṭlān's dedication of this text to Naṣr al-Dawla in his entry on Elias of

42 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, 8, ed. Tornberg, 75-76, 98.

43 Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, 75-104; Mordechai, *Costly Diversity*, 91-98, 201-204.

44 Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, 10, ed. Tornberg, 182-183.

45 Bertaina, Science, syntax, and superiority; Samir, Elie de Nisibe, 257-268.

46 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 8.6.

47 Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam*, 108-112.

48 Ibn Bakhtīshūʿ, *Risālah fī al-ṭibb*, ed. Klein-Franke; Contadini, *World of Beasts*, 39-53.

49 The colophon is no longer preserved in manuscripts of *Banquet of Physicians*, but is quoted in Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38.6. Ibn Buṭlān dated his text 1365 in the Seleucid era, which Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa incorrectly converted to 450 A.H. (1058 CE), an error that Conrad mistakenly followed: Conrad, Ibn Butlān in Bilād Al-Shām, 144-145.

Nisibis's brother, the physician Zāhid al-ʿUlamāʾ, who built Mayyāfāriqīn's hospital for the ruler.[50] In this early example of the *maqāma* genre,[51] Ibn Buṭlān utilized his encyclopedic knowledge of Greek and Arabic intellectual history to place himself at the forefront of Arabic medical and literary worlds. He formulated the text as a dialogue where the narrator interrogated and embarrassed a series of medical professionals (a physician, oculist, surgeon, etc.), through which, Conrad argued, he fictionalized and reframed his feud with Ibn Riḍwān.[52] Like his later *Banquet of Priests*, he set *Banquet of Physicians* in the Marwānid-ruled Jazīra, in this case in Mayyāfāriqīn.

The *Banquet of Physicians* was a tour de force of erudition. Ibn Buṭlān's literary Arabic prose is replete with anecdotes and quotations from famous intellectuals of the ancient and Islamic worlds, including Greek scholars like Galen, Plato, Pythagoras, and Hippokrates and figures from Islamic history like the folk-hero ʿAmr ibn Maʿdīkarib (d. 630s-640), the singer ʿUbaydallāh ibn Surayj (d. 716), and the physicians Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn (d. 910) and Bakhtīshūʿ ibn Gabriel (d. 870). While Ibn Buṭlān himself composed most of the poems in this *maqāma*, he also included verses by literary contemporaries such as Abū al-Ḥusayn ibn Naffākh, Isrāʾīl al-Kaḥḥāl, and Aḥmad ibn Qurāba.[53] The medical questions written across the *maqāma* were incisive enough that the early 12th-century physician Ibn Athradī collected and answered them.[54] The *Banquet of Physicians* would be popular in elite circles, as is evident from two sumptuous 13th-century manuscripts, covered in miniatures.[55] In dedicating this text to Naṣr al-Dawla, Ibn Buṭlān was capitalizing on his reputation as a physician and man of letters to maintain his prominent place in Islamic scholarly networks while living in the Byzantine world.

At the same time as he was writing the *Banquet of the Physicians* and representing Naṣr al-Dawla, Ibn Buṭlān described a massive plague that filled the cemeteries of Constantinople in May/June 1054, which resulted in 14,000 people being buried at the Church of St. Luke in cemeteries for foreigners and the indigent.[56] He likely dealt with the effects of the plague while working as a physician in the »monastery that Emperor Constantine founded in the outskirts of Constantinople,« where he wrote the *Banquet of the Physicians*, as reported in the text's colophon. We can identify this as the Monastery of St. George in the Mangana, an extravagant foundation of the aforementioned Emperor Constantine Monomachos, which included a large and famous hospital.[57]

50 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.54.1.

51 Kennedy, The *Maqāmāt* as a nexus of interests, 171-175; Beaumont, Mighty and never ending affair.

52 Conrad, Scholarship and social context.

53 Ibn Buṭlān, *The Doctors' Dinner Party*, ed. Kennedy and Farrell, 46-47, 50-51, 64-65.

54 Ibn Athradī, *Le banquet des médecins*, ed. and trans. Dagher and Troupeau; Ibn Buṭlān, *Das Ärztebankett*, trans. Klein-Franke 147-204.

55 Baer, Illustrations.

56 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38.4; *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople*, 3, trans. Berger, 85. Skylitzes also mentioned this plague: John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811-1057*, trans. Wortley, 455.

57 Attaleiatēs, *The History*, trans. Kaldellis and Krallis, 84-91; Miller, *Birth of the Hospital*, 149-150; Janin, *Les èglises et les monastères*, 75-81.

Ibn Buṭlān is not the only known Arabic-speaking physician who seems to have worked at the Mangana. Ten remedies from the Mangana hospital are found across Vat. gr. 299, all of which likely can be dated between Monomachos and the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204.[58] One of the three named physicians is Abram »the Saracen«, *aktouarios* of the Mangana and imperial *archiatros*, who would have been one of the most prominent physicians in Constantinople in the late 11th/12th century.[59] Vat. gr. 299 (fols. 374r-374v) and BML Antinori 101 (fols. 353v-354r) contain a purgative remedy of Abram's written out, both as Arabic transliterated into Greek characters and as a Greek translation of the Arabic.[60] As a bilingual physician trained primarily in Arabic working in a Byzantine monastic hospital, Abram was assuredly a Melkite, that is, a Middle Eastern Christian in communion with Byzantine Orthodoxy.[61] We can, perhaps, connect the patronage of Arabic-speaking Melkites at the Mangana to its founder, Monomachos, who was born and raised in the Melkite metropolis of Antioch and maintained deep connections with the place.[62] Indeed, already by c. 1037/38, there is evidence of Antiochene physicians becoming prominent in Constantinople in a physician to the powerful John the *orphanotrophos*, whom Empress Zoe tried to bribe to poison John.[63] Around the same time that Ibn Buṭlān was at this monastic hospital in Constantinople, he converted to Byzantine Orthodoxy and took the monastic habit.

An Arabic Christian Scholar

Ibn Riḍwān mockingly stated that Ibn Buṭlān did not need to keep repeating that he was a »Christian from Baghdad«, because his affiliation with Christianity and Baghdad were so well known.[64] Indeed, in addition to promoting his connection to the Baghdadi intellectual tradition, Ibn Buṭlān also prominently advertised his Christian affiliation throughout his travels, writing about and for Christian audiences. He sought to participate in the Christian communities that he encountered, describing Christian churches and monasteries in detail in letters to Hilāl al-Ṣābiʾ.[65]

In his first stop after leaving Baghdad, Ibn Buṭlān approached the Mirdāsid emir of Aleppo, Muʿizz al-Dawla, and used his erudition to gain »control over the worship of the Christians [of Aleppo]… He [then] began to establish religious canons in accordance with their [Christian] principles (*uṣūl*) and obligations (*shurūṭ*), and they hated him for it.«[66] We

58 Bennett, *Medicine and Pharmacy*, 107-120.

59 Bennett, *Medicine and Pharmacy*, 115.

60 Bennett, *Medicine and Pharmacy*, 23.

61 Nasrallah, *Histoire 3.1*, 37-45.

62 Roberts has pointed to Monomachos's descent from Antioch as a reason for why he may have appointed Peter III as the city's patriarch, the only known Antiochene Melkite given that position in the 11th century. See Todt, *Dukat und griechisch-orthodoxes Patriarchat*, 284; Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 226; Roberts, *Reason and Revelation*, 24.

63 John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History*, trans. Wortley, *811-1057*, 379–80.

64 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 40-41 (Arabic).

65 Conrad, Ibn Butlān in Bilād Al-Shām, 148-149.

66 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 315; Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38.2.

can interpret the deployment of the Islamic legal terms *uṣūl* and *shurūṭ* in several ways: Ibn Buṭlān may have employed Islamic terminology to discuss the Christian legal tradition in Arabic, as his teacher Ibn al-Ṭayyib did in his legal projects.[67] Indeed, Ibn Buṭlān's apparent goal of forming and enforcing a canon law code for Aleppo's Christians may have been influenced by his teacher Ibn al-Ṭayyib, who synthesized the East Syrian law code.[68] Alternatively, perhaps Ibn Buṭlān was employing Arabic legal vocabulary that the Muslim emir, to whom he was proposing his Christian legal project, would understand. It is even possible that Ibn al-Qifṭī (or his source) was opting to explain these events using Islamic legal norms. Regardless of the origins of this Islamic legal terminology, by seeking religious authority over all of Aleppo's Christians, regardless of confession, Ibn Buṭlān was skirting local ecclesiastical power structures. Bishops in the Islamic world were rarely subjected to transconfessional Christian authorities empowered by local Muslim rulers – let alone to one who was, apparently, not yet a cleric.[69] As a result, after Ibn Buṭlān embarrassed a local Christian physician, Mubārak ibn Sharāra, in a medical argument, Ibn Sharāra exploited the enmities among Aleppo's Christians that Ibn Buṭlān's strict regulations had created to hound him out of Aleppo.[70] As with Ibn Riḍwān, Ibn Buṭlān made the mistake of insulting the wrong local elite. Ibn Sharāra likely belonged to the well-documented Melkite community of the city, whereas East Syrians like Ibn Buṭlān were rare in Aleppo.[71] Ibn Sharāra lived in the city for more than four decades after Ibn Buṭlān left and wrote a history of it. His prominent family there preserved his papers for consultation for generations, due to his repute as a scribe.[72] After being chased out of Aleppo (and then Cairo), Ibn Buṭlān appeared in Constantinople, where his religious and medical careers became further intertwined.

While in Constantinople in 1054, Ibn Buṭlān became embroiled in the dispute that would later be considered the moment of irreconcilable split between New and Old Rome.[73] In the introduction to his *Treatise on the Eucharist*, Ibn Buṭlān described how papal delegates had brought a letter to Constantinople in 1054 that critiqued Eastern practices like using leavened bread in the Eucharist and allowing priests to grow beards. The pope then sent this letter to the other Eastern patriarchs. At this fraught time, Ibn Buṭlān visited the patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Keroularios, describing their interaction as follows:

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67 On Ibn al-Ṭayyib's use of Islamic legal terminology, see Weitz, *Between Christ and Caliph*, 231-234.

68 Ibn al-Ṭayyib, *Fiqh al-Naṣrānīya*, ed. Hoenerbach and Spies.

69 Tannous, *Simple Believers*, 162-163. This contrasts with the *raʾīs al-yahūd*, who had power over different Jewish communities: Cohen, *Jewish Self-Government*.

70 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 315.

71 Nasrallah considered Ibn Sharāra a Melkite and noted that Graf gave two identical entries for Ibn Sharāra as a »Melkite« and »Nestorian«: Nasrallah, *Histoire 3.1*, 155, 174-175; Graf, *GCAL 2*, 71-72, 195. Oltean accepted Graf's »Nestorian« entry and conjectured that Ibn Sharāra first disliked Ibn Buṭlān for asserting power over the East Syrians of Aleppo – a community whose supposed prominence he entirely concocts – and later despised him for becoming a Melkite: Oltean, Ibn Buṭlān and the Byzantines, 371. These suppositions do not fit our evidence.

72 Ibn al-Qifṭī, ed. Lippert, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, 330; Ibn Shaddād, *Description d'Alep*, ed. Sourdel, 46; Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī, *Kunūz al-dhahab*, 1, ed. Shaʿath and al-Bakkūr, 340.

73 Despite this event's political ramifications, it was only deemed a defining »schism« in later centuries: Mayne, East and West; Harris, ›Schism‹ of 1054, 1-4; Kaplan, La place du schisme de 1054.

> I came to [the patriarch] in those days and found him worried and distressed about this situation. He said to me, »What do you think about what this opposing sect is saying?« I said to him, »O master, command me to go to them so that I might thoroughly probe their thinking. For if I should succeed in rebutting them, I might spare us the burden of troubling with them. And if it should be otherwise, there would be no blemish on the clergy on my account, for I am foreign in lands and language.« He answered me, saying: »No. Instead, go and write a treatise on this.«[74]

After the patriarch's »expert translator«, ʿĪsa, had read Ibn Buṭlān's treatise to him in Greek, Keroularios had it read to his synod and sent to the papal legates. Not long thereafter, mutual excommunications were exchanged between the papal legates and Patriarch Keroularios.

The existence of this text is remarkable, seeing that it was written in Arabic for a Greek-speaking audience by a foreigner with a suspect Christological background. Modern scholarly interpretations have done little to contextualize it. Georg Graf claimed that Michael Keroularios commissioned this »Nestorian« (i.e. East Syrian) author to give a third-party perspective that supported Byzantine arguments. Due to Graf's hallowed name in Christian Arabic studies, this contention has been largely accepted.[75] However, it is difficult to imagine that Keroularios would have sought a theological opinion from a »Nestorian« deemed a heretic by both Greeks and Latins. Indeed, Ibn Buṭlān's description of these events portrays him as a foreign Chalcedonian coreligionist of the Byzantine patriarch: when he offered to spy for the patriarch because he could gain the Latins' trust, the implication was that he was like the Melkites of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, whom the pope and patriarch were both trying to win to their side. Furthermore, previously neglected manuscript evidence suggests that Ibn Buṭlān was, in fact, in communion with the Byzantine Church at the time he wrote this text.

Graf edited less than half of the *Treatise on the Eucharist*, summarizing the rest, using three Vatican manuscripts of Abū Shākir ibn al-Rāhib's (d. 1290) Copto-Arabic encyclopedia, *Book of the Proof*, in which the text was included alongside marginal comments of al-Asʿad ibn al-ʿAssāl (d. before 1259).[76] While these manuscripts effectively represent Ibn al-Rāhib's work,[77] Graf did not have access to four Melkite Arabic manuscripts that contain Ibn Buṭlān's *Treatise on the Eucharist* as an independent text.[78] The distinct recension in these Melkite manuscripts contains Ibn Buṭlān's encomiastic introductory address to Patriarch Keroularios, a long, flowery passage written in rhymed prose that indicates Ibn Buṭlān's adherence to the

74 Holy Sepulchre ar. 12, fol. 282v. For ease I cite only this manuscript, but all texts come from my collated edition and translation, which I plan to publish.

75 Graf, Eucharistielehre des Nestorianers; Mavroudi, Empress Zoe, 433-436; Oltean, Ibn Buṭlān and the Byzantines, 357-358. Fiey does not follow Graf but postulates (with little evidence) that Ibn Buṭlān could have been a Syrian Miaphysite: Fiey, Ibn Buṭlān and the Patriarch of Constantinople.

76 Vatican ar. 104, 116, and 117.

77 Vat. ar. 104 is an autograph by Ibn al-Rāhib, while the other two manuscripts provide valuable information on his later revisions to his encyclopedia. See Sidarus, Les sources, 127-128.

78 Holy Sepulchre ar. 12, Bibliothèque Orientale 516, Latakia 3, Latakia 34.

Byzantine Church.[79] In this passage, which the Coptic encyclopedists had omitted – perhaps due to their opposition to Byzantine ecclesiology – Ibn Buṭlān extolled Keroularios in biblical language. He described the patriarch as one whom God made his cornerstone (*raʾs al-zāwiya*) and intermediary (*wāsiṭ*) to humankind. He compared him to Christ through a host of scriptural allusions and stated that it was the role of the »elected patriarchs and the rightly guided scholars« to overcome Satan's traps. Echoing his earlier rhetoric in his questions to Elias of Nisibis, Ibn Buṭlān called himself an »insignificant student«, and said that the patriarch's holy inspiration and aid enabled him to compose this treatise against their Frankish brethren.

Ibn Buṭlān echoed his confessional allegiance to the Byzantine church elsewhere in the treatise. He stated that »there are five patriarchs, four of them sanctify [the Eucharist] with leavened bread, and one with unleavened bread,« calling Leo IX both »Pope« and »Patriarch of Rome«, and Keroularios, »Patriarch of Constantinople«.[80] This was a remarkably Byzantine idea of the pentarchy, which had been codified at councils not accepted by the Church of the East.[81] Ibn Buṭlān had evidently placed himself under the authority of the Byzantine church.

Graf presented two arguments that this was a »Nestorian« text. The first is that Ibn Buṭlān interpreted the Eucharist as a symbolic, rather than literal, transformation of Christ's body and blood, in line with East Syrian authors like Babai the Great and Pseudo-George of Arbela.[82] This is an overstatement. Ibn Buṭlān followed Patristic precedent by using symbolic language to describe the Eucharist, but also affirmed its literal transformation into Christ's body and blood. Graf admitted as much. He dismissed the fact that Ibn Buṭlān repeatedly called the Eucharist the »body of the Lord« as a metaphor. However, this would have been a novel term to East Syrians, implying heretical Theopaschism.[83] Graf also found four intertexts between Ibn Buṭlān's *Treatise on the Eucharist* and Ibn al-Ṭayyib's *Commentary on the Gospels* in discussing Matthew's account of the Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-30).[84] However, seeing as none of these intertexts provided evidence of East Syrian theology, this merely indicates that Ibn Buṭlān had learned biblical exegesis from Ibn al-Ṭayyib, his teacher in Baghdad. In sum, Ibn Buṭlān cited no East Syrian authorities, provided scriptural exegesis that was unproblematic to his Byzantine audience, and gave arguments that accorded with Byzantine Christology and ecclesiology.

A letter written by the Byzantine polymath Michael Psellos provides possible evidence of Ibn Buṭlān's conversion. Scholars have pointed out the probable connection between Ibn Buṭlān and Psellos, for example in Psellos's reference in a letter to Keroularios to an individual

79 Holy Sepulchre ar. 12, fols. 283r-v.

80 Holy Sepulchre ar. 12, fol. 287r.

81 The fifth patriarchate, Jerusalem, was created at Chalcedon. The Pentarchy was formalized under Justinian. See Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions*, 54-66; Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter*, 117-130.

82 Graf, Eucharistielehre des Nestorianers, 50-51.

83 Graf, Eucharistielehre des Nestorianers, 51; Gero, Eucharistic Doctrine.

84 Graf, Eucharistielehre des Nestorianers, 175-177, 189-191.

from »Babylon« (likely Baghdad) who had come to study with him.[85] Both Psellos and Ibn Buṭlān were prominent intellectuals active in patriarchal and imperial circles, and Psellos was well-acquainted with ambassadors from Islamic polities.[86] Furthermore, in one letter written in the name of Emperor Monomachos, Psellos described his excitement for the upcoming baptism of the unnamed recipient of the letter.[87] He said that Monomachos himself will be the godfather, while Keroularios, Psellos, and every intellectual in the capital will be present, per the recipient's request. I identify Ibn Buṭlān as the recipient of this letter based on the circumstances: the letter was written to a heterodox scholar in high repute in Constantinople between 1047 and 1054.[88] The letter begins by praising the beauty, intelligence, and complexity of the recipient's previous letter. Few figures who were not already Byzantine Christians could impress Psellos with their Greek rhetoric. Although we have no evidence that Ibn Buṭlān could write beautiful, literary Greek, he was an erudite Arabic writer who may have utilized a translator like Keroularios's »skillful Arabic translator«, ʿĪsa.[89] Although rebaptism was not canonically necessary for »Nestorians« to convert according to the 95th Canon of the Quinisext Council (692), there are ample reports of canonically unnecessary rebaptism of Syrian Miaphysites, Armenians, and Latins in this period under the auspices of Keroularios.[90] The conversion of East Syrians to Byzantine Orthodoxy in this period was rare, but not unprecedented. For example, after an older student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, ʿAlī ibn ʿĪsā al-Kaḥḥāl, had become a Melkite, he had Melkite children throw pamphlets into East Syrian churches.[91] To expedite his integration into the Byzantine elite, Ibn Buṭlān likely chose to be rebaptized, with the emperor himself as his godfather.

Moreover, while in Constantinople, Ibn Buṭlān began residing in Byzantine Orthodox monasteries and writing texts for explicitly Christian audiences, in addition to taking a new name that does not appear in his earlier texts: Yuwānīs (يوانيس).[92] This was a transliteration of

85 Psellos, *Epistulae*, ed. Papaioannou, no. 111, ll. 93-96; Ibn Buṭlān, *Das Ärztebankett*, trans. Klein-Franke, 16-19; Volk, *Der medizinische Inhalt*, 15-20; Oltean, Ibn Buṭlān and the Byzantines, 363-364. Mavroudi's contention that Babylon refers to Cairo does not rule out Ibn Buṭlān: Mavroudi, Translations from Greek into Latin and Arabic, 50-51.

86 Oltean, Ibn Buṭlān and the Byzantines, 362-372. Oltean postulated that Ibn Buṭlān was Psellos's primary contact in Antioch and at St. Symeon's Monastery – where he speculates Ibn Buṭlān resided. However, there is no concrete evidence for this, in contrast to Psellos's known connections to religious and lay leaders around Antioch. See Oltean, 362-376; Glynias, Black Mountain; Cheynet, Michel Psellos et Antioche; Cheynet, L'administration provinciale, 52-54. In a letter to a *doux* of Antioch, Psellos relates praise he had heard from the ambassador of the Mirdāsid emirate in Aleppo: Psellos, *Epistulae*, no. 189, ll. 30-46; Cheynet, Michel Psellos et Antioche, 419.

87 Psellos, *Epistulae*, ed. Papaioannou, no. 185; Jeffreys and Lauxtermann, *Letters of Psellos*, 386.

88 Jeffreys and Lauxtermann, *Letters of Psellos*, 385-386.

89 Jeffreys and Lauxtermann suggest the possibility of a translation: Jeffreys and Lauxtermann, *Letters of Psellos*, 386.

90 Michael the Syrian, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3, ed. Chabot, 131; Matthew of Edessa, *Armenia and the Crusades*, trans. Dostourian, 84; Kolbaba, On the closing of the churches.

91 Nasrallah, *Histoire 3.1*, 156-158.

92 Yuwānīs appears in the *Treatise on the Eucharist* and the colophon to *Banquet of the Physicians*. Usāma ibn Munqidh calls him Yūḥannā: Graf, Eucharistielehre des Nestorianers, 52; Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38.6; Usāma ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-iʿtibār*, ed. Hitti, 183.

Ἰωάννης, rather than a more standard form of »John« used by Arabic-speaking Christians, Yaḥyā and Yūḥannā. Transliterating Greek names like this was a common practice among Melkites.[93] Yuwānīs was likely either Ibn Buṭlān's new baptismal name or his monastic name – though it is unclear when exactly he took the monastic habit. Although he had established himself in Constantinople as a diplomat and physician, Ibn Buṭlān transcended his foreign status by converting to the dominant Byzantine form of Christianity between 1051 and 1054.

A Melkite Physician and Monk in Syria

Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī provides a description of Ibn Buṭlān's last dozen years that other sources corroborate: after leaving Constantinople, Ibn Buṭlān went back and forth between Antioch and Aleppo, before dying as a monk in Antioch in 1066.[94]

Usāma ibn Munqidh (d. 1188) recounts stories that depict Ibn Buṭlān as a physician treating patients from his shop in Aleppo, surrounded by students.[95] He says that Ibn Buṭlān came into the service of his great-grandfather, the emir of Shayzar, Muqallad ibn Naṣr ibn Munqidh (d. 1059), at one point treating his son ʿAlī (Usāma's grandfather). Muqallad's death dates the stories between 1054 and 1059.[96] During this period, Ibn Buṭlān may also have been involved in building a hospital in Aleppo.[97] Ibn al-ʿAjamī tells a somewhat humorous story of how Ibn Buṭlān cured the knee of Kusrā, the *qāḍī* of Aleppo, by forcing him to begin walking again to escape the embarrassment of public nudity, a technique that Ibn Buṭlān deemed more »gentle« than remedies or poultices.[98] Around the same time, Ibn Buṭlān often visited the famous poet Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī (d. 1058) in nearby Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān, as emerges from a story about al-Maʿarrī's death: Ibn Buṭlān predicted that al-Maʿarrī would soon die because he had dictated in incorrect Arabic, a feat that Ibn Buṭlān knew was impossible for his erudite friend when healthy.[99] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa quotes a lament written not long thereafter, in which Ibn Buṭlān mourned the deaths of al-Maʿarrī, Ibn al-Ṭayyib, and a host

93 E.g. Yānī, an Arabic transliteration of Γιάννη, held by the translator Yānī ibn al-Duks and found in contemporary Melkite Syriac manuscripts: Glynias, Homiletic translation in Byzantine Antioch; Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts*, 322-325.

94 Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī, *Kunūz al-dhahab*, 1, ed. Shaʿath and Fāliḥ al-Bakkūr, 446-447; Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 294. His death date, the 8th of Shawwal, 458 AH (September 2, 1066) is given as a Friday but was actually a Sunday. Either the day of the week was incorrectly written or the year was. In the latter case, the two closest possibilities when the 8th of Shawwal was a Friday are 456 AH (September 23, 1064) and 464 AH (June 28, 1072).

95 Usāma ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-iʿtibār*, ed. Hitti, 183-185; Conrad, Ibn Butlān in Bilād Al-Shām, 136-137.

96 Usāma ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-iʿtibār*, ed. Hitti, 184. Conrad argued for the historicity of this anecdote because it reflected Usāma's family history: Conrad, Ibn Butlān in Bilād Al-Shām, 145.

97 Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī, *Kunūz al-dhahab*, 1, ed. Shaʿath and Fāliḥ al-Bakkūr, 445. Conrad considered this story of Ibn Buṭlān's hospital foundation in Aleppo ahistorical because of its similarity with the apocryphal story of al-Rāzī's foundation of the ʿAdudī hospital: Conrad, Ibn Butlān in Bilād Al-Shām, 137-138. However, Ibn Buṭlān, who worked at the ʿAdudī hospital, may have imitated its foundation myth.

98 Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī, *Kunūz al-dhahab*, 1, ed. Shaʿath and Fāliḥ al-Bakkūr, 446-447.

99 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāh ʿalā anbāh al-nuḥāh*, 1, ed. Ibrāhīm, 117; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughyat al-ṭalab fī tārīkh Ḥalab*, 2, ed. Zakkār, 910.

of other Arabic scientists, poets, Muslim jurists, and other scholars.[100] A decade after leaving Baghdad, Ibn Buṭlān was still maintaining connections with peers in Baghdad and elsewhere in the Islamic world – but, like him, many were getting old.

Ibn Buṭlān lived his last years in Antioch, a center of Christian Arabic scholarship under Byzantine control.[101] In Antioch, he taught students, became a monk, and wrote medical texts for diverse audiences. In so doing, he helped invigorate interest among Antiochene Melkites in transmitting Arabic science into Byzantine contexts.

Ibn Buṭlān had enjoyed his previous visit to Antioch in 1049, after Ibn Sharāra had driven him from Aleppo. In his most detailed letter sent to Hilāl al-Ṣābiʾ, Ibn Buṭlān described Antioch's landscape and walls, focusing on aspects of its religious and intellectual environment that interested him, e.g. a hospital, the well-functioning water system that served both baths and terraced gardens, and, in most detail, the Cathedral of St. Kassianos (al-Qusyān).[102] He further described his awe in visiting the ascetic landscape of the Black Mountain outside the city, lavishing praise on the wealth of the Monastery of St. Symeon the Younger.[103]

Ibn Buṭlān found compatriots in the local Melkite physicians of Antioch, whom he depicted as assured of their superiority to Greek-speaking »Roman« doctors.[104] He positively referenced two Antiochene physicians in his *Egyptian Discourse*, in one case relating a story from the Antiochene physician Abū Naṣr ibn al-ʿAṭṭār about a greedy Roman physician who confused basic terminology of Galenic medicine.[105] Ibn Buṭlān praised this Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār to Hilāl al-Ṣābiʾ, calling him Antioch's »judge of judges«, and saying he »has a hand in the sciences and is eloquent and discerning«.[106] His patronymic, »ibn al-ʿAṭṭār«, means »son of the perfumer«, notable due to the appearance in Greek manuscripts around this time of recipes for Arabic and Persian perfumes.[107] Indeed, the aforementioned Empress Zoe was famously interested in making perfumes and incense, and an ointment recipe of hers is preserved in a late 11th-century manuscript collection that also included Arabic-influenced pharmacological texts written by a student of Ibn Buṭlān's in Antioch, Symeon Seth.[108]

Ibn Buṭlān also befriended Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī in Antioch, a Melkite who had come to Antioch in 1014/15 from Egypt, fleeing the persecutions of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥākim.[109] Yaḥyā is famous today as a historian.[110] However, like Ibn Buṭlān, he was also a bilingual physician who was a fount of Greek knowledge to the Islamic world and of Arabic knowl-

100 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.38.4; Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 62-64.

101 See Roberts, *Reason and Revelation*.

102 See Eger, (Re)Mapping medieval Antioch, 117-127.

103 Glynias, Black Mountain, 415-416; Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 19-20 (Arabic).

104 On Roman ethnicity in Byzantium, see Kaldellis, *Romanland*.

105 Schacht and Meyerhof, *Ibn Butlan and Ibn Ridwan*, 57-59.

106 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 297.

107 Bennett, *Medicine and Pharmacy*, 128-146.

108 Mavroudi, Empress Zoe; Bennett, *Medicine and Pharmacy*, 49-80.

109 Forsyth, *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle*, 7-11.

110 See Forsyth, *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle*.

edge to the Byzantine Empire. At one point Ibn Buṭlān's old enemy Ibn Riḍwān wrote to Yaḥyā, asking for information about the Greek Hippokratic corpus; Yaḥyā translated a list of Hippokrates' Greek works into Arabic for him, which Ibn Riḍwān proudly quoted as a mark of his own ancient learning.[111] In *Why Physicians*, Ibn Buṭlān praised Yaḥyā as a »master in our time, an authority in the sciences, preeminent in religion and refinement, [who] has splendid works«, and shared a story that Yaḥyā told him in Antioch that demonstrated his shared derision for Roman physicians. Yaḥyā described how a Roman physician slowly killed his patient, »a servant of the emperor [and] Roman youth«, with improper treatments.[112] Yaḥyā was an old man by 1063 CE, when Ibn Buṭlān wrote this text. He lived at least a few years longer, as his chronicle is reported to have run until 1066 CE.[113] I have begun to study his commentary on Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq's *Questions on Medicine for Scholars*, which is extant in a single, unstudied manuscript, (Rabat) Kattānī 396. The existence of Yaḥyā's commentary on this work, an essential handbook of Arabic Galenic medicine, indicates that, like Ibn Buṭlān, Yaḥyā was actively working to bring the Baghdadi medical tradition into Byzantine Antioch.

Ibn Buṭlān also trained students in Antioch who could navigate the Greek and Arabic traditions, two of whom we can discuss in detail: Symeon Seth and Yūḥannā al-Anṭākī.

A prominent intellectual known for his Greek philosophical, pharmacological, and astronomical writings that drew on Arabic sources, Symeon Seth was a Melkite scholar of Antioch who became a court astrologer to multiple Byzantine emperors. It has been demonstrated that Seth studied under Ibn Buṭlān in Antioch in the 1050s or 1060s, before being patronized by Michael VII Doukas (r. 1071-1078) in Constantinople.[114] While Seth seems to have borrowed arguments from Ibn Buṭlān's *Banquet of the Physicians* in his *Refutation of Galen*,[115] the most unmistakable evidence of their pedagogical relationship is Seth's Arabo-Greek translation of excerpts from Ibn Buṭlān's *Taqwīm al-Siḥḥa*. Pietrobelli and Cronier argued that Seth used his teacher's book to make this elliptical paraphrase of the *Taqwīm* for his own private consultation.[116] Seth brought the Baghdadi tradition to a Byzantine Greek-reading audience through such translations – a topic I take up elsewhere.[117]

One other Antiochene is referred to as a »student of Ibn Buṭlān« in the heading for his only known text: the priest Yūḥannā al-Anṭākī. In this fragment of a philosophical work excerpted by al-Muʾtaman ibn al-ʿAssāl (d. before 1286) in his Copto-Arabic encyclopedia, Yūḥannā used the Baghdadi vocabulary of Aristotelian metaphysics to explain how to describe causation in different ways.[118] Samir has argued that he aimed to philosophically justify the Trinity by building on arguments of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, which he learned from Ibn Buṭlān. As an

111 Rosenthal, An eleventh-century list.

112 Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *Literary History of Medicine*, 2.1, ed. Savage-Smith *et al.*, sec. 10.36.

113 Forsyth, *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle*, 16-21; Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī, *Histoire III*, 3, ed. Kratchkovsky, 374-377.

114 Pietrobelli and Cronier, Ibn Buṭlān and Symeon Seth.

115 Cronier *et al.*, Galien en procès à Byzance, 96-97.

116 Pietrobelli and Cronier, Ibn Buṭlān and Symeon Seth.

117 Glynias, Symeon Seth.

118 Ibn al-ʿAssāl, *Majmūaʿ uṣūl al-dīn*, 1, ed. Pirone, 380-382.

Antiochene priest, Yūḥannā was assuredly a Melkite.[119] Ibn Buṭlān's circle in Antioch likely included other Melkite clerics like Yūḥannā and lay scholars like Seth.

Ibn Buṭlān also disseminated Baghdadi ideas of medical praxis in Antioch by writing texts like *Why Physicians* and his *Medical Manual for the Use of Monks and Country People*. The colophon of the lost *Why Physicians*, like numerous passages from it referenced in this chapter, was preserved by later encyclopedists. It says that Ibn Buṭlān completed the text in 1063 CE, when he was »exhausted in body and broken in mind, while gathering materials to build a hospital in Antioch«.[120] As we have seen, this work, written near the end of Ibn Buṭlān's life, exemplified his larger intellectual project to promote Baghdad's contributions to Greek science.

Samira Jadon argues that Ibn Buṭlān likewise wrote his *Medical Manual* in Antioch, after he had become a monk and encountered medical issues that arise without access to urban hospitals.[121] The first 40 of the 42 chapters of the *Medical Manual* were a shortened, edited version of Ibn Sīnā's famous medical *Canon*, thus bringing the essentials of cutting-edge Arabic medicine to monks and other Melkites in Antioch.[122] He combined this with dietary and pharmacological prescriptions explicitly targeted at Christians and monks in two original chapters at the end of the text. In Chapter 41, Ibn Buṭlān provided recipes for what monks and Christians should eat when sick or fasting. This chapter circulated independently of the larger text, for example in two manuscripts of the recipe compilation, *The Description of Familiar Foods*.[123] In Chapter 42, »which incenses are used in the churches«, Ibn Buṭlān began by describing a »Melkite« variety of incense, then proceeded to describe other types of incense and their use – notable, given the aforementioned Constantinopolitan interest in Arabic incense recipes. Though he explicitly wrote this for a Christian audience, manuscript evidence indicates that the *Medical Manual* circulated in Islamicate medical settings.[124] Ibn Buṭlān was disseminating Arabic scientific paradigms and Baghdadi medical innovations to the Byzantine world, while maintaining a broader Arabic audience within the Islamic world.

Conclusions

A Baghdadi intellectual of the highest caliber, Ibn Buṭlān died as an honored Byzantine monk in Antioch in 1066, facts we ironically know from reports by his old rival, Ibn Sharāra, and his descendants in Aleppo.[125] Through his multilingualism, his promotion of his pedigree as a physician, his deployment of his Christian identity, and his integration into Arabic literary networks, Ibn Buṭlān was able to navigate both the Byzantine and Islamic worlds. He joined other Melkite scholars in Antioch, like Ibn al-Aṭṭār and Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī, in seeking

119 Samir, Les auteurs et les oeuvres des XIème et XIIème siècles, 214-215; Nasrallah, *Histoire 3.1*, 253-254.

120 Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī, *Kunūz al-dhahab*, 1, ed. Shaʿath and Fāliḥ al-Bakkūr, 445-446.

121 Jadon, *Ibn Buṭlān's Medical Manual*, 49-55. I look forward to David Baldi's upcoming work on this text.

122 Jadon, *Ibn Buṭlān's Medical Manual*, 43-46.

123 Perry and Arberry, Description of familiar foods, 443-450; Lewicka, *Food and Foodways*, 37 n. 50.

124 Jadon, *Ibn Buṭlān's Medical Manual*, 82-85.

125 Ibn al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Lippert, 315; Sibṭ ibn al-ʿAjamī, *Kunūz al-dhahab*, 1, ed. Shaʿath and Fāliḥ al-Bakkūr, 447.

to offer the intellectual traditions of Baghdad to a Byzantine audience. Their expertise, as they claimed it, was based on their ability to navigate both the Arabic and Greek traditions, leading to widespread disdain for monolingual scholars, whether Arabic-speaking or Greek-speaking. Ibn Buṭlān's student Symeon Seth would continue his legacy of championing the Baghdadi tradition by catalyzing Byzantine interest in translating Arabic scientific knowledge into Greek.[126]

126 See Glynias, Symeon Seth; Pietrobelli and Cronier, Ibn Buṭlān and Symeon Seth.

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