

## How One Sees



*This anatomical drawing of the eye by Abū Zayd Hunayn ibn Isbāq al-'Ibādī (808–ca. 873), who translated Galen's optical treatise into Arabic, is considered as probably the earliest in the Muslim tradition. Hunayn was a Christian Arab known in Latin as Johannitius, who came from al-Hīrab near Baghdad. His ten books on the eye were described by Julius Hirschberg as "the first learned Arabic text book on ophthalmology with the name of the author that has come down to us".<sup>1</sup> The illustration we used as a visual motto is taken from a later Arabic manuscript referring to Hunayn ibn Isbāq. This manuscript dates from ca. 1200 and is held at the National Library in Cairo.<sup>2</sup>*

## A Short Genealogy on the Variation of a Model

In intellectual history there is the phenomenon of master thinkers. They are admired, because they dared to reflect on matters in ways that nobody thought of before them. Or they combined existing thoughts in such a way that something extraordinarily original was the result. In the history of science and technology, we marvel at master models. From such models, many other particular concepts and construction principles are derived, which themselves can also be

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<sup>1</sup> Julius Hirschberg, *Die Arabischen Lehrbücher der Augenheilkunde* (Berlin, 1905), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Fuat Sezgin gives the signature as "Dar al-Kutub (National Library), (Signature:) Taimur, p. 319", in: Sezgin, *Wissenschaft und Technik im Islam*, vol. IV (Frankfurt am Main, 2003), p. 19.