



‘ABDALLĀH B. ‘ĪSĀ

‘ABDALLĀH B. ‘ĪSĀ B. BAQTAVAYH, ABU’L-ḤOSAYN, medical author of the early 5th/11th century, of Vāseṭī background. His own name as well as his father’s name suggest that he may have been a convert to Islam, for ‘Abdallāh is a name typical of a neophyte. His father and grandfather, to judge from their Syro-Persian names, appear to have belonged to the indigenous Christian—probably Nestorian—Aramaic speaking population of Mesopotamia.

‘Īsā b. Baqtavayh is reported to have been a physician, and ‘Abdallāh’s son may also have taken up this profession. In 420/1029 ‘Abdallāh composed for his son what appears to be his major work, *Ketāb al-moqaddamāt*, also known as *Kanz al-aṭebbā’*. The book was available to Ebn Abī Oṣaybe‘a, who twice quotes from it and, in all likelihood, derives from it his information on the date and circumstances of its composition. *Ketāb al-moqaddamāt* was probably a kind of primer for a young man ready to step out into the life of the medical profession. To judge by the quotations in Ebn Abī Oṣaybe‘a, e.g., of a process of making ice using saltpeter, the loss of the book is to be deplored. In addition to this work, Ebn Abī Oṣaybe‘a mentions two treatises on more specialized subjects: *Ketāb al-qaṣd elā ma’refat al-faṣd*, on bloodletting, and *Ketāb al-zohd fī’l-ṭebb*, of which one would like to know whether it dealt with asceticism as a therapeutic measure or as a moral attitude on the part of the physician.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ebn Abī Oṣaybe‘a, *‘Oyūn al-anbā‘ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭebbā‘*, ed. August Müller, Cairo and Königsberg, 1882-84, I, pp. 82, 209, 253.

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