

Accounts of the Unani Medical Literature Produced from 13th Century to 16th century

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Abstract: *The Unani system of Medicine has a huge reservoir of literature composed by the various authors, and many of them require regular books because of their glorious and distinguished works. For some authors, not a massive book but huge volumes of books will be required and to wind up their works and introducing them will not be an easy task for a researcher. It was taken as an Intra-Mural Research (IMR) project from Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India to compile the history of literature produced from 13th to 16th century AD. This work was carried out at National Institute of Indian Medical Heritage (NIIMH), Hyderabad, a peripheral institute of CCRAS. NIIMH has the mandate to work and preserve the heritage of all medical sciences.*

Keywords: History of Medicine, Unani medicine

1. Introduction

It is a well known fact that medical literature of the past is a source of information which has the potentiality of suggestions to the contemporary scientist. The different views of medicine in the past and its philosophy on a wider perspective will enable us to evaluate old medical literature more objectively and utilize it.

Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India has approved three Intra-Mural Research (IMR) projects and entrusted me to compile the history of literature produced from Hippocratic period (462-370 BC) to 16th century AD.

These three IMR projects are divided in three parts:

- First part deals with Unani Medical Literature produced from Hippocratic period (462-370 BC) to 8th century AD
- Second part deals with Unani Medical Literature produced from 9th century to 12th century AD
- Third part deals with Unani Medical Literature produced from 13th century to 16th century AD

All these three parts are published by National Institute of Indian Medical Heritage (NIIMH), Revenue Board Colony, Gaddiannaram, Hyderabad-500036. Over thousand books written in Unani Medicine from the Hippocratic period up to the 16th century are covered in these three monographs.

The period between from 9th to 12th centuries AD is often described as the Golden Age of Islamic science, the teaching and practice of medicine in Europe was heavily influenced by the works of Al-Razi (d. 925), al-Zahrawi (d. 1013) and Ibn Sina (d. 1037). Ibn Sina's (Avicenna) Canon of Medicine, they were translated into Latin and then disseminated in manuscript and printed form throughout Europe. But the period from the 13th to 16th centuries was also a prosperous period. Ibn Nafis (d. 1288 AD) is portrayed to the world as one of the greatest physicians in the 13th century, equal to Avicenna and even surpassing the latter in the treatment. After the work of Ibn al-Nafis, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Unani system produced

many great names in the field as Ali Gilani of India (d. 1609 AD) and Daud Al-Antaki (d. 1599) are among them.

This period is important in the Indian context also as it was the time when the Unani system of medicine found entry into the Indian subcontinent, there was a Mughal rule in India who patronized the Unani system of medicine. Many books were written in this period by Unani scholars. This is the period of which many personalities require regular books because of their glorious and distinguished works and to wind up their works and introducing them will not be easy task for a researcher. Finding old manuscripts is in fact tracing one's heritage. Our artistic, intellectual and cultural needs are connected to them. To preserve the intellectual heritage is need of the hour.

These medical literature covered different topics and structures they may be classified as Medical Encyclopedias, Epitomes, Commentaries, Medical Poetry, Medical Monographs, Medical Therapeutics Dietetics and Regimen, Pharmaceutics

A particularly outstanding manuscript in the latter category is an illuminated manuscript of a treatise by an Indian court physician, Hakīm 'Alavī Khān that was possibly prepared as a presentation copy for the Mughal Emperor Muḥammad Shah.¹

Salient Features of the Monograph

Though the information can be traced in the books written on the subject of 'History of Unani Medicine' in Urdu but as of now there is no authentic book available in English on the subject. Urdu books basically deal with the biographies of Unani physicians rather than discussing their literary works in detail. Therefore the monograph on history of the Unani books helps the scholars who are unaware of Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages to get information about precious Unani literature, linking the past with the present, going back again and again to the vast reservoir of empirical knowledge of ancient traditions derived from experiments and observations for culling out new ideas for study and investigation. The present work makes Unani classical

literatures in public domain due to its global popularity leading to collaboration and intra AYUSH referral. The study caters the needs of the scholars and scientists who with a mind free of bias and prejudice are willing to accept the challenge of making the young generation interested in perusal of classic medical literature that contain unique natural cures for many diseases which are still cureless.

This monograph contains the account of the medical history of four hundred years from 13th to 16th century in chronological order and some important books written after the 16th century also. It consists of descriptions of over 200 books composed by 24 physicians of the 13th century, 18 physicians of 14th century, 13 physicians of 15th century, 22 physicians of 16th century, and 17 physicians after 16th century along with their brief accounts of life. First an introduction of an important book has been given, followed by the brief introduction of the author, and then other compositions of the same author have been described in brief.

The contents are mentioned here:

Chapter One: description of the Books composed in 13th century

- 1) Al-Janinah by Al-Dakhtar (d. 1230 AD)
- 2) Lutf al-Masail by Sadid al-Din (d.1237 AD)
- 3) Kitab al-Rihla by Ibn Rumiya Al-Nabati (d. 1240)
- 4) Al-Advia al-Mufradah by Al-Souri (d. 1241 AD)
- 5) Mufradat Alfaz by Kamal al-Din Mosuli (d. 1242 AD)
- 6) Ikhtisar Kulliyat by Rafi' ai-Din Jili (d.1243 AD)
- 7) Nihayat al-Afkar by Al-Baghdādī (d. 1248 AD)
- 8) Al-Jami' li Mufradat By Ibn Baytar (d. 1248 AD)
- 9) Sharh Maqalah al-Nabd by al-Khonji (d. 1248 AD)
- 10) Tarikh al-Hukama by Ibn al-Qifti (d. 1248 AD)
- 11) Nuzhat al-Albāb by al-Tifāshī (d. 1253 AD)
- 12) Al-Kafi fil Kuhl by Khalīfah Al-Ḥalabī (d. 1256 AD)
- 13) Natījat al-Fikar by Fath al-Dīn al-Qaysī (d. 1258 AD)
- 14) Hawashi al-Qanun by Sharfuddin bin Rahbi (d. 1269 AD)
- 15) Uyūn al-Anbā By Ibn Abi Usaibia (d. 1270 AD)
- 16) Alāmat by Abū Alī al-Marrākushī (fl. 1281 AD)
- 17) Tibb Firoz Shahi by Shah Quli (fl. 1281 AD)
- 18) Sharh Kulliyat al-Qanun by Ya'qub Samri (d.1282 AD)
- 19) Aja'ib al-Makhlūqat by Al-Qazwini (1283 .d)
- 20) Kitāb al-Umda fil Jarahat by Ibn al-Quff (d. 1286)
- 21) Kitāb al-Shamil by Ibn Nafis (d. 1288 AD)
- 22) Book on Food and Drink by Vaṭvāt (fl. 1290 AD)
- 23) Al-Tadhkirah al-Hadia by Al-Suwaydī, (d. 1292)
- 24) Nur al-Uyun by Ṣalāḥuddin (d. 1296 AD)

Chapter Two: description of the Books composed in 14th century

- 25) Nuzhat al-Hukamā by al-Shirazi (d. 1311 AD)
- 26) Tanqih al-Manazir by al-Farsi (d. 1320 AD)
- 27) Al-Hawi fi Ilm al-Tadawi by Mahmud ibn Ilyas al-Shirazi (d. 1330 AD)
- 28) Haqa'iq Asrar al-Tibb by Mas'ud Sijzi (fl. 1334 AD)
- 29) Majmua-i-Ziyai by Ziya Zangi (fl. 1336 AD)
- 30) Qānūnchah by Al-Jaghmini (d.1344 AD)
- 31) Kashf Al-Rayn by Ibn Al-Akfānī (d. 1348 AD)
- 32) Kitāb al-Umdah by Ṣadaqah al-Shadhilī (d. 1350 AD)
- 33) Sharah Kulliat by al-Amuli (fl. 1350 AD)

- 34) Al-Talwiḥ ilā Asrār al-Tanqih by Khujandī (fl. 1303 AD)
- 35) Ma la Yasa'u by Ibn al-Kutubi (d. 1353 AD)
- 36) Al-Mughni by Al-Kazaruni (d. 1357 AD)
- 37) Taqweem ul-Adawiyah by al-Isfara'ini (d. 1358 AD)
- 38) Muqnia al-Sa'il by ibn al-Khatib (d. 1374 AD)
- 39) Ḥall al-Mūjiz by Al-Aqsara'i (d. 1379 AD)
- 40) Tashrīḥ-i Badan by ibn Ilyās (fl. 1380 AD)
- 41) Ṭibb-i Shahābi by al-Nagawri (fl. 1388 AD)
- 42) Ikhtiyārāt-i Badī'ī by Haji Zayn Attar (1388 AD)
- 43) Hayat al-Hayawan by Al-Damiri (1389 AD)

Chapter Three: description of the Books composed in 15th century

- 44) Shifa al-Asqam by Khidr ibn Ali (d. 1422 AD)
- 45) Khora Chholi by Gaesudaraaz (d.1422 AD)
- 46) Sharḥ al-Mukhtaṣar by al-Astarabadi (fl. 1427 AD)
- 47) Al-Jawhar al-Fard by al-Māridīnī (fl. 1442 AD)
- 48) Sharh al-Asbab by Nafis Kirmani (d. 1449 AD)
- 49) Al-Jawhar al-Nafis al-Baghdādī (d. 1463 AD)
- 50) Fawā'id al-Hasaniyah by al-Shirāzī (d. 1467 AD)
- 51) Cerrāhiyyetü 'l-Hāniyye by Şerafeddin (d. 1468 AD)
- 52) Tibb Shifa Mahmud Shahi by Ali Aseeli (fl. 1474 AD)
- 53) Sharah al-Mujiz by Ghayasudin (fl. 1474 AD)
- 54) Tuhfatul Mujerrabat by Sadullah Nizami (fl. 1470 AD)
- 55) Al-Munjiz by Mahmud Amshati (d.1496 AD)
- 56) Khulasat al-Tajarib by Nurbakhshi (fl. 1499 AD)

Chapter Four: description of the Books composed in 16th century

- 57) Aaina-e-Sikandari (fl. 1515 AD)
- 58) Tibb Ibrahim Shahi by Khwajgi (fl. 1519 AD)
- 59) Madan al-Shifa by Bahwa bin Khawas (fl. 1519 AD)
- 60) Sharh Mujiz By Ibn Mubarak Qazwini (d.1521 AD)
- 61) Faiziya by Mulla Mir Tabib (fl 1530 AD)
- 62) Matalib by Safiuddin Gilani (fl. 1537 AD)
- 63) Sharah Qanuncha By Lahori (fl. 1538 AD)
- 64) Dastūr al-Ilāj by Sulṭān Alī Khurāsānī (fl. 1526 AD)
- 65) Ain al-Hayat by Al-Harawī, (d. 1542 AD)
- 66) Jami al-Fawa'id' by Yousuf (fl. 1544 AD)
- 67) Zakhira Nizam Shahi by Rustam Jurjani (fl. 1544 AD)
- 68) Tarjuma Kulliat by Fathullah Gilani (fl. 1560 AD)
- 69) Mukhtaṣar Tadhkira by al-Sha'rānī (d. 1565 AD)
- 70) Fattahi by Abul Fatah Gilani (fl. 1589 AD)
- 71) Al-Rawz al-Yāni by al-Tamakrūtī (d.1572 AD)
- 72) Nur Hadaqa al-Absar by Taqī (d. 1585 AD)
- 73) Risalah Atishak by Shirazi (d. 1592 AD)
- 74) Zia al-Uyun by Ain al-Mulk (d. 1595 AD)
- 75) Sharḥ al-Qānūn by Alī Gilani (fl.1590 AD)
- 76) Tazkira by Dawud Antaki (fl. 1590 AD)
- 77) Zubda al-Hikam By Shamsuddin (fl. 1590 AD)
- 78) Ikhtiyarat-e-Qasmi by Firishta (1590 A.D)

Some important books composed after 16th century

- 79) Hadiqat al-Azhar by Qasim al-Andalusi (d. 1610 AD)
- 80) Ganj Badaward by Amanullah (d. 1637 AD)
- 81) Ikhtiyarat Qutub Shahi by Mir Momin (d. 1626 AD)
- 82) Tib Dara Shikohi by Nuruddin (fl. 1628 AD)
- 83) Qarabadin Shifā'ī by Muzaffar (d. 1627 AD)
- 84) Tibb-e-Ghiyasia by Shamsuddin Shirazi (fl. 1648 AD)
- 85) Majmua By Nizamuddin Gilani (d.1669 AD)
- 86) Qarabadin Masumi by al-Sheerazi (fl. 1637 AD)
- 87) Mufarriḥ al-Qulūb by Arzānī (d. 1722 AD)

- 88) Jami' al-Javami by Alavi Khan (d.1747 AD)
- 89) Majma' al-Javāmi by Hādī Khān, (fl. 1771-81)
- 90) Sharh Mujiz by Sharīf Khān (d.1807 AD)
- 91) Tahqeeq al-Buhran by Ahmadullah (fl. 1795)
- 92) Ilaj al-Atfal by Shifai Khan (fl. 1836 AD)
- 93) Yadgar Razai by Hakim Raza Ali Khan (fl. 1842 AD)
- 94) Aksīr A'zām by Azam Khan (d.1902 AD)
- 95) Al-Qanun (Urdu) By Kintoori (d. 1918 AD)

In order to evaluate the contributions of authors in these periods to the progress of medicine authentic primary sources were utilized to review their biography and their compositions. Original Arabic and Persian editions of resource books were studied. For this purpose author has visited many libraries of India personally like HMS Central Library, Hamdard University, New Delhi, Ibn Sina Academy of Medieval Medicine, Aligarh, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Arabic Persian Research Institute, Tonk, Rajasthan, Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama Library, Lucknow, Raza Library Rampur, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library, Patna, National Library Kolkata, and the Library of Asiatic Society, Kolkata. Furthermore, pertinent references including books, periodicals and online history of medicine and other resources have been reviewed.^{2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13}

This work is kind of introductory and commemorative. It is not aimed to do critical review which is another topic. I am confident after the publication of this seminal work, more work can be carried out methodically along these lines.

I have completed the task in a very short period of twelve months. However, the present work is restricted to important books composed during these four centuries and does not represent each and every book written in Unani Medicine as a whole, nor is it possible to encompass all the works of great scholars spread over centuries in a minuscule manner. Still, an attempt has been made to include as many books as possible however there is always a space for improvement, addition and deletion and by no means is it the last draft on the topic.

The present volume carries descriptions of over 300 books. It covers all kinds of works by an author, the original compositions as well as translations, commentaries and epitomes also. Some books have detailed descriptions and some have very short ones because the available information was very less and it was taken up and put in the monograph. The purpose was at least the readers may know the names of these books. To search for all these books in different libraries was very complex and tiring because many manuscripts covered with a lot of dust and worms were very difficult to read but it was awesome to reach to all these rare books written in these long periods, it gave me the opportunity to increase a lot of my knowledge about these compositions which was impossible to gain in usual circumstances.¹⁴

This work is the first attempt of its kind to include all Unani publications of this period in chronological order. Around one thousand books composed by Unani physicians from Hippocratic period (462-370 BC) to 16th century AD are documented in these three monographs which certainly

serve as useful reference for students, academicians, medical historians and scientists and will also be of immense help to scholars doing research work.

Earlier the author has completed some other literary projects in NIIMH, among them is editing and translation of a Persian manuscript 'Ilaj al-Atfal' (Pediatrics), and a monograph on Amrāz Kabid (hepatic disorders) in literature of Unani Medicine, both were published in four issues of institute journal. Editing and translation of an Arabic manuscript 'Ain al-Hayāt' (A book on Geriatrics), was done and published by Ibn Sina Academy, Tijara House, Aligarh.

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