

**THE LAMENTS  
OF THE PHILOSOPHERS  
OVER ALEXANDER THE GREAT  
ACCORDING TO  
*THE BLESSED COMPENDIUM*  
OF AL-MAKĪN IBN AL-‘AMĪD**

The thirteenth-century Christian Arabic historian Ġirġis al-Makīn ibn al-‘Amīd — the author of the two-volume universal history entitled *The Blessed Compendium* (*al-Maġmū‘ al-mubārak*) — was a rather paradoxical figure. Frequently defined as “a Coptic historian,”<sup>1</sup> he was not a Copt, and even though his *Blessed Compendium* is well known not only in Eastern Christian and Muslim historiography, but also in Western scholarship since its inception, the first part of this historical work still remains unpublished. This first part, however, contains vast material that would undoubtedly interest scholars studying the intellectual heritage of the medieval Middle East. The following article deals with one section of al-Makīn’s famous work.

**THE AUTHOR: HIS ORIGINS AND LIFE TRAJECTORY**

Al-Makīn’s autobiographical note on his origins was initially appended to his history and was then published as part of the *Historia*

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(1) See, for instance: Cl. CAHEN, R. G. COQUIN, “al-Makīn b. al-‘Amīd,” in: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition, 11 vols. & Suppl., Leiden, 1986–2004, vol. 6, p. 143:2; S. Kh. SAMIR, “al-Makīn, Ibn al-‘Amīd,” in: *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. by A. S. ATIYA, 8 vols., New York, Toronto, Oxford [etc.], 1991, vol. 5, p. 1513; F.-Ch. MUTH, “Fātimids,” in: *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, 4 vols., Wiesbaden, 2004–2010, vol. 2, p. 508:2; S. MOAWAD, “Al-Makīn Jirjis ibn al-‘Amīd (the elder),” in: *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, 5 vols., ed. D. THOMAS, B. ROGGEMA, A. MALLETT [et al.], Leiden, Boston, 2009–2012, vol. 4, p. 566.

*Saracenica* edited by Thomas van Erpe (Erpenius; 1584–1624)<sup>2</sup> which contained the second part of *The Blessed Compendium*. A chapter on al-Makīn ibn al-‘Amīd can also be found in the *Tālī* (the “Continuation” of the *Biographical Dictionary* (*Kitāb Wafayāt al-a‘yān*) by Ibn Ḥallikān, 1211–1282), compiled by the Christian Arabic author Faḍl Allāh aṣ-Ṣuqā‘ī (1226–1326), who served as a secretary in the Mamluk administration in Damascus.<sup>3</sup> We also know that a biographical account of al-Makīn is present in some *manuscript* copies of the sixteenth volume of the *Biographical Lexicon* of Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Ḥalīl ibn Aybak aṣ-Ṣafadī (1297–1363), though not in printed editions.<sup>4</sup> The Paris manuscript of the *Tālī* (dated AH 733/AD 1332) once belonged to aṣ-Ṣafadī,<sup>5</sup> and his account of al-Makīn’s life was probably borrowed from the manuscript of aṣ-Ṣuqā‘ī’s work. Later on, a Mamluk historian and geographer Taqī ad-Dīn Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī (1364–1442) presented these accounts in his *Great Alphabetical Book* (*Kitāb al-muqaffā al-kabīr*).<sup>6</sup> While comparing these medieval bibliographical sources on al-Makīn, one can get a picture of his origins and life.

(2) *Historia Saracenica qua res gestae Muslimorum*, Arabicè olim exarata à Georgio Elmacino... et Latinè reddita operâ ac studio Thomae ERPENII, Lugduni Batavorum, 1625, pp. 299–300.

(3) Faḍl Allāh IBN AṢ-SUQĀ‘Ī, *Tālī Kitāb Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, ed. by J. SUBLET, Damas, 1974, pp. ١١١–١١٠, 136–138 (§ 167).

(4) MS Bodleian Library DCLXXIII; J. URI, *Bibliothecæ Bodleianæ codicum manuscriptorum orientalium*, Oxonii, 1787, pt. 1, p. 153:1 [Cod. Mss. Ar.]; A. NICOLL, *Bibliothecæ Bodleianæ codicum manuscriptorum Orientalium catalogi partis secundae volumen primum Arabicos complectens confecit...*, Oxonii, 1821, pp. 502–503; Cl. CAHEN, “À propos d’al-Makīn ibn al-‘Amīd,” *Arabica*, 6 (1959), p. 198; MS Bibliothèque nationale de France ar. 2066 (fol. 122r–112v); W. Mac Guckin DE SLANE, baron, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, Paris, 1883–1895, p. 367:2; IBN AṢ-SUQĀ‘Ī, *Tālī*, p. ١١١ (note 1), 136 (commentary to § 167). In the printed editions of the *Biographical Lexicon*, there is no chapter on al-Makīn, and his name is not listed in the index (*Das biographische Lexikon des Ṣalāḥaddīn Ḥalīl ibn Aibak aṣ-Ṣafadī*, t. 1–30 (Bibliotheca Islamica), Wiesbaden, Berlin, Beirut, 1962–2010; also *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, ed. by Aḥmad AL-ARNAWUT, Turkī [AL-]MUṢṬAFA, Bayrūt, 2000. On the author see: E. K. ROWSON, “al-Ṣafadī,” in: *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography (1350–1850)*, ed. J. E. LOWRY, D. J. STEWART, Wiesbaden, 2009, pp. 341–357.

(5) MS Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ar. 2061; DE SLANE, *Catalogue*, p. 367:1. The edition prepared by J. SUBLET based on this manuscript. The editor states it is “un *unicum*,” IBN AṢ-SUQĀ‘Ī, *Tālī*, p. XXVIII.

(6) Taqī ad-Dīn Aḥmad AL-MAQRĪZĪ, *Kitāb al-muqaffā al-kabīr*, ed. M. YA‘LĀWĪ, 8 vols., Bayrūt, 1991, vol. 3, pp. ١٦–١٨.

Al-Makīn ibn al-‘Amīd’s “distant ancestor”, as al-Maqrīzī puts it, came to Egypt from Tikrit, and al-Makīn himself is called “a Syrian, Christian, originating from Tikrīt” in the *Great Alphabetical Book*. The historian’s life is narrated there as follows: “al-Makīn Ğirġis ibn al-‘Amīd, the hero of the present biography, was born on a Saturday, in the month of Rajab in the year 602. He served in the military *dīwān* in Cairo, then in Damascus, and proved himself in the time of [Sultan] Yūsuf an-Nāšir. Afterwards [he served] up until [the reign of Sultan] aḏ-Zāhir Baybars. He was the immediate servant of Amir ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn Ṭaybars, the governor of Syria, and thus came to prominence.” The biography of al-Makīn compiled by aṣ-Ṣuqā’ī continues the narrative as follows: “One of the scribes who helped him in the military *dīwān* was once overcome with envy against him. He forged a letter and planted it upon his desk, and then reported him, so as to provoke [his superiors’] ire against him and then to occupy his place. Al-Makīn was caught, and the informer’s report indeed caused his imprisonment, punishment, and prolonged suffering: he was imprisoned for fifteen years. [Then] al-Makīn was released. He left his affairs and moved to Damascus, where he died in the year 672.” Recalculating the dates, provided in the narrative according to the Hijra calendar, results in AD 1205 as al-Makīn’s date of birth and AD 1273 as the date of his death.<sup>7</sup> The political disturbances mentioned in the accounts of al-Makīn’s biography evidently threatened the Mamluk government in Syria and were probably caused by Mongol invasion of the region. It is obvious that the officers of the military *dīwān* were held responsible for this before the Mamluk authorities in Cairo. Al-Maqrīzī concludes his account of al-Makīn with the following description of the latter’s principal work: “He authored a comprehensive *History* which is not without merit.”

### THE BLESSED COMPENDIUM

The second part of *The Blessed Compendium* that contains “Islamic history” was edited, as mentioned above, by Thomas van Erpe and later became the subject of additional publications,<sup>8</sup> while its first part

(7) CAHEN, COQUIN, “al-Makīn b. al-‘Amīd,” p. 143:2.

(8) Cl. CAHEN, “La ‘Chronique des Ayyoubides’ d’al-Makīn b. al-‘Amīd,” *Bulletin des Études Orientales*, 15 (1955–1957), pp. 109–184; *Al-Makīn Ibn al-‘Amīd. Chronique des Ayyoubides (602–658/1205–6–1259–60)*, ed. A.-M. EDDÉ, F. MICHEAU (Documents relatifs à l’histoire des croisades, XVI), [Paris], 1994.

comprising a series of chapters on various events from the creation of the world to the eleventh year of Heraclius' reign still remains unpublished. One of the manuscripts used in the present study — kept in Munich — was to have the text of al-Makīn's work laid out in two columns: the one containing the original Arabic text, and the other, its Latin translation that was to be prepared, as the title page claims, by Johann Heinrich Hottinger (1620–1667); yet the column intended for the translation remained empty. Only some brief extracts from *The Blessed Compendium* were published by J. H. Hottinger in his book *Smegma Orientale*.<sup>9</sup> In addition to this publication, one can also find an English translation of the chapter on Alexander the Great, prepared by E. A. W. Budge (1857–1934)<sup>10</sup> from an Ethiopic version of al-Makīn's history,<sup>11</sup> as well as an edition of some fragments from the final section of the first part of the history prepared by C. F. Seybold (1859–1921)<sup>12</sup> and based on several manuscripts, including one in Garshūnī. A fragment from the beginning of the first part of *The Blessed Compendium*, also in Garshūnī, was published in facsimile as a sample Garshūnī page in the *Specimina Codicum Orientalium* by Cardinal Eugène Tisserant (1884–1972).<sup>13</sup> In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an integral critical edition of the work was planned by Gaston Wiet (1887–1971), who published some observations on the manuscript tradition of *The Blessed Compendium*,<sup>14</sup> but sadly the plan was never realized. The present author has previously published Russian trans-

(9) J. H. HOTTINGER, *Smegma Orientale: Sordibus Barbarismi*, Heidelberg, 1658, pp. 206 ff. (passim).

(10) E. A. W. BUDGE, *The Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*, London, 1896, p. 355–385.

(11) On the Ethiopian version of al-Makīn's history see: U. PIETRUSCHKA, "Giyorgis Wäldä 'Amid," *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, 4 vols., Wiesbaden, 2004–2010, vol. 2, pp. 812:2–814:1 and M. KROPP, "Arabisch-äthiopische Übersetzungstechnik am Beispiel der *Zena Ayhud (Yosippon)* und des *Tarikä Wäldä-'Amid*," *ZDMG* 136 (1986), pp. 314–346.

(12) C. F. SEYBOLD, "Zu El Makīn's Weltchronik," *ZDMG* 64 (1910), pp. 140–153.

(13) E. TISSERANT, *Specimina Codicum Orientalium*, Bonnae, 1914, plate 32.

(14) J. MASPERO, Ad. FORTESCUE, G. WIET, *Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie depuis la mort de l'Empereur Anastase jusqu'à la reconciliation des Églises Jacobites (518–616)* (Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études; Sciences historiques et philologiques, 237), Paris, 1923, pp. 219–222, n. 2; CAHEN, COQUIN, "al-Makīn b. al-'Amīd," p. 143:2.

lations of the chapters on Emperors Claudius, Aurelian,<sup>15</sup> Zeno,<sup>16</sup> and Anastasius,<sup>17</sup> as well as a preliminary edition of the laments of the philosophers discussed below.<sup>18</sup>

Al-Makīn's history is arranged as a series of biographies of famous figures of world history including descriptions of events that took place during their lifetime. Though some confusion and chronological misinterpretation often occurs, al-Makīn's work is still worth studying, especially in those cases where he retells familiar stories differently or even describes otherwise unknown events. Tentatively, one could define *The Blessed Compendium* as a compilation rather than an original historical work, but the importance of al-Makīn's sources prompts us to consider his œuvre as a document of considerable historical value.

The first part of *The Blessed Compendium* opens with a theological and philosophical introduction that describes the creation of the world and its orderly arrangement. There follows a series of accounts of the biblical patriarchs (Seth, Enos, Kenan etc.) each of which has a title indicating the respective patriarch's number "after Adam" (the same system will be employed in chapter titles unrelated to biblical history). The sequence of accounts of the patriarchs is interrupted with a discussion of the seven "climes" and of numerous "wonders of the world." With the appearance of the kings of "the sons of Israel,"

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(15) Н. Н. СЕЛЕЗНЕВ, "«Коптский историк» — потомок выходца из Тикрита: Ал-Макйн ибн ал-'Амйд и его «История»" ["The Coptic Historian" — A descendant of an emigrant from Tikrit — al-Makīn ibn al-'Amīd and his *History*], *Точки/Пункта*, 1–2/10 (2011), pp. 45–53.

(16) Н. Н. СЕЛЕЗНЕВ, "Хроника или исторический роман? Царствование Зинона и события на Востоке по «Благословенному собранию» ал-Макйна ибн ал-'Амйда" ["A Chronicle or A Historical Romance? The reign of Zeno and the events in the East according to *The Blessed Compendium* of al-Makīn ibn al-'Amīd"], in: *Aeternitas: Сборник статей по греко-римскому и христианскому Египту*, под ред. А. А. ВОЙТЕНКО, Москва, 2012, pp. 120–148.

(17) Н. Н. СЕЛЕЗНЕВ, "Царствование императора Анастасия по «Благословенному собранию» ал-Макина ибн ал-'Амида" ["The Reign of Anastasius according to *The Blessed Compendium* of al-Makīn ibn al-'Amīd"], *Религиоведение*, 1 (2013), pp. 50–59.

(18) Н. Н. СЕЛЕЗНЕВ, "Изречения философов над гробом Александра Великого по «Истории» ал-Макйна ибн ал-'Амйда" ["The Laments of the Philosophers over Alexander the Great according to *The Blessed Compendium* of al-Makīn ibn al-'Amīd"], *История философии*, 18 (2013), pp. 248–267.

al-Makīn's history follows their succession. Along with the information borrowed from the biblical books, al-Makīn uses works of other historians who had earlier dealt with the same subjects. He usually refers to them as follows: "as Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq [*sic*] says in his *History...*," "as Rūzbihān says in his *History...*," "as [Agapius] of Mabbug (*al-Manbiḡī*) says...," "as Epiphanius of Cyprus says...," "as Ibn ar-Rāhib says...," etc. Babylonian kings (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar) and then Persian kings (with a special reference to Darius) appear in the context of biblical history. The Persians are followed by Alexander the Great and then the Ptolemaic dynasty. After the Ptolemies, the author mentions Roman rulers, beginning with "Augustus Caesar, the one hundred and seventh after Adam." Roman rule serves as a background for New Testament events and the accounts of the apostles. The series of chapters on the "Roman" (*ar-Rūm*) kings covers the Byzantine emperors from Constantine the Great to Heraclius. The chapter on Heraclius concludes with the advent of Muḥammad, and there the first part of *The Blessed Compendium* comes a close. The second part begins with the story of Muḥammad and ends, as does the entire history of al-Makīn, with Sultan Baybars' ascent to power (1260).

### THE CHAPTER ON ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE LAMENTS OF THE PHILOSOPHERS

In the beginning of the chapter on "the ninety second from Adam: Alexander, son of Philip the Greek, the Macedonian," al-Makīn states that other authors' accounts of Alexander, who bore the title *Dū l-qarnayn* ("the two-horned one"), are quite numerous. He continues his account of Alexander with a long narrative of Alexander's life and exploits. He reports that the young Macedonian ruler was involved in a conflict with Darius, but thanks to Aristotle's wise advice, astrological prognoses, and powerful amulets, Alexander managed to defeat the Persians, while remaining innocent of the death of the Persian king Darius. He then married Darius' daughter and magnanimously took care of his mother. Al-Makīn then tells us the story of Alexander's establishing control over Babylon, his triumph over the kings of India and China, and his building the "gates" against Gog and

Magog.<sup>19</sup> A plot against the great conqueror in Macedonia resulted in his poisoning. Al-Makīn's report of Alexander's death is followed by the laments of the philosophers, after which the establishing of the Ptolemaic dynasty is mentioned. The chapter concludes with an account of the many "books of Aristotle" on astrology and magic. One can get a more detailed idea of the contents of this chapter by consulting E. A. W. Budge's aforementioned English translation of its Ethiopic version. It seems to be commonly accepted by scholars that the narrative section of the chapter was compiled mainly from material borrowed from the famous *Alexander Romance*<sup>20</sup> and partly from the Hermetic work *al-Iṣṭamāhīs*.<sup>21</sup>

Collections of the philosophers' laments over Alexander gained an enormous popularity in the medieval literature of both East and West.<sup>22</sup> Within Arabic literature, Sebastian Brock has pointed out two main traditions of such collections: the Muslim and the Christian.<sup>23</sup> In the Muslim tradition, the laments of the philosophers over Alexander can be found in the *History* of al-Ya'qūbī (d. 897/8),<sup>24</sup> the *Meadows of*

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(19) E. VAN DONZEL, A. SCHMIDT, *Gog and Magog in Early Eastern Christian and Islamic Sources*, Leiden, Boston, 2009.

(20) E. A. W. BUDGE, *The History of Alexander the Great, Being the Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes: Being the Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes*, Cambridge, 1889; K. Th. VAN BLADEL, "The Syriac Sources of the Early Arabic Narratives of Alexander," in: *Memory as History: The Legacy of Alexander in Asia*, ed. H. P. RAY, D. T. POTTS, New Delhi, 2007, pp. 54–75; R. STONEMAN, "Alexander the Great in the Arabic Tradition," in: *The Ancient Novel and Beyond*, ed. S. PANAYOTAKIS, M. ZIMMERMAN, W. KEULEN (Mnemosyne, 241), Leiden, Boston, 2003, pp. 3–21; F. DOUFIKAR-AERTS, "The Last Days of Alexander' in an Arabic Popular Romance of al-Iskandar," in: *The Ancient Novel and Beyond*, pp. 23–35.

(21) M. PLESSNER, "al-Makīn," in: *E. J. Brill's First Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1913–1936*, 8 vols. & Suppl., Leiden, 1993, vol. 5, p. 173:1.

(22) For a survey of such collections see S. BROCK, "The Laments of the Philosophers over Alexander in Syriac," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 15:2 (1970), pp. 205–218 and W. HERTZ, "Aristoteles beim Tode Alexanders," in: *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, ed. F. VON DER LEYEN. Stuttgart, Berlin, 1905, pp. 130–153.

(23) BROCK, "The Laments of the Philosophers," p. 207.

(24) *Ibn Wādhih qui dicitur al-Ja'qūbī Historiae*, ed. by M. Th. HOUTSMA, 2 parts, Lugduni Batavorum, 1883, pt. 1, p. ١١٢ ff.

*Gold* of al-Masʿūdī (d. c. 896–956),<sup>25</sup> the *History of Persian Kings* of al-Taʿālibī (961–1038),<sup>26</sup> *The Choicest Maxims and Best Sayings* of al-Mubaššir ibn Fātik (c. 1020–1087),<sup>27</sup> the *Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects* of aš-Šahrastānī (1076–1153),<sup>28</sup> and the *Limit of Desire in the Arts of Literature* of an-Nuwayrī (1279–1332).<sup>29</sup> Within Christian Arabic literature, they can be found in the *Sayings of the Philosophers* attributed to Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (809–873),<sup>30</sup> in the long recension of the *History* of Eutychius of Alexandria also known as Saʿīd ibn al-Bīṭrīq/Baṭrīq (877–940) or, in other words, in the recension of *Pseudo-Eutychius*,<sup>31</sup> in the *Book of Histories* of Abū Šākir ibn ar-Rāhib (1200/10–1290/5),<sup>32</sup> and in *The Blessed Compendium* of al-Makīn ibn al-ʿAmīd (1205–1273). It is more than probable that these two lists are incomplete, and other witnesses to such collections exist. An Arabic

(25) MAÇOUDI, *Les prairies d'or*, ed. C. BARBIER DE MEYNARD and A. PAVET DE COURTEILLE, 9 vols., Paris, 1861–1877, vol. 2, pp. 252 ff.

(26) Abou Manšoūr ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Moḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl AL-THA-ʿALIBI, *Histoire des rois des Perses*, ed. H. ZOTENBERG, Paris, 1900, pp. 450 ff.; F. ROSENTHAL, *The Classical Heritage in Islam*. London, New York, 1992, pp. 120–144.

(27) Abū-l-Wafāʾ al-Mubaššir IBN FĀTIK, *Muhtār al-ḥikam wa-maḥāsīn al-kalim*, ed. by ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān BADAWĪ, Bayrūt, 1980, pp. ٢٤٠ ff. and ٢٩٦ ff. After quoting several of the philosophers' sayings about Alexander, al-Mubaššir ibn Fātik remarks: "I have quoted these and the rest of the sayings about him in my extensive *History* that contains everything in a complete fashion" (p. ٢٤٠).

(28) *Kitāb al-mīlal wa-n-niḥal. Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects*, by Muhammad al-Shahrastānī, ed. W. CURETON, Parts 1–2, London, 1842–1846, pt. 2, pp. ٣٣١ ff.

(29) Šihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Waḥhāb AN-NUWAYRĪ, *Nihāyat al-arab fi funūn al-adab*, ed. Yūsuf AṬ-ṬAWĪL, ʿAlī Muḥammad HĀŠIM, 33 vols., Bayrūt, 2004, vols. 15–16, pp. ١٩٧–١٩٦.

(30) Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq AL-ʿIBĀDĪ, *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, ed. ʿAbd ar-Ramān BADAWĪ, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm ANŠĀRĪ, Aš-Šaffāḥ al-Kuwayt, 1985<sup>٩٨</sup>. See also: M. ZAKERI, "Before Aristotle became Aristotle: Pseudo-Aristotelian aphorisms in *Ādāb al-falāsifa*," in: *Islamic Thought in the Middle Ages: Studies in Text, Transmission and Translation, in honour of Hans Daiber*, ed. A. AKASOY, W. RAVEN, Leiden, Boston, 2008, pp. 649–696.

(31) Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini *Annales*, ed. Ed. POCOCKE, Oxoniae, 1656 (repr.: 1658), pp. 287 ff.; Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini *Annales*, ed. L. CHEIKHO. Parts 1–2 (CSCO, ScrAr, Ser. 3, vol. 6), Beirut, 1906, pp. ٨٤–٨٣.

(32) BUDGE, *The Life and Exploits*, pp. 398–400.



version of the collection of laments of the philosophers is also found in the Samaritan Chronicle of Abū-l-Faḥ,<sup>33</sup> which seems to be closer to the Muslim tradition. The Persian<sup>34</sup> and the Turkish<sup>35</sup> versions are also worth mentioning. It is remarkable that the Persian version is preserved as part of Ferdowsī's (935–1020) *Shāh-nāmeḥ*.<sup>36</sup> In Ferdowsī's poetic text, one can find some elements characteristic of the Muslim tradition of the sayings. A publication of the Syriac version of the sayings is based on a very late East-Syriac manuscript (Alqosh, 1907), the only one extant.<sup>37</sup> The structure and contents of this collection are similar to those of the Arabic version of Pseudo-Euthychius, but it is hardly possible to make any definite conclusions concerning the relations between these two witnesses to the sayings.

Thus, much remains unknown regarding the complex history of this text. We do not know when and in what language a collection of the philosophers' laments over Alexander was first added to the report of his death in the *Alexander Romance*. It is also unknown how the "initial" Arabic version (or, possibly, several "initial" versions independent of each other) appeared. Within the Muslim tradition, all the aforementioned collections differ from one another, and we are unable, as yet, to chart a stemma of dependences. It is only possible to point out some common elements of composition and phraseology and thus to suggest that some anthology (or anthologies, similar to one another) of philosophical sentences circulated in among Muslim intellectuals and this anthology (or anthologies) provided a common source for the later compilers.

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(33) Abulfathi *Annales Samaritani*, ed. by Ed. VILMAR, Gothae, 1865, pp. 92 ff.; А. С. ЖАМКОЧЯН, *Самаритянская хроника Абу-л-Фатха из собрания Российской Национальной Библиотеки* [*The Samaritan Chronicle of Abū-l-Faḥ from the Collection of the National Library of Russia*], Москва, 1995, p. 92.

(34) J. VON HAMMER-PURGSTALL, *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*, Wien, 1818, p. 335.

(35) J. VON HAMMER-PURGSTALL, *Geschichte der Osmanischen Dichtkunst bis auf unsere Zeit*. 4 vols., Pesth, 1836–1838, vol. 1, p. 103.

(36) ФИРДОУСИ, *Шāх-нāме, Критический текст* [Ferdowsī, *Shāh-nāmeḥ*, A Critical Text], изд. М.-Н. О. ОСМАНОВ, А. НУШИНА (Памятники литературы народов Востока, Тексты, Большая серия II), Москва, 1968, т. 7, § 46<sup>1</sup>·Λ.

(37) BROCK, "The Laments of the Philosophers," pp. 205–218.

In the Christian Arabic tradition, the problem of establishing filiation can only partially be resolved. On the one hand, there are significant differences in both extent and composition between the text of the philosophers' sayings attributed to Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq<sup>38</sup> and that found in the *History* of Pseudo-Eutychius of Alexandria. On the other hand, it is quite probable that al-Makīn borrowed his collection of the laments of the philosophers over Alexander from the *Book of Histories* of Ibn ar-Rāhib, because al-Makīn's collection is nearly identical with Ibn ar-Rāhib's. Moreover, as mentioned above, there are numerous references to Ibn ar-Rāhib in al-Makīn's *Blessed Compendium*.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, one can be quite certain that the text of the sayings included in Ibn ar-Rāhib's *Book of Histories* is an abridged reworking of the collection of the laments found in the *History* of Pseudo-Eutychius of Alexandria. In the original *History* of Eutychius (which is shorter than that of Pseudo-Eutychius), we find no mention of the collection of the philosophers' sayings.<sup>40</sup> The author of the collection of the laments found in *Pseudo-Eutychius'* work is, therefore, unknown. Was Ibn ar-Rāhib the author of the abridged and reworked version of the collection of the philosophers' laments which was borrowed by al-Makīn or did he borrow it from someone else's compilation that served as an intermediary between him and the *History* of Pseudo-Eutychius? This remains uncertain. The text of the *History* of Pseudo-Eutychius published by Ed. Pococke seems to be extant in a worse state of preservation (in what concerns the fragment in question) than the text found in al-Makīn's *Blessed Compendium*. One can note that, instead of the

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(38) On arguments against Ḥunayn's authorship see BROCK, "The Laments of the Philosophers," p. 206 and K. MERKLE, *Die Sittensprüche der Philosophen "Kitāb ādāb al-falāsifa" von Ḥonein ibn Iṣḥāq in der Überarbeitung des Muḥammed ibn 'Alī al-Anṣārī*, Inaugural-Dissertation, Leipzig, 1921, pp. 60–61.

(39) The problem of interdependences between *The Blessed Compendium* of al-Makīn and the *History* of his contemporary Ibn ar-Rāhib is complex. M. Chaîne argued that Ibn ar-Rāhib could have used al-Makīn's work; see M. CHAÎNE, "Le Chronicon orientale de Butros ibn ar-Rahib et l'histoire de Girgis el-Makim [sic]," *Revue de l'Orient chrétien*, XXVIII (3 sér., VIII), (1931–1932), pp. 390–405. However this may be, the section in question contains no reference to Ibn ar-Rāhib.

(40) M. BREYDY, *Das Annalenwerk des Eutychios von Alexandrien. Ausgewählte Geschichten und Legenden kompiliert von Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq um 935 A.D.* (CSCO, 471–472; ScrAr, 44–45), Lovanii, 1985, vol. 471/44, pp. 33–40.

Qur'ānic word *al-mihād* (couch) found in the text of al-Makīn, the edition of the *History* of Pseudo-Eutychius reads *al-makān* (place).<sup>41</sup> Such a replacement prompts one to pose the following question: if the dependence (whether direct or indirect) of al-Makīn's collection of the laments on the similar collection of Pseudo-Eutychius is recognized, could the replacement of *al-mihād* with *al-makān* be considered as evidence of an earlier version of Pseudo-Eutychius' *History* (or a source of it) that did have the reading *al-mihād* and depended on a text of the philosophers' sayings which had circulated in the Muslim milieu? In favour of the reading *al-mihād*, one could point to the fact that its replacement with *al-makān* makes the phrase lose its rhymed form (*al-bilād — al-mihād*).<sup>42</sup> However this may be, the text of the collection of the laments of the philosophers over Alexander extant in al-Makīn's *Blessed Compendium* proves to be a valuable witness both to the history of the text of Pseudo-Eutychius and to the entire history of the text of the collection of the philosophers' sayings.

In conclusion, the reader should note that in the case of a medieval collection of philosophical sayings such as this we are dealing with a *transformation* of Classical philosophical heritage and its reshaping by popular collections of maxims or collections that subordinate philosophy to the ascetic ideal of perfection rather than with its real *continuation* traceable to the ancient authors.<sup>43</sup> The names of the philosophers provided in such collections of sayings are accidental: in different versions of the texts, the same sayings may be attributed to different ancient sages or be transmitted anonymously. In the Samaritan version, the authors of some sayings are said to be Samaritans.<sup>44</sup> The "Classical" wisdom thus turned out to be transformed by the intellectual milieu in which it was used.

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(41) See the Arabic text below and the commentary in the notes; also Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini *Annales*, ed. РОСОКЕ, p. 290:15 and Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini *Annales*, ed. СНЕКНО, p. 84:3.

(42) See the Arabic text below.

(43) Ю. АРЖАНОВ, «Посмотрим, как превознесли душу в своих речениях те, кто был искусен в мудрости...»: Сирийские переводы этико-философских текстов" [“Let us consider how the soul was praised by those who were skilful in wisdom...”: Syriac translations of Greek popular philosophy"], *Символ 61: Syriaca • Arabica • Iranica*, Paris, Moscow, 2012, pp. 217–237.

(44) *Abulfathi Annales Samaritani*, p. ٩٢.

The present critical edition is based on the following manuscripts: **(P)** MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ar. 294 (AD 14<sup>th</sup> c.),<sup>45</sup> fol. 134v, l. 13 – fol. 135r, l. 23; **(V)** MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ar. 168 (AD 1621)<sup>46</sup>, fol. 112r, l. 20 – fol. 113r, l. 8; **(V̄)** MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ar. 169 (AD 1684)<sup>47</sup>, fol. 110v, l. 10 – fol. 111r, l. 15; **(M)** MS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Ar. 376 (AD 1647)<sup>48</sup>, p. 154, l. 38 – p. 156, l. 1. The English translation was prepared in consultation with Dmitry A. Morozov (The Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, Moscow) to whom I express my deepest gratitude. I am also grateful to Alexander Treiger (Dalhousie University) for reading an earlier draft of this publication and suggesting some improvements.

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(45) G. TROUPEAU, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes: manuscrits chrétiens*, 2 vols., Paris, 1972–1974, vol. 1, p. 261.

(46) A. MAI, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio*, 10 vols., Rome, 1825–1838, vol. 4 (Codices Arabici), pp. 308–309.

(47) MAI, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio*, vol. 4, pp. 309–310.

(48) J. AUMER, *Die Arabischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in Muenchen*, Wiesbaden, 1970, pp. 140–141.

**Ġirġis al-Makīn ibn al-‘Amīd,  
The Blessed Compendium**

**“THE NINETY SECOND FROM ADAM:  
ALEXANDER, SON OF PHILIP THE GREEK, THE MACEDONIAN”**

(fragment)

TEXT

وحضر الحكيم<sup>49</sup> ارسطاطاليس و<sup>50</sup> جماعة<sup>51</sup> من الحكماء<sup>52</sup> اليونان<sup>53</sup> الذين  
كانوا في مملكته وتكلم لكل واحد<sup>54</sup> منهم لئما حضره من الحكمة<sup>55</sup> على  
تابوت الاسكندر فابتدا<sup>56</sup> ارسطاطاليس<sup>57</sup>  
وقال: ان دنيا يكون هذا<sup>58</sup> اخرها فالزهد<sup>59</sup> فيها من اولها اولي؛  
وقال انطيقوس:<sup>60</sup> هذه<sup>61</sup> الطريق<sup>62</sup> لا بدّ لمن سلوكها<sup>63</sup> فارغبوا في الباقية  
واتركوا الفانية؛  
وقال فيليمون:<sup>64</sup> هذا يوم قد اقبل من شرّه<sup>65</sup> ما كان مدبراً وادبر من خيره ما  
كان مقبلاً؛

(49) P add. الفاضل

(50) P add. هو كان معلم الاسكندر ووزيره ومشيريه وحضر

(51) V ṽ جماعة

(52) V حكما

(53) ṽ abs.

(54) P كل واحداً V ṽ M واحد

(55) P بما حضر من كلام الحكمة V ṽ الاسكندر

(56) P M فابتدى

(57) P ارسطاطوا

(58) P M في

(59) V ṽ هكذي الزهد M ; الزهد ṽ

(60) V ṽ M انطيقوس

(61) V ṽ M هذا

(62) V ṽ M السبيل

(63) V منها ṽ M منه

(64) P add. الوزير

(65) V ṽ سرّه

وقال افلاطون: <sup>66</sup> ايها الساعي <sup>67</sup> المتعصب <sup>68</sup> جمعت ما <sup>69</sup> لزمك اوزاره وعاد على غيرك هناوه؛  
 وقال ديوجانس: <sup>70</sup> صدر عنا الاسكندر ناطقاً وورد <sup>71</sup> علينا صامتاً؛  
 وقال [ثاون]: <sup>72</sup> هذا يوم ترعى الرعية راعيها؛  
 وقال لينون: <sup>73</sup> كفى <sup>74</sup> بهذا <sup>75</sup> عبرة <sup>76</sup> ان الذهب لكان بالامس <sup>77</sup> كنز الاسكندر واليوم <sup>78</sup> اصبح الاسكندر مكنوزا <sup>79</sup> في الذهب؛  
 وقال اخر: سيلحقك من سرّه موتك كما لحقت من سرّك موته؛  
 وقال اخر: كان الاسكندر يودبنا <sup>80</sup> في حياته وقد صار <sup>81</sup> واعظا لنا بموته؛ <sup>82</sup>  
 وقال اخر: لقد كنا بالامس نقدر <sup>83</sup> على الاستماع منك ولا نقدر على الكلام بين يديك واما اليوم فنقدر <sup>84</sup> على ان <sup>85</sup> نتكلم ولا نقدر على <sup>86</sup> ان نسمع؛  
 وقال اخر: امات هذا الرجل خلقاً <sup>87</sup> في لمحبة الدنيا ومات وتركها <sup>88</sup>؛

- (66) V افلاطون V̄ افلاطون V  
 (67) V̄ السالى  
 (68) M المغتصب V̄ V المغتصب  
 (69) P و  
 (70) M دوجانس  
 (71) P V V̄ ورد  
 (72) P M V̄ ياروس V̄ ياروس; EUTYCHIUS ناران; AŠ-ŠAHRASTĀNĪ ثاون; Syr. (BROCK) ܐܘܨܝܢ  
 (73) V V̄ لبيون; EUTYCHIUS نيلون; BUDGE Nīlōs.  
 (74) V̄ M كفا  
 (75) V هذه V̄ بهذه  
 (76) P عبرت V̄ عبرة V غيره  
 (77) P بالامس M بالامس كان  
 (78) V V̄ add. قد  
 (79) V̄ مكنوز  
 (80) P V V̄ ديوبنا  
 (81) M add. الان  
 (82) V V̄ abs.  
 (83) V V̄ بالامس كنا نقدر M في الامس كنا نقدر V̄  
 (84) P ان V̄ V abs.  
 (85) P انت V̄ V abs.  
 (86) V̄ abs.  
 (87) M خلقاً كثيراً  
 (88) V طلب الدنيا ومات وتركها لغيره M طلب الدنيا وتركها لغيره V̄

وقال اخر: لم يودبنا الاسكندر بكلامه كما لادبنا بسكوته<sup>89</sup>؛  
 وقال اخر: خافت حصونك وامنت حصون<sup>90</sup> خايفيك<sup>91</sup>؛  
 وقال اخر: يا من<sup>92</sup> غضبه<sup>93</sup> الموت لهل لا<sup>94</sup> غضبت<sup>95</sup> على الموت؛  
 وقال اخر: ايها الجمع لا تبكوا<sup>96</sup> على الاسكندر بل ابكوا على انفسكم<sup>97</sup>؛  
 وقال لآخر: قد<sup>98</sup> كنت لا تسع<sup>99</sup> يرحب<sup>100</sup> البلاد فكيف<sup>101</sup> صبرت<sup>102</sup> على  
 ضيق<sup>103</sup> المهاد<sup>104</sup>؛  
 وقال اخر: قد كنت مغبوطاً لو قد صبحت<sup>105</sup> مرحوماً؛  
 لوقال اخر: هذا الذي غضبه كان مرهوباً وجانبه منيعاً كيف ما خاف منه  
 الموت؛  
 وقال اخر: لقد كان الاسكندر عزيزاً ولقد اصبح ذليلاً<sup>106</sup>،<sup>107</sup>  
 وقال اخر: لكفا العامة اسوة<sup>108</sup> الملوك في الموت وكفى<sup>109</sup> الملوك عظة<sup>110</sup>  
 بموت<sup>111</sup> العامة<sup>112</sup>؛

- (89) ادبنا الان M وادبنا سكوته V وادبنا سكوته الان V  
 (90) غيرك V add.  
 (91) V V This sentence and the following one are put in reverse order.  
 (92) V V add. كان  
 (93) V V غضبه  
 (94) M هلا  
 (95) V V غضبت M غضبت  
 (96) V V after اخر  
 (97) M نفوسكم  
 (98) V V abs.  
 (99) P تقنع M بتسع  
 (100) V M برأ حيث V بر حيث  
 (101) V V وكيف M كيف  
 (102) V صيرة  
 (103) V اضيق V  
 (104) Cf. Qur'ān 2:206, 3:12, 3:197, 13:18, 38:56. EUTYCHIUS المكان  
 (105) M فاصبحت  
 (106) M abs.  
 (107) V V abs.  
 (108) V V كفي العامة اسوة بـ M كفى الغايه اسرة V  
 (109) V V وكفا  
 (110) V V اعظت  
 (111) V V الموة  
 (112) V V الجامه

وقال اخر: لقد كان صيتك<sup>113</sup> مرهوبًا وملكك عاليًا<sup>114</sup> وقد<sup>115</sup> اصبح  
صيتك<sup>116</sup> منقطعًا وملكك متضعًا<sup>117</sup>؛  
وقال اخر: قد كنت تقدر على الاحسان والاساءة<sup>118</sup> واما<sup>119</sup> اليوم فلا تقدر  
فرحم الله من احسن عند القدره<sup>119</sup>؛  
وقال اخر: لين<sup>120</sup> كنت بالامس لا يامنك احدًا<sup>121</sup> فقد اصبحت اليوم لا  
يخافك احدًا<sup>122</sup>.

### TRANSLATION

The wise<sup>123</sup> Aristotle<sup>124</sup> and a group of [other] Greek sages of [Alexander's] kingdom were present, and each of them spoke over Alexander's coffin in accordance with the wisdom which each had. Aristotle was the first [to speak].

He said: If the end of this world is like this, then it is better to keep abstinence regarding it from the very beginning.

Antigonus<sup>125</sup> said: Following this path is inevitable, so have desire for the permanent [life] and abandon the perishing.

Philemon<sup>126</sup> said: this is a day whose evil [side], once far away, has drawn near, and whose good [side], once near, has become far away.

Plato said: O passionate seeker, you have gathered to yourself the brunt of this, while the joy of this went to another.

Diogenes said: Alexander had left us speaking and has now returned to us speechless.

(113) V قد كان صوتك ; EUTYCHIUS قصرك V قصرك V قد صوتك

(114) AL-YA' QŪBĪ غالبا

(115) V V قد

(116) V V abs.; EUTYCHIUS الصوت

(117) M منبضعًا

(118) V V فاما

(119) V V M المقدره المقدره

(120) V V M ان

(121) M احد

(122) M احد

(123) P add. excellent

(124) P add. he was Alexander's teacher, vizier, and adviser.

(125) P Antīqūs V V M Antīfūs ; BUDGE Antīgōs (Antigonus).

(126) P add. vizier



Theon said: This is a day when the flock herds its shepherd.

[Philo?]<sup>127</sup> said: This is a sufficient lesson: yesterday, gold was Alexander's treasure, while today, Alexander himself has been covered with gold.

Another [philosopher] said: He who rejoices in your death will [soon] follow after you, just as you have followed those in whose death you had rejoiced.

Another one said: Alexander used to instruct us during his life, and now he has become a teacher for us in his death.

Another one said: yesterday, we could listen to you, but could not speak before you, while today, we can speak, but can no longer hear [you].

Another one said: This man had slain many<sup>128</sup> people out of love<sup>129</sup> for the world, and now he has died himself and has left it.

Another one said: Alexander had never instructed us by his words as much as he has now instructed us by his silence.

Another one said: Your fortresses now live in fear, while the fortresses of those who fear you are secure.

Another one said: O you whose anger meant death [for others], did you not show anger toward death?

Another one said: O people, do not lament over Alexander, but weep over yourselves.

Another one said: There was no sufficient room in you for the magnitude of [the entire] land; how can you now bear the confinement of [this] couch?

Another one said: You had been blessed, and now you have become grieved over.

Another one said: Your anger had been frightening, and your state had been unassailable; how is it that death was not afraid of you?

Another one said: Behold, Alexander had been powerful, and has now become miserable.

Another one said: The example of kings at [their] death is sufficient for the common people, just as the death of common people is a sufficient admonition for kings.

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(127) **P M** Līnūn **V** Ṽ Lībūn; **BUDGE** Nīlōs; **EUTYCHIUS** Nīlūn.

(128) **M**

(129) **V** Ṽ **M** demanded.

Another one said: Your glory<sup>130</sup> had been fearful, and your kingdom had been exalted,<sup>131</sup> and now your glory<sup>132</sup> has disappeared, and your kingdom has become lowly.

Another one said: You had been able to do both good and evil, but now you no longer can; may God have mercy upon him who does good when he can.

Another one said: Yesterday, no one had been secure you; today, no one is afraid of you.

### SUMMARY

The medieval Christian Arabic historian (A.D. 13<sup>th</sup> c.) Ğirġis al-Makīn ibn al-‘Amīd is well known not only in Middle Eastern Christian and traditional Muslim historiography, but also in Western scholarship since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Despite this, however, the first volume of his most important work — *The Blessed Compendium* (*al-Maġmū‘ al-mubāarak*) — still remains unpublished. The present article discusses the section of al-Makīn’s history devoted to Alexander the Great, which contains laments of the philosophers over Alexander. The study includes a critical edition of the Arabic text of the laments, based on four manuscripts, an English translation, and a commentary.

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(130) EUTYCHIUS voice.

(131) AL-YA‘QUBI triumphant.

(132) EUTYCHIUS voice.

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and Ecclesiastical History

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Cultures of the Christian Orient  
in the Middle Ages



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