gran importancia, por el lugar que ocupa a medio camino entre el orbe latino y el árabe, para la historiografía hispánica.

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GRIFFITH, Sidney H. (trans. and intro.), *Yaḥyā ibn ʻAdī. The reformation of morals*. A parallel Arabic-English edition translated and introduced by Sidney H. Griffith. «Eastern Christian Texts», 1 (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), xlvi + 133 pp. [Arabic text based on the critical edition by Samir Khalil Kussaim, *Yaḥyā ibn ʻAdī (893-974), Tahḏīb al-aḫlāq* (Beirut: CEDRAC, 1994].

The Christian heritage of what came to be the Islamic world has been sadly neglected in English-language scholarship: in the United States, Near or Middle Eastern Studies programs often supplement their Arab-related offerings with courses on the Turkish and Persian *Islamic* worlds rather than with classes on the non-Muslim inhabitants of the Arabic-speaking Islamic world, or the pre-Islamic Near East (Christian or non-Christian). This oversight is compounded by the fact that Anglophone Church historians have primarily devoted themselves to the study of the Greek or Latin, largely "Orthodox" (i.e. Chalcedonian), legacy of Christianity. Brigham Young University's «Eastern Christian Texts» promises to fill this gap with a series of edited texts from the Christian Orient, accompanied by facing English translations.

The proximate goal of these publications (as with its Islamic texts series) is to "provide high quality bilingual editions of important ancient religious and philosophical texts" [p. ix]. As, from at least the eighth century of the Common Era, "eastern Christians" cannot be divorced from their Islamic setting, Yaḥyā b. ʻAdī's (d. 974 C.E.) *Tahḏīb al-aḫlāq* ("Reformation of morals") is well suited to inaugurate this series. In fact, the *Reformation of morals* has been attributed to both Christian and Muslim authors, as it is more reflective of the philosophical currents instrumental in shaping both Islamic and eastern Christian thought –i.e. the "Graeco-Syrian logical curriculum of late antiquity" [p. xix; Griffith's citation of Gutas]– than the "Jacobite" Christian creed of its author (or the doctrinal tenets of any other denomination, for that matter).

Essentially a discourse on the "moral qualities [of the soul]" (Griffith's rendering of *aḫlāq*), the work is primarily concerned with

the virtues and vices of the rulers and the educated (akin to the Persian "mirrors-for-princes" literature). Based on the premise that humans, alone among the animals, are "possessed of critical thinking and discrimination" (*ḏū fikrin wa-tamyīz*), and that the "worthiest thing a man chooses for himself is his own fulfillment and perfection" [p. 5], in the prolegomena the work urges its audience to avoid vice and cultivate virtue. The second part begins with a platonic echo, outlining the three "faculties" of the soul (*quwwat al-nafs*) – the appetitive, the irascible and the rational. For it is from these that the moral qualities (outlined in part three) emanate, each virtue (or vice) being associated with at least one of the three faculties. And these moral qualities are, in turn, pleasing or displeasing, according to the situation or station of their possessor – either kings or their subjects, rich or poor, men or women, religious/philosophers or others; what is a "virtue" for one, may be a "vice" for another. For example,

> "Love of pomp and splendor (*ḥubb al-zīna*)] is to be considered good on the part of kings and leaders, youths, elegant people, those who live in luxury, and women. As for monks (*al-ruhbān*), ascetics (*al-zuhhād*), elders (*al-šuyūḫ*), and scholars (*ahl al-ʻilm*) – especially orators (*al-ḫuṭabā'*), preachers (*al-wāʻiẓūna*), and religious leaders (*ru'asā' al-dīn*) – for them pomp and splendor (*al-zīna*) and making a display of oneself (*al-taṣannuʻ*) are to be considered repugnant. What is to be considered good for them is clothing of hair and coarse material, traveling on foot, obscurity, attendance at churches and mosques and so forth, and an abhorrence for luxurious living." [p. 61]

The instructional nature of the work is evident in the fourth part, wherein there is a description of how to "train" (*tarwīḍ*) the appetitive soul, "tame" (*tarwīḍ*) the irascible, and "strengthen" (*taqwiyya*) the rational one. The fifth, and final, section is devoted to a discussion of the "complete man" (*al-insān al-tāmm*) – the one who has attained "perfection" (*al-kamāl*). Here, as throughout the book, particular attention is paid to the "perfect king" (*al-malik al-tāmm*), who, for example

> "must take as his comrades, as his boon companions, as his entourage, and as those who will

> be around him, all who are known for nobility and level-headedness. They are to be characterized by refinement and dignity, singled out for knowledge and wisdom, and proven in understanding and perspicacity… He must make it his own pleasure and delight to take counsel with [scholars] about knowledge and its special fields, about the conduct of kingship and its ceremonies, about the histories of wise men and their moral qualities, and about the biographies of the best kings and their habits." [p. 95]

At the end of his introduction, Griffith suggests that the *Reformation of morals* may be seen as "a distinctly Christian contribution to the moral education of those in the inter-religious society of tenth-century Baghdad who were destined to become kings and leaders in their polity" [pp. xlv-xlvi]. The intended audience is clearly highly educated and apparently of varying religious persuasions, but the work is careful not to show preference for members of any one denomination. While various types of religious leaders are explicitly named, there is no sectarianism: sheikhs, ascetics, monks and priests – as long as they are "virtuous"– appear to be held in equal esteem by the author. It is this inter-religiosity that hinders attempts to define such a work as "Christian" or "Muslim" – as the history of the varied attributions of its authorship attest. But Griffith's highlighting of "the ancient Christian penchant for equating monasticism with the practice of the philosophy of Christ" [p. xlv] does support his suggestion that the monastic ideal may have been as influential for Yaḥyā's thinking as was the secular philosophical tradition – a thought that will hopefully be further developed in future works on the intellectual (and spiritual) heritage of ʻAbbāsid Baghdad.

The combined talents of Samir Khalil Samir and Sidney H. Griffith have now made this work of Yaḥyā's ibn ʻAdī easily accessible to both Arabists and non-Arabists. The 33 page introduction orients the reader to the life of Yaḥyā – geographically ("Yaḥyā ibn ʻAdī al-Takrītī", pp. xiv-xviii), philosophically ("Yaḥyā ibn ʻAdī al-Manṭiqī", pp. xviii-xxv) and spiritually ("Yaḥyā ibn ʻAdī, the Theologian", pp. xxv-xxviii), and also situates the *Reformation of morals* within its literary and philosophical tradition. Samir's fully vocalized and conveniently subtitled 149-page Arabic text has been

further divided into numbered paragraphs, and formatted to fit Griffith's 57-page English translation.

The student of Arabic will greatly appreciate Samir's vocalization of the text and pages xxxii-xli of Griffith's introduction, which can serve as a study guide to the text and translation. For translation is certainly an art, upon the finer points of which no two people will ever agree (particularly on the balance that should be struck between faithful adherence to the style of the original and a rendering into the familiar idiom of the target language). Additionally, the very nature of Arabic and English preclude a perfect inter-linear translation (as seen even in the few passages quoted above): two or more English words may be needed to convey a concept contained in one Arabic term, or a single Arabic lexeme may have different meanings, depending on the context.

In the future, the editors of «Eastern Christian Texts» might consider providing additional information on the textual history of the original-language edition used for the translation. For, even if the edited text has already been published, the reader would like to have at hand an overview of the manuscripts used for the editing of the original text, as well as the editor's methodology. A fuller index would also be a desideratum – particularly one for the key Arabic (or, in future volumes, Syriac, Coptic, or Armenian, etc.) terms. These minor points aside, in the final analysis, this bilingual edition of Yaḥyā's work will prove invaluable both to students of Oriental Christianity and/or the cultural milieu of ʻAbbāsid Baġdād.

The ultimate goal of Brigham Young University's «Eastern Christian Texts» series is "to promote scholarship, understanding and dialogue, and the values and truths that these texts embody" [pp. ix-x]. Although time alone will tell if the other goals are met, the efforts of Griffith and Samir have successfully produced a work that will furnish its readers with an *understanding* of both the milieu and the values of the cultured elite in ʻAbbāsid Baġdād.

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