



ḤĀWI, AL-

ḤĀWI, AL- (i.e., *al-Ketābal-ḥāwifī'l-ṭebb* “Comprehensive book on medicine”), the title of a major Arabic work on medicine in twenty-five volumes by Abu Bakr Moḥammad b. Zakariyā' Rāzi (b. Rey [classical Rhagai, on the southern outskirts of modern Tehran], 1 Ša'bān 251/28 August 865; d. 5 Ša'bān 313/26 October 925; these dates on Biruni's authority), physician, scientist, philosopher, and prolific author in medicine and ancillary subjects, alchemy, logic, and philosophy. It was translated into Latin in 1279 as *Continens* by Faraj b. Sālem (Farraguth) and presented to Charles of Anjou, king of Naples.

According to circumstantial but solid evidence, the multi-volume work *al-Ḥāwi* is the result of a posthumous compilation of Rāzi's medical notes and commonplace books in the fields of pathology and therapy, *materia medica* and pharmacy, but excluding anatomy. The Buyid vizier Abu'l-Faẓl b. al-'Amid (d. 961; see [EBN 'AMĪD](#)) was credited with the initiative to have the book compiled; he is reported to have purchased Rāzi's papers from a surviving sister of his who had them in her possession and to have had them transcribed and collected by a group of Rāzi's students (Ebn Abi Oṣaybe'a, I p. 314; II, 15 ff.). The author had never meant them to be published in their present state; instead, they constituted his reference library and were mainly to serve his long-term end, as he proudly proclaims in his *al-Sira al-falsafiya* (ed. Kraus, fol. 5a), unprecedented project of a large medical encyclopedia under the title *al-Jāme'* “*Colligens*” (the nearly orthographical similarity of the titles *al-Jāme'* and *al-Ḥāwi* has often led to confusion; see Iskandar, 1975, pp. 41-46). To judge by the sections of *al-Jāme'* hitherto identified and the bibliographical accounts by



Ebn al-Nadim and Ebn Abi Oṣaybeʿa, it may well have encompassed a number of thematically related, but independently titled monographs (cf. Iskandar, 1975, esp. p. 44). Conversely, the possibility that *al-Ḥāwi* contains some rather more finished and, as it were, publishable sections will have to be entertained as well, pending a thorough examination of all existing manuscripts (see below).

The range of Rāzi's notes as gathered in *al-Ḥāwi* convincingly fulfils his requirement that a competent scholar should be thoroughly versed in existing scholarship. For him as a physician, this included the Greek, Sanskrit, Syriac, and early Islamic traditions, not ignoring unattributed hospital practice and "women" (*al-nesā'*; see Najmābādī, p. 127, n. 43) either, regardless of whether or not he was in agreement; apparently he did not exclude a single source that he had ever had access to. Thus the names quoted run the gamut from the Hippocratic corpus (5th c. B.C.E.–1st cent. C.E.) to Paul of Aegina (fl. 630) and John of Alexandria (fl. 650) among the Greeks; from Caraka (fl. 2nd cent. C.E.) to *Aṣṭāṅkar* (i.e., *Aṣṭāṅgahāṛdaya* by Vāgbhaṭa, fl. 600) and *Sindhīsār* (i.e., *Siddhasāra* by Ravigupta, fl. 650) among the Indians; from Sarjis of Ra's-al-'Ayn (Sergius of Rēš 'Aynā, d. 536) to Yuḥannā b. Sarābiun (Bar Serā-pyōn, fl. 873) among Syriac writers; and among Islamic authors from Tiāduq (fl. 700) to his own contemporaries, such as Tābet b. Qorra (d. 901), Yusof Sāher (fl. 905), and Quṣṭā b. Luqā (d. 300/912). However, he did not rely on authority alone, but also noted his own, at times contrasting, clinical experience of cures and case histories.

The disposition of the material in *al-Ḥāwi* (here quoted from the Hyderabad edition) generally follows the traditional order: localized diseases and their therapy from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet (*men al-qarn ela'l-qadam*, vols. 1-10); worms, gout, etc. (vol. 11); external lesions and their treatment (vols. 12-13); fevers (vols. 14-16); acute diseases (vol. 17); crises (vol. 18); uroscopy, animal bites, etc., poisons (vol. 19); *materia medica*, pharmacy (vols. 20-22, partly subdivided); diatetics, dermatology (vol. 23). The most plausible assumption seems to be that the extant compilation was derived from a series of notebooks organized by subject; thus the (approximate) duplications of certain excerpts can be explained on the basis of repeated notations as required by the subject under review. Frequently, only one of these multiple occurrences agrees with the original text, which would indicate that it was (more or less) directly copied from the respective exemplar, whereas Rāzi jotted down the others from memory (Weisser, esp. pp. 281 ff.).



As a rule, Rāzi took the opening quotation in each section from a pertinent work of Galen as the basis that he laid out for himself and future physicians. His attitude to Galen, perhaps best described as ambivalent rather than critical, has been much discussed throughout history from Rāzi's lifetime on.

The ambivalence just alluded to is, on the one hand, articulated by the title of his treatise *al-Šokuk 'alā Jālinus* "Doubts concerning Galen" and, on the other hand, by his well-nigh insurmountable reluctance to fault Galen for neglecting to discuss smallpox and measles adequately, let alone charging him with ignorance of a problem of such acute urgency; see his often praised but to date understudied monograph *Fi'l-jadari wa'l-ḥaṣba* "On smallpox and measles," and the corresponding section in *al-Ḥāwi* (XVII:1, etc.; cf. Ullmann, p. 134; Richter-Bernburg, 1994, pp. 387 f.). At least in his more declaratory statements, though, Rāzi maintains that knowledge has the potential of infinite growth; provided that a scholar master the knowledge transmitted from preceding generations, he is equally capable of transcending and expanding it. Such temerity, running counter to the culturally dominant mentality, was castigated as a late-born, *per se* inferior student's presumption vis-à-vis legitimate authority and violation of a quasi-tabu (Rāzi, *Šokuk*, pp. 111-14; Ullmann, pp. 68, 159). Consequently, his arguments were never debated on merit as a serious engagement of logical and scientific problems. Yet, the precise relationship in his own thought between received wisdom and well-considered personal experience still wants proper examination. Rāzi's impact on later generations of medical scholars and writers (cf. Iskandar, 1967, pp. 29-32), is attested by a number of epitomes of *al-Ḥāwi* (cf. Ullmann, p. 130, n. 5). Within Persian medical literature, apparently the first author to draw specifically on *al-Ḥāwi* was Abu Bakr Aḳawayni Boḳāri (q.v.), a second generation student of Rāzi. Sayyed Esmā'il Jorjāni made ample use of it as well (Richter-Bernburg, 1978, pp. 3 ff.), while most of the later gleanings from *al-Ḥāwi* can be presumed to have been done indirectly. Two noteworthy later works of self-professed indebtedness to *al-Ḥāwi* are the anonymous and undated compendium *Mujaz-e kommi* (Rieu, *Persian Manuscripts II*, p. 460) and Moḥammad Mo'men Tonokāboni's *Toḥfat al-mo'menin* (comp. 1090/1679), a large *materia medica* dedicated to the Safavid Shah Solaymān (Richter-Bernburg, 1978, index, qq.v.).

The immense volume of *al-Ḥāwi* could not but affect its manuscript transmission; thus notwithstanding the existence of numerous partial copies no complete set of its twenty-five volumes survives. Some of the extant copies



still want proper identification (*pace* Iskandar, 1967, pp. 1-26, 104 f., pls. 8-9, MSS WMS. 123 and 160; at least the former can confidently be identified as the first section of *al-Jāmi' al-kabir*, since the disposition of the material is identical to that quoted by Ebn Abi Uṣaybe'a, I, pp. 317–18, for *al-Jāmi'*). On the other hand, medicine historically being a relatively non-denominational discipline, interest in *al-Ḥāwī* transcended religious boundaries, as attested, for instance, by a copy in Hebrew characters and, in Europe, by its Latin translation in 1279 by Faraj b. Sālem, a Jewish physician from Girgenti (i.e., Agrigento, Sicily). It was first printed in one hefty folio volume in Brescia in 1468, with more editions to follow. The complete Arabic text was published in twenty-five volumes in Hyderabad, Deccan, over a period of eighteen years (1955-73). This edition, despite all its merits, unfortunately suffers from the lack of critical text editing. Thus even at the basic level of textual recension, enormous work remains to be done.

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