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The Biography of the Lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali ('Īsā b. 'Alī)

Introduction

The Syriac-Arabic *Lexicon* of Isho' bar 'Ali has long been known in western scholarship. Already in the 1830s, the *Altmeister* of Hebrew grammar and lexicography F. H. W. Gesenius pointed out the significance of Bar 'Ali's *Lexicon* for Semitic lexicography.[1] In 1874, G. Hoffmann published the first half of Bar 'Ali's *Lexicon* (*ʾālap* through *mim*) on the basis of a single manuscript.[2] R. J. H. Gottheil, then, supplied a critical edition, based on a number of manuscripts, of the second half of the *Lexicon* (*nun* through *taw*).[3] In addition to these editions, the *Lexicon* of Bar 'Ali – along with that of Ḥasan Bar Bahlul (mid-10th cent.)[4] – was incorporated into R. Payne Smith's *Thesaurus Syriacus* and, to a lesser extent, C. Brockelmann's *Lexicon Syriacum*.[5]

The present study aims to clarify the biography of the author of this *Lexicon*, Isho' bar 'Ali, or in Arabic 'Īsā b. 'Alī (in Christian Arabic also Yashū' b. 'Alī). In Arabic sources, there are no less than three different individuals with some version of the name 'Īsā b. 'Alī with whom the author of the *Lexicon* could potentially be identified: 1. 'Īsā b. 'Alī, who was a student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq and lived in the second half of the ninth century; 2. 'Īsā b. 'Alī, who was a student of Yaḥyā

1   *De Bar Alio et Bar Bahlulo, lexicographis Syro-Arabicis ineditis, commentatio litteraria philologica*, 1-2 (Leipzig, 1834, 1839).

2   *Syrisch-Arabische Glossen. Autographie einer gothaischen Handschrift enthaltend Bar Ali's Lexikon von Alaf bis Mim* (Kiel, 1874).

3   *Bar 'Ali (Isho'). The Syriac-Arabic Glosses*, 1-2 (Atti della R. Accademia dei Lincei. Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche Ser. 5, vol. 13; Rome, 1910, 1928). See also his preliminary remarks in „Proceedings of the American Oriental Society, at Its Meeting in New York, N.Y., October 30th and 31st, 1880," *JAOS* 14 (1890), clxxxv-cxci.

4   Edited in R. Duval, *Lexicon Syriacum auctore Hassano bar Bahlule*, 1-3 (Paris, 1888-1901). For the few known biographical details about Bar Bahlul as well as bibliographic references to his more recently discovered *Book of Signs* (*Kitāb al-dalāʾil*), see L. Van Rompay's entry in the forthcoming *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage* (Piscataway, NJ).

5   R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* (Oxford, 1879-1901); C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Berlin, 1895; 2nd edn. Halis Saxonum, 1928). An English translation (with correction, expansion, and update) of the latter recently appeared as M. Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon* (Piscataway – Winona Lake, 2009).

b. 'Adī and died in 1001; 3. 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-kaḥḥāl, who was a student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib and died sometime after 1010. Prior to 1922, scholars generally identified the lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali with 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq. In his *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, however, A. Baumstark rejected this identification and proposed instead that the lexicographer is to be identified with (a somewhat misconstrued version of) 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of Yaḥyā b. 'Adī.[6] This study argues that Baumstark's proposal is unfeasible and that the lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali is in all likelihood to be identified with 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq.

Isho' bar 'Ali, Author of the Syriac-Arabic *Lexicon*

Before proceeding to the three different individuals with some version of the name 'Īsā b. 'Alī, it is necessary to see what the *Lexicon*, itself, says about its author. In the introductory heading, the author of the *Lexicon* is identified simply as 'Isho' bar 'Ali, the physician' (ܐܣܝܐ ܒܪ ܥܠܝ ܝܫܘܥ).[7] In the preface, Bar 'Ali states that he undertook the writing of the *Lexicon* at the behest of a certain Abraham.[8] During his readings, Abraham had been employing the *Lexicon* of the well-known translator Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq (808-873)[9] as well as a *Lexicon* compiled by Isho' of Merv (ܡܪܘܙܝܐ ܝܫܘܥ).[10] Abraham seems to have been happy with the former, but less so with the latter. In Bar 'Ali's words:[11]

6   A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), 241.

7   Hoffmann, *Syrisch-Arabische Glossen*, 1.4. This designation is also found in some manuscripts at the beginning of new sections; see, e. g., Gottheil, *Bar 'Ali (Isho')*, 237.

8   The Syriac text of the preface is edited in Hoffmann, *Syrisch-Arabische Glossen*, 1-5. A slightly different version of the Syriac text with Latin translation (as well as an Arabic version) is found in Gesenius, *De Bar Alio et Bar Bahlulo*, vol. 1, 13-21. An additional Latin translation is available in Duval, *Lexicon Syriacum auctore Hassano bar Bahlule*, viii-ix.

9   Several different lexicographical works are attributed to Ḥunayn: 1. the *Book of Similar Words* (ܟܬܒܐ ܕܒܢܬ ܩܠܐ) (see G. Hoffmann, *Opuscula nestoriana* [Paris, 1880], 2-49 along with R. J. H. Gottheil, *A Treatise on Syriac Grammar by Mâr(i) Eliâ of Ṣôbʰâ* [Berlin, 1887], 61*-67*; idem, „A Syriac Lexicographical Tract," *Hebraica* 5 [1889]: 215-229); 2. the no longer extant *Explanation of Greek Words in Syriac* (ܦܘܫܩ ܡܠܐ ܝܘܢܝܬܐ ܒܣܘܪܝܝܐ); 3. a *Compendious Lexicon* (ܠܟܣܝܩܘܢ ܚܦܝܛܐ), which is attributed to him in the *Catalogue* of 'Abdisho' bar Brikhā (d. 1318) (G. S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca orientalis Clementino-vaticana* [Rome, 1719-1728], vol. 3.1, 165). In general, see Duval, *Lexicon Syriacum auctore Hassano bar Bahlule*, vii-viii; idem, *La littérature syriaque* (Bibliothèque de l'enseignement de l'histoire ecclésiastique: Anciennes littératures chrétiennes 2; 3rd edn. Paris, 1907), 295-297, G. Endress, „Bilingual Lexical Materials in the Arabic Tradition of the Hellenistic Sciences," in J. Hamesse and D. Jacquart (eds.), *Lexiques bilingues dans les domaines philosophique et scientifique (Moyen Âge – Renaissance)* (Brepols, 2001), 164.

10   According to Duval (*Lexicon Syriacum auctore Hassano bar Bahlule*, viii, xx; *La littérature syriaque*, 297-298), this Isho' of Merv is to be identified with Zekaryā of Merv, who is often cited in the *Lexicon* of Bar Bahlul. This identification has been adopted by others (see, e. g., Endress, Bilingual Lexical Materials in the Arabic Tradition, 164-165. Nevertheless, Bar Bahlul never explicitly identifies Zekaryā of Merv with Isho' of Merv. In addition, in one instance, Bar Bahul cites Isho' of Merv by name (Duval, *Lexicon Syriacum auctore Hassano bar Bahlule*, 835.14).

ܘܡܢ ܚܕܐ ܠܗܕܐ ܡܫܒܚܘܢܬܐ ܕܠܠܟܢܘܬܐ ܘܒܠܫܢܐ ܕܣܝܡܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܚܘܢܝܢ ܘܡܢ
ܐܚܢܝܐ ܕܥܝ ܕܡܢ ܠܠܟܢ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܡܪܘܙܝܐ ܐܠ ܕܕ ܐܬܬܦܪܥܬ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܢ ܐܝܢܐ ܕܠܐ
ܛܟܣ.

On the one hand, you praised the arrangement of the order and the skill of the *Lexicon* of master Ḥunayn. On the other hand, you found fault with that of Isho' of Merv as having been composed irregularly and without order.

One of the main issues between the two lexicons, then, seems to have been their organization or lack thereof. To solve this problem, Bar 'Ali proposes to organize his *Lexicon* alphabetically.[12] The lexicons of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq and Isho' of Merv also seemed to have differed at times in their definitions.[13] It is for these reasons that Bar 'Ali undertook composing a new lexicon on the basis of these two previous works. Bar 'Ali describes the sources for his *Lexicon* as follows:[14]

ܐܬܦܝܣܬ ܐܝܟ ܗܘ ܐܢܫ ܕܪܚܡ ܝܘܠܦܢܐ ܕܠܗܠܝܢ ܬܪܝܢ ܠܠܟܢܘܢܐ ܩܕ
ܐܕܗܪܬܢܝ ܟܢܫ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܚܕ ܟܕ ܡܘܣܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ ܘܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ ܐܘܣܦ
ܕܫܡܥܬ ܡܢ ܡܠܦܢܝ ܘܝܠܦܬ ܡܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܕܝܪܐ ܘܥܠܝܗܝܢ ܫܐܠܬ
ܠܣܒܐ ܐܫ̈ܝܫܐ.

You have convinced me, as one who loves instruction, that I consider these two lexicons, of which you have reminded me, and that I collect them into one adding various other (words), which I have heard from my teacher (*mallpān[y]*), which I have learned from books over the course of a long time, and about which I had asked the elders.

The identity of this *mallpānā* of Bar 'Ali will be crucial to the following discussion.[15]

Finally, it should be mentioned that the collection that goes under the name of Bar 'Ali in the manuscript tradition must differ significantly from the work that he originally authored. This is most clearly demonstrated by the manuscripts themselves.[16] The manuscripts of Bar 'Ali's *Lexicon* present at least four different recensions, several of which represent enlargements.[17] It seems, then, that Bar 'Ali's

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Thus, without further evidence, it seems best to assume that Isho' of Merv and Zekaryā of Merv are two distinct individuals (so also Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 232).

11   Hoffmann, *Syrisch-Arabische Glossen*, 2.8-11.

12   Towards the end of the Preface, Bar 'Ali states: ܫܡܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܠܠܟܢܘܬܐ ܚܕ ܥܠ ܚܕ ܕܚܒܫ ܩܘܡܣܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܥܝܐ ܕܝܐܝܒ ܐܪܬܟܣܬ ܕܬܩܦܝܢ ܘܡܠܡ ܕܡܬܒܥܝܢ 'I have organized the lexemes alphabetically so that the things being sought may be more readily found' (Hoffmann, *Syrisch-Arabische Glossen*, 4.20-5.1).

13   ܘܐܫܟܚܬ ܬܘ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܟܒܪ ܚܙܝܬܟ ܡܚܬܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܝܬ ܗܘܢ ܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܕܩܡܘܪܐ 'You also found that there is not a little difference between them in the interpretation of phrases' (Hoffmann, *Syrisch-Arabische Glossen*, 2.11-3.1).

14   Hoffmann, *Syrisch-Arabische Glossen*, 3.3-7.

15   It should be noted that some manuscripts read the plural ܡܠܦܢ (see Hoffmann, *Syrisch-Arabische Glossen*, 3; Gesenius, *De Bar Alio et Bar Bahlulo*, vol. 2, 1).

16   See Gottheil, *Bar 'Ali (Isho')*, 8 and his comments in „Proceedings of the American Oriental Society," cxci.

17   See the stemma in Gottheil, *Bar 'Ali (Isho')*, 7-8. As is the case with the *Lexicon* of Bar Bahlul, manuscripts of the *Lexicon* of Bar 'Ali are found in both the E.- and W.-Syr. tradition.

Lexicon was never viewed as a closed corpus, but rather it was a tool to be supplemented with additional material when needed. In one manuscript (viz. Oxford, Pococke 167), the scribe even left blank spaces after several paragraphs, presumably so that additions could be made.[18] The impetus for this practice of supplementation stems – at least in part – from Bar 'Ali, himself. At the end of his preface, Bar 'Ali exhorts his future readers:[19]

ܘܐܢ ܡܕܡ ܬܫܟܚ ܒܡܫܘܚܬܐ ܕܙܒܢܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܣܛܪ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܬܒܢܢ ܠܚܡܘ
ܘܐܘܣܦ ܘܟܬܘܒ ܠܐ ܡܗܡܝܢܐܝܬ ܟܕ ܠܐ ܬܬܦܫܚ ܐܢ ܐܦ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܥܘܕܪܢܐ
ܠܗܢܘܢ ܕܒܬܪܟ

If you find in the course of time some other (words) in addition to those that we have written for you, add and write (them) without negligence, not worrying whether you will also be of use to those who come after you.

Based on the textual variety among the manuscripts, it is clear that Bar 'Ali's request was honored. In fact, the name of one of these later expanders is known from a postscript that is transmitted in several manuscripts, and it is none other than the aforementioned Abraham:[20]

ܦܘܣܩܘܦܘܢ ܐܢܐ ܡܚܝܠܐ ܘܚܛܝܐ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܕܒܫܡܐ ܣܠܝܚ ܐܢܐ ܐܦ ܡܣܡ ܪܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܚܘܢ
ܠܚܠܗ ܕܕܘܟܪܢܗ ܒܝܬ ܟܐܢܐ ܕܘܝ ܝܫܘܥ ܘܐܘܣܦܬ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܡܢ ܕܐܫܟܚܬ ܣܛܪ ܡܢ
ܗܝ ܕܐܬܬܥܝܪܬ ܕܐܘܬܪ[21] ܠܟܪܝܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܩܪܝܢ[22] ܒܗ ܘܐܘܣܦ ܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܡܘܣܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܢ ܡܪܝܐ ܨܒܐ ܘܐܦ ܗܘ
ܘܣܘܦ ܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܢ ܡܪܝܐ ܨܒܐ ܥܠ ܐܘܪܚ ܘܐܢ ܢܚܐ ܠܦܘܬ ܡܫܘܚܬܐ ܕܦܫܝܛܘܬܢ

Postscript. I, the feeble sinner Abraham, who is a deacon (only) in name, have consented to the advice of our brother, who is remembered among the upright, Isho', and I have added in this book some (words) from what I found in the holy scriptures, in addition to (the fact) that I was intent on benefitting those who read in it. I will also continue adding (to it), if the Lord so desires and we live according to the measure of (our) simplicity.

The various additions and supplements to Bar 'Ali's *Lexicon* have implications for the identification of Bar 'Ali since it cannot be assumed that any given lemma

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18   Gottheil, in „Proceedings of the American Oriental Society," clxxxvii. Cf. R. Payne Smith, *Catalogi codicum manuscriptorum bibliothecae Bodleianae. Pars sexta. Codices Syriacos, Carshunicos, Mendaeos, complectens* (Oxford, 1864), 612-613 (no. 184).

19   Hoffmann, *Syrisch-Arabische Glossen,* 5.5-8.

20   Gesenius, *De Bar Alio et Bar Bahlulo,* vol. 1, 21-22 (with Latin translation). An additional Latin translation is available in Duval, *Lexicon Syriacum auctore Hassano bar Bahlule,* ix. The Arabic version differs in several details: وانا الواهى الخاطى ابراهيم الشماس بالاسم استجبت بمشورة اخينا يشوع مذكورا يكون بين الصالحين وقد اضفت الى هذا الكتاب ما وجدت فى الكتب النفيسة لافيد لى وللذين يقرون فيه وانا اضيف اليه ايضا ان عشت بمشيئة الرب بحسب مقدارى المسكين 'I, the feeble sinner Abraham, deacon (only) in name, have consented to the advice of our brother, Yashū', (who) is remembered among the upright, and I have added to this book what I found in the spiritual (reading نفسية) books, for my benefit and for that of those who read in it. I will also continue adding to it, if I live – the Lord willing – according to my meager capacity'.

21   Read ܠܟܪܝܐ.

22   Read ܠܕܩܪܝܢ, compare the Arabic version للذين يقرون.

found in the manuscript tradition is actually from the hand of Bar 'Ali himself, as opposed to the work of a later redactor.

'Īsā b. 'Alī in Arabic Sources

In Arabic sources, there are at least three different individuals with some version of the name 'Īsā b. 'Alī, with whom the author of the *Lexicon* could potentially be identified. The first chronologically is the 'Īsā b. 'Alī who lived in the second half of the 9th century.[23] He was a student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq, who was mentioned above as the author of a Syriac *Lexicon*, but is better known as a physician and translator. This 'Īsā b. 'Alī's primary field of study was medicine, and he was the personal physician of Caliph al-Mu'tamid (r. 870-892). In addition to the field of medicine, he worked in other sciences, including astronomy, physics, and probably mathematics. He was also a scribe, as he is mentioned in the colophon of two manuscripts of the Arabic Diatessaron (Vatican, Borg. Arab. 250; Oxford, Bodleian Arab. e 163).[24] In his *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, Ibn al-Nadīm (fl. 987) relates the following about this 'Īsā b. 'Alī:[25]

عيسى بن على من تلاميذ حنين وكان فاضلا وله من الكتب كتاب المنافع التي تستفاد من اعضاء الحيوان

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23 In general, see B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm. A Tenth-century survey of Muslim culture* (New York, 1970), 1014; G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (Studi e Testi 118, 133, 146, 147, 172; Vatican City, 1944-1953), vol. 2, 131 (also 153, 157, 169-170, 176); P. E. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza* (2nd edn. Oxford, 1959), 311; L. Leclerc, *Histoire de la médicine arabe* (Paris, 1876), vol. 1, 303-304; M. Meyerhof, „New Light on Ḥunain Ibn Isḥâq and his Period," *Isis* 8 (1926), 710; R. P. Paul Sbath, *Al-Fihris (Catalogue de manuscrits arabes)*, Part 1. *Ouvrages des auteurs antérieurs au XVIIᵉ siècle* (Cairo, 1938), 54 (no. 134); F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden, 1967-2007), vol. 3, 259, 377; vol. 5, 416; M. Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam* (Leiden, 1970), 327.

24 For the colophon of ms. Vatican, Borg. Arab. 250, see P. Augustinus Ciasca, جمعه الذي دياطاسارون طظيانوس من المبشرين الاربعة *seu Tatiani Evangeliorum Harmoniae Arabice* (Rome, 1888), 99 (Latin translation), 210 (Arabic text), both of which must be corrected on the basis of the post-script on p. xv. An English translation is available in Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, 300. For the colophon of ms. Oxford, Bodleian Arab. e 163, see A. J. B. Higgins, „The Arabic Version of Tatian's Diatessaron," *JTS* ns 45 (1944): 188 n. 1 (with English translation). Higgin's interpretation of the second part of the colophon in ms. Bodleian Arab. e 163 is, however, incorrect, as pointed out by Graf (*Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 2, 169-170 n. 2) and Kahle (*The Cairo Geniza*, 308) and later accepted by Higgins, himself („Tatian's Diatessaron," *Journal of the Manchester University Egyptian and Oriental Society* 24 [1942-1945], 30 n. 1). In general, see T. Baarda, „The Author of the Arabic Diatessaron", in T. Baarda, A. F. J. Klijn, and W. C. van Unnik (eds.), *Miscellanea Neotestamentica*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1978), 61-103 (reprinted in T. Baarda, *Early Transmission of Words of Jesus* [Amsterdam, 1983], 207-249) and P. Joosse, „An Introduction to the Arabic Diatessaron," *OC* 83 (1999), 72-129.

25 G. Flügel, *Kitâb al-Fihrist* (Leipzig, 1871-1872), vol. 1, 297.19-21. An English translation is available in Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, vol. 2, 699.

'Īsā b. 'Alī was among the students of Ḥunayn, and he was excellent. Among his works is the *Book of the benefits made use of from the Organs of Animals.*

In his *'Uyūn al-ʾanbāʾ fī ṭabaqāt al-ʾaṭibbāʾ*, Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa (d. 1270) provides additional information:[26]

عيسى بن على كان طبيبا فاضلا ومشتغلا بالحكمة وله تصانيف في ذلك وكان قد قرأ صناعة الطب
على حنين بن اسحق وهو من أجل تلاميذه وكان عيسى بن على يخدم أحمد بن المتوكل وهو المعتمد
على الله وكان طبيبه قديما ولما ولى الخلافة أحسن اليه وشرفه وحمله عدة دفعات على دواب وخلع
عليه ولعيسى بن على من الكتب كتاب المنافع التى تستفاد من أعضاء الحيوان كتاب السموم مقالتان

'Īsā b. 'Alī was an excellent physician and devoted to wisdom (*ḥikma*), and he had (many) literary works on this (subject). He studied the field of medicine under Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq being one of his most illustrious students. 'Īsā b. 'Alī served Aḥmad b. Mutawakkil, i. e. al-Muʿtamid ʿAlā Allāh. He was formerly his physician. When he became Caliph, he did well by him, honored him, brought him on animals a number of times, and bestowed upon him (a garment of honor). Among 'Īsā b. 'Alī works is the *Book of the benefits made use of from the Organs of Animals* (and) the *Book of Poisons* in two parts.

Throughout the following discussion, this person will be referred to as 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq.

The second 'Īsā b. 'Alī relevant to the current discussion is Abū al-Qāsim 'Īsā b. 'Alī, who died on March 28, 1001.[27] His father was the 'good vizier' 'Alī b. 'Īsā b. Dāʾūd b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 946).[28] This 'Īsā b. 'Alī was one of the most prominent Muslim students of the Syriac Orthodox philosopher Yaḥyā b. 'Adī (d. 974). In addition, he served as secretary under Caliph al-Ṭāʾiʿ (d. 991). In his *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, Ibn al-Nadīm relates the following about this 'Īsā b. 'Alī:[29]

ابنه ابو القاسم عيسى بن على من اوحد زمانه في المنطق والعلوم القديمة ومولده ... وله من الكتب كتاب
في اللغة الفارسية

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26 A. Müller, *Ibn Abî Useibia* (n. p., 1884), vol. 1, 203. Slightly different versions of the text are given in Gesenius, *De Bar Alio et Bar Bahlulo,* vol. 1, 11-12 and Flügel, *Kitâb al-Fihrist*, vol. 2, 143.

27 The most complete review of the sources is in Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam. The cultural revival during the Buyid age* (Leiden, 1986), 134-136. See also H. Bowen, *The life and times of 'Alī ibn 'Īsā, 'the Good vizier'* (Cambridge, 1928), 397-398, *passim*; H. Busse, *Chalif und Grosskönig. Die Buyiden im Iraq (945-1055)* (Beirut, 1969), 248 (no. 8), *passim*; Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm,* 1077 (s. v. Qāsim, Abū al-); Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur,* vol. 2, 157 (also 109, 176, 238, 242); D. Gutas, *Greek thought, Arabic culture. The Graeco-Arabic translation movement in Baghdad and early 'Abbasid society (2nd – 4th /8th – 10th centuries)* (London, 1998), 72-73, 132-133; D. Sourdel, *Le vizirat 'abbâside de 749 à 936 (132 à 324 de l'Hégire)* (Damas, 1959-1960), 524. In addition to the primary sources cited below, see the statement by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 1023) in his *Kitāb al-ʾimtāʿ wal-muʾānasa* (ed. A. Amīn and A. al-Zayn, *Kitāb al-ʾimtāʿ wal-muʾānasa* [Cairo, 2nd edn. 1953], vol. 1, 36-37).

28 In general, see H. Bowen, in *EI²*, vol. 1, 386 and especially his *The life and times of 'Alī ibn 'Īsā, 'the Good vizier'.*

29 Flügel, *Kitâb al-Fihrist*, vol. 1, 129.7-9. An English translation is available in Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm,* vol. 1, 282.

His (scl. 'Alī b. 'Īsā b. Dā'ūd b. al-Jarrāḥ) son Abū al-Qāsim 'Īsā b. 'Alī was unique in his time in logic and the ancient sciences. His birth was … Among his works is a book on the Persian language.

In his *Ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (d. ca. 985) provides the following additional information:[30]

عيسى بن على بن عيسى بن الجراح الوزير كان هذا الشيخ كبيرا في علم الأوائل جامعا لفنون
الفضائل وكان مع توجهه في هذه العلوم له رأس مال في علم الحديث وعلو الاسناد والمعرفة
بالقراءت[31] وسائر الآداب والمحاسن وكان ملازما لبيته صائنا لنفسه إلى أن مات مشتغلا بالإفادة
والتدريس على رثاثة حاله وكبر سنه ...

'Īsā b. 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-Jarrāḥ, the vizier: This sheikh was great in the science of the ancients combining (various) disciplines of merit. In addition to his patronage of these sciences, he had capital in the science of *Ḥadīth*, greatness in ascription (*'isnād*), knowledge of Qur'ānic recitation (*qirā'a*), and the rest of culture (*'ādāb*) and good qualities. He was secluded in his house keeping to himself until his death (and) occupying himself with instructing and teaching despite his ragged condition and great age [the passage continues with four sayings from the philosophers that were translated by 'Īsā b. 'Alī].

The fullest statement is, however, provided by Ibn al-Qifṭī (d. 1248) in his *Ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā':*[32]

عيسى بن على بن عيسى بن داؤد بن الجراح أبو القاسم ولد الوزير إمام في فنون متعددة سمع الحديث
الكثير ورواه وحضر مجلس روايته أجلاء الناس وكان قيما بعلم الأوائل قرأ المنطق على يحيى بن
عدى وأكثر الأخذ عنه وتحقق به وأفاد جماعة من الطلبة وناظر وحقق وسئل فيه فأجاب أجوبة سادة
لم يخرج فيها عن طريقة القوم ورأيت نسخة من السماع الطبيعى التى قرأها على يحيى بن عدى
شرح يحيى النحوى وهى في غاية الجودة والحسن والتحقيق وكانت له عليها حواش حصلت بالمناظرة
حالة القراءة وهى بخطه وكان أشبه شىء بخط أبى على بن مقلة في القوة والجريان والطريقة وكانت
هذه النسخة في عشرة مجلدات كبار وقد حشاها بعد ذلك جورجيس اليبرودى بشرح ثامسطيوس
للكتاب وقد كان عيسى بن على هذا تقدم في الدولة وخدم بعض الخلفاء كتابة وتوفى ببغداد في سحرة
يوم الجمعة لليلة بقيت من شهر ربيع الآخر سنة إحدى وتسعين وثلثمائة

'Īsā b. 'Alī b. 'Īsā b. Dā'ūd b. al-Jarrāḥ Abū al-Qāsim, son of the vizier, was a leading figure in various disciplines. He heard and transmitted numerous *Ḥadīth*s, and eminent people attended his *majlis* of transmission. He was a custodian of the science of the ancients. He studied logic under Yaḥyā b. 'Adī and learned much from him and had (great) conviction in him. He acquired many students. He debated and investigated; he was questioned, and he answered with a satisfactory answer in which he did not deviate from the way of (his) people. I saw a copy of the *Physica* which he read under Yaḥyā b. 'Adī after Yaḥyā al-Naḥwī (i. e. John Philoponus) had commented (on it), and it was the utmost of goodness, beauty, and perfection. He had on it marginal notes which arose during the discussion while reading (it), and they were in his hand. His handwriting was similar to that of Abū 'Alī b. Muqla in its strength, flow, and manner. This copy was in ten large volumes, and afterwards Jūrjīs al-Yabrūdī glossed it using a commentary of Themistius on the book. This 'Īsā b. 'Alī advanced in the state, and he served some of the Caliphs as secretary. He died in Baghdad in the early morning on the last Friday of the latter Rabī' year 391 (= March 28, 1001).

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30 D. M. Dunlop, *The Muntakhab Ṣiwān al-ḥikmah of Abū Sulaimān as-Sijistānī. Arabic text, introduction and indices* (The Hague, 1979), 143 (no. 280).
31 Read القراءة.
32 Lippert, *Ibn al-Qifṭī's Ta'rīh al-ḥukamā'*, 244-245.

Throughout the following discussion, this person will be referred to as ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī, student of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī.

The third and final person relevant to this discussion is the oculist ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-kaḥḥāl, who died sometime after 1010.[33] He was a student of the Church of the East theologian and philosopher Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 1043).[34] According to the *Ecclesiastical History* of Bar ʿEbrāyā (d. 1286), ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-kaḥḥāl originally belonged to the Church of the East, but due to a conflict with Katholikos Iwannis VI (r. 1001-1012) he became a Melkite.[35] He is best-known for his *Prescription of Oculists (Taḏkirat al-kaḥḥālīn)*, which became a standard textbook of ocular science in Arabic and which was translated into Hebrew and Latin in the Middle Ages.[36] In his *ʿUyūn al-ʾanbāʾ fī ṭabaqāt al-ʾaṭibbaʾ*, Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa relates the following about ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-kaḥḥāl:[37]

على بن عيسى وقيل عيسى بن على الكحال كان مشهورا بالحذق في صناعة الكحل متميزا فيها
وبكلامه يقتدى في امراض العين ومداواتها وكتابه المشهور بتذكرة الكحالين هو الذى لا بد لكل من
يعانى صناعة الكحل أن يحفظه وقد اقتصر الناس عليه دون غيره من سائر الكتب التى قد ألفت فى
هذا الفن وصار ذلك مستمرا عندهم وكلام على بن عيسى في أعمال صناعة الكحل أجود من كلامه
فيما يتعلق بالامور العلمية وكانت وفاته سنة ... واربعمائة ولعلى بن عيسى من الكتب كتاب تذكرة
الكحالين ثلاث مقالات

ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā, also called ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī, al-kaḥḥāl (i. e. the oculist) was famous (and) distinguished for (his) skill in the field of ocular medicine. His precepts are followed with regard to illnesses of the eye and their treatments. As for his famous book *Prescription of Oculists*, it is necessary for everyone who is concerned with the field of ocular medicine to memorize it. People have been content with it and no other among the rest of the books which have been written in this discipline. This one became the enduring one among (all of) them. That which ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā said about the craft of the field

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33   In general, see C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, vol. 1 (2nd edn. Leiden, 1943), 635; Suppl. Vol. 1 (Leiden, 1937), 884-885; Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 2, 176; J. Hirschbert (trans. F. C. Blodi), *The History of Ophthalmology*, Vol. 2. *The Middle Ages; The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Bonn, 1985), 53-59; Leclerc, *Histoire de la médicine arabe*, 498-503; E. Mittwock, in *EI²*, vol. 1, 388; Sbath, *Al-Fihris*, Part 1, 54 (no. 132); Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, vol. 3, 337-340; Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam*, 208-209.

34   Müller, *Ibn Abi Useibia*, vol. 1, 240.

35   J. B. Abbeloos and T. J. Lamy, *Gregorii Barhebraei chronicon ecclesiasticum* (Paris, 1872-1877), vol. 3, 275-278. See also Assemani, *Bibliotheca orientalis*, vol. 2, 445; Busse, *Chalif und Grosskönig*, 478 n. 2.

36   The Arabic text is available in Al-Hakim al-Sayyid Ghous Mohiuddin al-Sharafi, *Tadhkiratu'l Kahhālīn by ʿAli b. Īsa al-Kaḥḥāl (d. 400 A.H./1010 A.D.)* (Hyderabad, 1964). The text or portions of it have been translated into several languages: Latin translation in C. A. Hille, *De medicis arabibus oculariis. Prolegomena ad Alii Ben Isa monitorium oculariorum* (Dresden, 1845). Reprinted in F. Sezgin (ed.), *Augenheilkunde im Islam. Texte, Studien und Übersetzungen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1986), vol. 4, 1-46. German translation in J. Hirschberg and J. Lippert, *Ali ibn Isa. Erinnerungsbuch für Augenärzte* (Leipzig, 1904). Reprinted in Sezgin, *Augenheilkunde im Islam*, vol. 1, 196-556. English translation in C. A. Wood, *Memorandum Book of a Tenth-Century Oculist* (Chicago, 1936).

37   Müller, *Ibn Abi Useibia*, vol. 1, 247. Slightly different versions of the text are given in Flügel, *Kitâb al-Fihrist*, vol. 2, 143 and Gesenius, *De Bar Alio et Bar Bahlulo*, vol. 1, 12.

of ocular medicine is better than that which he said related to scientific matters. He passed away in the year four hundred and ... Among the books of ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā are the book of *Prescription of Oculists* in three parts.

Throughout the following discussion, this person will be referred to as ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-kaḥḥāl, student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib.

Already by the thirteenth century, ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-kaḥḥāl, student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, began to be conflated with ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī, student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq. In his *Taʾrīkh al-ḥukamāʾ*, for instance, Ibn al-Qifṭī states:[38]

عيسى بن على من تلاميذ حنين وكان فاضلا مصنفا مشهور التصنيف من ذلك كتاب تذكرة الكحالين وعليها عمل أطباء هذا النوع في كل زمان كتاب المنافع التى تستفاد من أعضاء الحيوان

ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī was among the students of Ḥunayn, and he was an excellent author, famous for writing the *Book of the Prescription of Oculists* – according to which physicians of this branch (of medicine) have worked at all times – (and) the *Book of the benefits made use of from the Organs of Animals*.

In this passage, ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī, the student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq, is said to have written the *Book of the prescription of Oculists*, the well-known work by ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-kaḥḥāl, student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib. The conflation of ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-kaḥḥāl, student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, with ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī, student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq, resulted in the name of the former occasionally being inverted to ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī. This inverted form of the name is found in some manuscripts of the *Book of the prescription of Oculists*, though the non-inverted form, ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā, occurs in others.[39] In addition, the inverted form ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī is recorded, together with the non-inverted form, in the entry on ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-kaḥḥāl, student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, in the *ʿUyūn al-ʾanbāʾ fī ṭabaqāt al-ʾaṭibbāʾ* of Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, which was quoted above.[40] This conflation is not limited to the primary sources, but is also occasionally found in (early) scholarly literature.[41]

Which ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī wrote the Syriac-Arabic *Lexicon*?

In the previous section, it was established that three different individuals with some version of the name ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī are found in Arabic sources: 1. ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī, student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq; 2. ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī, student of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī; 3. ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-kaḥḥāl, student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib. The question for the present study then is: With which of these individuals is the lexicographer Ishoʿ bar ʿAli to be identified?[42] At first glance, this seems to be a rather uneventful question since in ms.

38   Lippert, *Ibn al-Qifṭī's Taʾrīḥ al-ḥukamāʾ*, 247.7-10.
39   See Hirschberg and Lippert, *Ali ibn Isa. Erinnerungsbuch für Augenärzte*, xxii-xxiii, 1 with n. 2. Reprinted in Sezgin, *Augenheilkunde im Islam*, vol. 1, 216-217, 233.
40   Müller, *Ibn Abi Useibia*, vol. 1, 247.
41   See, e. g., F. Wüstenfeld, *Geschichte der arabischen Aerzte und Naturforscher* (Göttingen, 1840), 39.
42   It is, of course, possible that he is not to be identified with any of them.

Vatican Syr. 217, which contains a portion of the *Lexicon*, the author is explicitly identified as 'rabban Isho' bar 'Ali, student of rabban Ḥunayn, the chief of medicine' (ܐܢܐ ܡܥܡܕ ܚܕ ܚܠ ܕܗܠܚܡܕ ܚܢ ܣܘܢܝ ܪܝ ܐܪܟܘܣܐܟ).[43] Prior to 1922, scholars generally followed this manuscript in identifying the lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali with 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq.[44] In many cases, however, scholars conflated the three individuals with the name 'Īsā b. 'Alī.

A turning point in scholarship was marked by the publication of Baumstark's *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* in 1922. Discussing the lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali, Baumstark states, „Der erstere (= the lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali), der besonders als Augenarzt berühmt und literarisch als solcher in arabischer Sprache tätig war, kann nicht, wie von zwei Überlieferungsvarianten die eine (with reference to Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a and ms. Vatican Syr. 227, a typo for ms. Vatican Syr. 217) behauptet, noch ein Schüler des Ḥunain ibn Isḥàq, sondern erst, wie die andere (with reference to Ibn al-Qifṭī) angibt, ein solcher des Jaḥjā ibn 'Adî gewesen sein …"[45] Baumstark, thus, explicitly rejects identifying the lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali with 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq. He does not, however, provide any justification for this rejection. In addition, the 'Īsā b. 'Alī whom Baumstark claims is the author of the *Lexicon* is actually a conflation of 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of Yaḥyā b. 'Adī, and 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-kaḥḥāl, student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib. The date given, the mention of Yaḥyā b. 'Adī, and the citation of Ibn al-Qifṭī all suggest the former, but the mention of oculist *(Augenarzt)* can only refer to the latter.[46] This conflation enables Baumstark to avoid two fatal flaws with his identification. First, 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of Yaḥyā b. 'Adī, is not attested as a physician in any source, whereas the manuscript tradition of the Syriac-Arabic *Lexicon* specifically states that the lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali was a physician (ܐܣܝܐ). Second, 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of Yaḥyā b. 'Adī, was a Muslim, whereas the author of the *Lexicon* was a Christian.[47]

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43 S. E. Assemanus and J. S. Assemanus, *Bibliothecæ apostolicæ Vaticanæ codicum manuscriptorum catalogus*, Part 1, Vol. 3. *Complectens reliquos codices chaldaicos sive syriacos* (Rome, 1758; reprint Paris, 1926), 504. Cf. Gottheil, *Bar 'Ali (Isho')*, 7 (s.v. 'S').

44 See, e.g., Assemani, *Bibliotheca orientalis Clementino-vaticana*, vol. 3.1, 257; Gesenius, *De Bar Alio et Bar Bahlulo*, vol. 1, 11; Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 1638 (implicitly); W. Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London, 1894), 215-216; Duval, *La littérature syriaque*, 297-298; Gottheil, *Bar 'Ali (Isho')*, 5 (implicitly); S. Euringer, *Die Überlieferung der arabischen Übersetzung des Diatessarons* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1912), 19-20.

45 Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 241.

46 That Baumstark does not distinguish between 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of Yaḥyā b. 'Adī, and 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-kaḥḥāl, student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib, can be further corroborated by the fact the he never cites Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a's entry on the latter (ed. Müller, vol. 1, 247), but only the entry on the former (ed. Müller, vol. 1, 203).

47 Lest there is any doubt that the lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali was a Christian, it should be noted that he begins his *Lexicon*: ܚܠ ܣ ܕܗܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܚܘܬܡܪܐ ܐܠܟ ܐܝܣܐ ܪܝܒܐ ܘܩܪܝܐ ܘܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܐܟܬ̣ܒ ܠܟܣܝܩܘܢ 'By the power of the blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I write (this) *Lexicon*' (Hoffmann, *Syrisch-Arabische Glossen*, 1.1-2).

In spite of these insurmountable difficulties, most subsequent scholars have fol-
lowed Baumstark in identifying the lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali with 'Īsā b. 'Alī,
student of Yaḥyā b. 'Adī.[48] This is done explicitly, for example, by G. Graf in his
Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur.[49] The identification of the lexi-
cographer Isho' bar 'Ali with 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of Yaḥyā b. 'Adī, is, however,
more often made implicitly when scholars state that Isho' bar 'Ali died in 1001.[50]
Based on the preceding discussion, it is clear that Baumstark's identification can-
not be correct. To reiterate, the lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali was a Christian physi-
cian whereas 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of Yaḥyā b. 'Adī, was neither a Christian nor a
physician.

If the lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali cannot be identified with 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student
of Yaḥyā b. 'Adī, the question then becomes whether he can be identified either
with 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq, or with 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-kaḥḥāl, student
of Ibn al-Ṭayyib. The latter can most likely be ruled out on the basis of his name.
In the more than twenty manuscripts of the *Lexicon*, the author's name is always
given as 'Īsā b. 'Alī and never as 'Alī b. 'Īsā.[51] Though it is possible that the in-
verted form of 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-kaḥḥāl's name could appear in a few manuscripts, it
pushes the limits of plausibility to assume that only the inverted form of the name
occurs.[52] It seems unlikely, then, that the lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali is to be iden-

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48   There is, however, a small contingent that maintains the previous identification with 'Īsā b. 'Alī,
      student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq; see, e. g., Meyerhof, „New Light on Ḥunain Ibn Isḥâq," 710; Kahle,
      The Cairo Geniza, 311; Higgins, „The Arabic Version of Tatian's Diatessaron," 194 n. 1; Joosse,
      „An Introduction to the Arabic Diatessaron," 78, 103 with n. 159; G. Strohmaier, *Hellas im Islam*
      (Wiesbaden, 2003), 183 with n. 21.
49   Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 2, 157. This is somewhat surprising
      since Graf clearly distinguishes all three of the relevant individuals (*Geschichte der christlichen
      arabischen Literatur*, 176). In addition, it should be noted that in the first volume of his
      Geschichte (153) Graf identifies the lexicographer Isho' bar 'Ali with 'Īsā b. 'Alī, student of
      Ḥunayn. He does not, however, clarify why he changed his opinion on the matter between the first
      and second volumes.
50   See, e. g., I. Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrologia Syriaca* (revised edn. Rome, 1965), 219 (§160); R. Degen,
      „Zum Diabetestraktat des 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī," *AION* 37 (1977), 459 n. 11; H. Daiber,
      Aetius Arabus. Die Vorsokratiker in arabischer Überlieferung (Wiesbaden, 1980), 54; W. L.
      Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron. Its creation, dissemination, significance, and history in scholarship*
      (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 25; Leiden, 1994), 53-54; G. Endress, „Die wissenschaftliche
      Literatur," in W. Fischer (ed.), *Grundriß der Arabischen Philologie*, Vol. 3. *Supplement* (Wies-
      baden, 1992), 4 n. 11); S. Wild, „Sprachwissenschaftliche Literatur," in H. Gätje (ed.), *Grundriß
      der Arabischen Philologie*, Vol. 1. *Literaturwissenschaft* (Wiesbaden, 1987), 144. See also S. P.
      Brock, who states that Isho' bar 'Ali was a tenth-century Syriac lexicographer (*An Introduction to
      Syriac Studies* [Gorgias Handbooks 4; 2nd edn. Piscataway, 2006], 30).
51   For the manuscripts, see Gottheil, *Bar 'Ali (Isho')*, 5-7 and his comments in „Proceedings of the
      American Oriental Society," clxxxvii-cxc.
52   This would, for instance, differ from the manuscript tradition of 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-kaḥḥāl's *Prescrip-
      tion of Oculists*, where both the non-inverted form 'Alī b. 'Īsā and the inverted form 'Īsā b. 'Alī
      occur (see note 39).

tified with ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-kaḥḥāl, student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib[53]. Therefore, the only individual with whom the lexicographer Ishoʿ bar ʿAli can likely be identified is ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī, student of Ḥunayn. This identification is confirmed by the only explicit datum of evidence, ms. Vatican Syr. 217, which unequivocally states that the lexicographer Ishoʿ bar ʿAli was a student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq. Thus, pending further evidence, it seems best to conclude that the lexicographer Ishoʿ bar ʿAli is to be identified with the physician ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī, who lived in the second half of the ninth century and was a student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq.[54]

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53 It should be noted that this identification has been accepted by some scholars, e. g. Endress („Bilingual Lexical Materials in the Arabic Tradition," 166), who does not, however, provid any evidence in its favor.

54 Another potential datum of evidence is found in the *Catalogue* of ʿAbdishoʿ where he lists several lexicographers, including Ishoʿ bar ʿAli: ܕܗ ܚܘܠܒܐ ܚܕܬ ܠܩܘܡܘܣܐ ܚܢܒܟܐ ܡܢ ܚܦܠܐ (Assemani, *Bibliotheca orientalis Clementino-vaticana*, vol. 3.1, 257-258). The syntax of this passage can, however, be understood in two different ways: 1. 'Bar Bahlul composed a lexicon collected from many books and (so did) the physician Ishoʿ bar ʿAli, Maruzāyā, and Gabriel' (according to Assemani); 2. 'Bar Bahlul composed a lexicon collected from many books and (from) the physician Ishoʿ bar ʿAli, Maruzāyā, and Gabriel' (according to Duval, *Lexicon Syriacum auctore Hassano bar Bahlule*, viii; idem, *La littérature syriaque*, 272). If Duval's interpretation is correct, this provides further support for identifying the lexicographer Ishoʿ bar ʿAli with ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī, student of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq, since the lexicographer Ishoʿ bar ʿAli would necessarily predate Bar Bahlul (mid-10th cent.) thereby ruling out both ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī (d. 1001), student of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, and ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-kaḥḥāl (d. after 1010), student of Ibn al-Ṭayyib. Nevertheless, since the passage in ʿAbdishoʿ admits a different interpretation, this cannot be taken as definitive corroborative evidence. In addition (and perhaps more to the point), there is no evidence in the *Lexicon* of Bar Bahlul itself that Bar Bahlul was dependent on the *Lexicon* of Bar ʿAli (see Duval, *Lexicon Syriacum auctore Hassano bar Bahlule*, ix-x).