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THE SAMI HADDAD COLLECTION OF ARABIC MEDICAL MANUSCRIPTS

by

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In September 1985, the London auction firm Sotheby's published a catalogue of *Fine Oriental manuscripts and miniatures* to be sold in their rooms on 21–22 November. This sale was of particular interest to historians of medieval Near Eastern medicine, since Lots 457–525 comprised a corpus of ninety-five manuscripts from the collection of the late Sami Haddad. Examination of the manuscripts revealed that this sale represented a unique opportunity for an especially significant acquisition. Furthermore, in view of the fact that Arabic medical collections of this size and calibre rarely become available, it seemed a matter of particular importance that this corpus should remain intact and available for scholarly research. The proposed sale was therefore brought to the attention of the Wellcome Trustees, who authorized acquisition of the collection and generously provided the necessary funding. Negotiations through Sotheby's came to a successful conclusion on 15 November, with the Wellcome Institute's purchase of the Haddad manuscripts by private treaty.

This new addition to the Wellcome Institute's already considerable Arabic holdings comes from the private collection of Dr Sami Ibrahim Haddad, one of the most intriguing and most important medical figures of the modern Middle East. Born in 1890 in Jaffa in Ottoman Palestine, Haddad received his secondary education in Jerusalem, where he excelled as a student, and in 1909 proceeded to advanced medical studies in Beirut at the Syrian Protestant College, which had established a teaching hospital only four years earlier. Upon receiving his MD in 1913, he spent several years in medical practice and held a number of official medical posts during the difficult years of World War I in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. In 1920, he joined the Department of Surgery at the Syrian Protestant College (later that year renamed the American University of Beirut), and played a leading role in the development of what quickly became the most advanced medical faculty in the Near East. The recipient of numerous scholarly awards and fellowships, he frequently travelled abroad to keep abreast of advances in his field; and though well-known as a cautious surgeon sceptical of unproven novelty, he was responsible for the introduction of numerous new surgical

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procedures into modern medical practice in the Near East. As war once again engulfed the region, he was promoted to Professor of Surgery in 1939, and became Chairman of the Department and Dean of the Medical Faculty in 1941.

Haddad retired in 1947, but was immediately appointed Professor Emeritus and remained active in his field. He founded the Orient Hospital that same year, continued to travel and lecture, and was twice decorated by the government of Lebanon, his adopted home. Though in failing health in the last five years of his life, he remained a practising surgeon to within four months of his death, on 5 February 1957.

Like so many other leading Arab personalities of his time, Haddad was actively involved in the political ferment and current of cultural revival that continued from late Ottoman times into the colonial period. He acted as physician and interpreter for the King-Crane Commission in 1919, and from 1920 until his death he played a significant role in decision-making at the American University of Beirut. An avid enthusiast for the heritage of the past, he took an interest in Arab medical history, on which he frequently wrote and lectured, and collected artefacts ranging from stamps and coins to glassware and jewellery. Of particular interest to him as a physician were medical and scientific instruments, photographs of medieval *bīmārīstāns*, and Near Eastern manuscripts. By the time of his death, his manuscript collection comprised 360 volumes, mostly in Arabic, but including fifty-two in Turkish, Persian, Armenian, Syriac, Garshūnē (Arabic written in Syriac characters), and Hebrew. Of the Arabic manuscripts, forty dealt with subjects in the exact sciences, and 122 with medicine, pharmacy, and chemistry.

The manuscripts now at the Wellcome Institute comprise the bulk of Haddad's medical collection. Medieval Arab and Islamic medicine is still an underdeveloped field in which historians are plagued by uncritical editions, heavily flawed translations of even the most fundamental sources, and insecure foundations for almost every topic of inquiry. Access to manuscript materials is in this situation very important; hence the Haddad collection of medical works—sembled by a knowledgeable medical practitioner, and largely in the 1930s and '40s, when significant texts were still readily available—is a most important acquisition. Although the Wellcome Institute already has quite substantial holdings in both Arabic and Persian manuscripts, only eighteen titles are repeated in the Haddad corpus. A full account of these manuscripts cannot be given here, but a selective and necessarily arbitrary summary of this new addition may serve to indicate its significance and the lines of research it suggests.

The Haddad corpus adds to the Wellcome Institute collections a number of major texts by well-known authors. These include the following:

1. Hunayn ibn Ishāq al-'Ibādī (d. 260/873), *Masā'il fī l-tibb*, H459, 64 fols. A fine clearly written exemplar of Hunayn's *Questions on medicine*, copied in 787/1385. The text has recently been edited, but would still seem to merit textual attention.
2. Idem, (*Fī ta'arruf 'ilal al-a'dā' al-bāṭina*, H458, 215 fols. An undated MS. of his Arabic translation of Galen's *De locis affectis*. Copies of this work are rare. See plate 1.

3. Al-Mājūsi (Haly Abbas), 'Alī ibn al-'Abbās (d. c. 384/994), *Kāmil al-ṣinā'a al-tibbiya*, H466, 365 fols. A superb compact *naskhī* copy of his great compendium on medicine, the *Liber regius*, copied in 838–41/1434–37. MS. H467 (55 fols.) is a later Mamlūk copy of the last two parts of this work.
4. Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh (d. 428/1037), *Al-Urjūza fī l-tibb*, H472, 55 fols. A *naskhī* manuscript of this verse mnemonic on medical thought and procedure, copied in 754/1353. MSS. H473 (40 fols.) and H474 (86 fols.) are Ottoman copies of this same work.
5. Ibn Butlān, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Mukhtār ibn al-Ḥasan (d. 458/1066), *Da'wat al-atibbā'*, H525, 11 fols. A late copy of this lively and engaging skit, composed "after the manner of *Kahla and Dimna*," on charlatans and medical ethics.
6. Ibn Jazla (Bengazala), Abū 'Alī Yaḥyā ibn 'Īsā (d. 493/1100), *Taqwīn al-abdān*, H475, 47 fols. A magnificent manuscript of his tabular digest of regimen and dietetic therapy, copied in 994/1585. The tables are ruled in gold and copied in black, red, blue, and gold.
7. Al-Masṭhī, Abū l-Naṣr Ṣā'id ibn Abī l-Khayr (d. 589/1193), *Al-Ṣafwa*, H477, 140 fols. Copied in 695/1295 by a physician named Sa'id al-Mutaṭabbib al-Mawsilī, this is the oldest manuscript in the Haddad collection and probably emanates from the circle of Nestorian Christian physicians in northern Iraq. See plate 2.
8. Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Abū l-Walīd Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad (d. 595/1198), *Sharḥ urjūzat Ibn Sīnā*, H478, 192 fols. The commentary on no. 4 above by the famous philosopher, jurist, and physician, this exemplar copied in 962/1554. As Ibn Rushd was an admirer of Ibn Sīnā's medical work, yet a critic of his philosophy, this unpublished commentary is of considerable interest.
9. Ibn Maymūn (Maimonides), Abū 'Imrān Mūsā ibn 'Ubayd Allāh (d. 601/1204), *Al-Maqāla fī tadbīr al-sihha*, H482, 42 fols. An exemplar of his well-known essay on hygiene and dietetics, dated 1090/1679, with al-Rāzī's *Bur' al-sā'a* appended.
10. Ibn al-Bayṭār, Diyā' al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh (d. 646/1248), *Al-Mughnī fī l-adwiya al-mufrada*, H486, 128 fols. An early Mamlūk copy of this Spanish botanist and pharmacologist's treatise on materia medica.
11. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, Abū l-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn al-Qāsim (d. 668/1270), *Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-atibbā'*, H489 and H490, 232 and 157 fols. Both parts of his famous biographical dictionary of physicians, copied 1309/1891 and 1294/1877. Though very late, these manuscripts remain useful in light of the serious defects in the printed editions.
12. Ibn al-Quff, Abū l-Faraj Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq (d. 685/1286), *Al-'Umda fī ṣinā'at al-jirāḥa*, part II, H491, 114 fols. A clear text of the second part of his important manual on surgery, with some lacunae and recopied folios.
13. Ibn al-Nafīs, Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Abī l-Ḥazm (d. 687/1288), *Mūjiz al-Qāntun*, H494, 118 fols. A Mamlūk copy of his synopsis of the *Canon* of Avicenna, copied in 734/1333. The text is defective at the beginning of the manuscript. MSS. H492 (184 fols.) and H493 (315 fols., defective at the conclusion of the MS.) are Ottoman copies of this same work.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

المقالة الخامسة من كتاب جالينوس في تعرف علل
الاعضا الباطنة

قال فكان اشترك خرج في المقالة التي قبل هذه ان ذكرت في الموضع
الذي وصفت فيه العلل الخادثة في الرية من ام الصدر والقلب شيئا بسيما
واخرت استتمام جميع القول فيما احده في هذه المقالة ولان اخرها انقضت
عند المقالة الرابعة انما كان في ذكر الاشياء التي عرضت لانطينا اصل الطبيب
الذي كان اول علمه في الرية ثم سعت حتى بلغت الي القلب قد ريت ان
الاجود ان استتم القول في جميع علل القلب

ذكر علل القلب

قد ينبغي ان نسلك في ام القلب ايضا المسلك الذي نسلكه في جميع الاعضا
ففي الاعراض التي تعرض له على طريق العلل الخادثة فيه خاصة او فيه اولاً
او في كيف شاء الانسان ان يقول في ذلك من الاعراض التي تعرض له اذ كان
ما يحدث فيه من العلل ايضا انما هو على طريق مشاركته لغيره من الاعضا
في العلل وانما مثل فيه ذلك ويجعل اول ما اذكره من امراض الرية التي
تقدمت فينتها وبرهنت عليها في كتب اخرى وما بينته هناك ان القلب

كالعند

Plate 1 Hunayn ibn Ishāq, (*Fi ta 'arruf 'ilal al-a'dā' al-bātina*, fol. 141v, here taking up the subject of diseases of the heart.

14. Al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Abī Bakr (d. 911/1505), *Al-Manhaj al-sāwī wa-l-manhal al-rāwī fī l-ṭibb al-nabawī*, H503, 91 fols. An undated manuscript of al-Suyūṭī’s work on medical traditions attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad.

Such works as these, focused on the renowned personalities of medieval Arab-Islamic medicine, are complemented in a very important way by other significant features of the Haddad corpus. In the study of the seminal works of great and famous men, it often happens that actual medical practice and the working physician are lost from view. The considerable attention that has quite rightly been devoted over the years to, for example, the *Al-Qānūn fī l-ṭibb* of Ibn Sīnā, seems to beg the question of the place of this often extremely complex and difficult work, and others like it, within the context of medieval Arab-Muslim society and general medical practice, as opposed to its obviously primal place within the context of formal and specialized medical literature. It would be a task of the greatest interest and importance to investigate such questions (and the reasons behind the answers) as what ordinary physicians actually read and used for their work, what texts they found most helpful for reference, teaching, and study, what works were kept in the libraries of those who could afford to buy books. Such inquiries lead us into the heart of the matter: medicine as a living intellectual and social tradition, ever changing and developing with the interplay of a vast array of social, scientific, and religious perceptions.

These matters are, of course, not easy to get at, but neither are they entirely beyond our reach. Much relevant information manifests itself in the way in which the great works attracted commentary, epitomization, and reworking on a more accessible level. To be viewed in the same light is the proliferation of “instant remedy” books, manuals of cures and procedures for those without access to a physician, works on the *Tibb al-nabī* (“Medicine of the Prophet”), and the interesting phenomenon of the large-scale survival of medical digests and manuals by unnamed or unknown authors. And perhaps of most immediate interest are those manuscripts that bear signs of repeated use and consultation: wear and damage, marginal comments, annotations, and glosses, and attestations of ownership and study.

The Haddad collection is quite rich in these respects. Many of the manuscripts are heavily annotated and seem to have been in frequent use. There are a number of anonymous manuals and more popular works, and—not surprisingly for a collection largely assembled in Lebanon—quite a few indications of the activity of Christian physicians in the hinterland of Mt. Lebanon during the later Ottoman period.

The survival and availability for study of such manuscripts as these is of great importance for the study of medical history in the medieval Near East. It is through this kind of data, as opposed to the more idealized tendencies evident elsewhere, that one can determine the importance attached to particular texts, practices, and ideas in medieval times, the structure of medical education, details about physicians and teachers about whom little or nothing is now known, and something of the physician’s place in society and his own attitudes toward his profession.