



HEDĀYAT AL-MOTA'ALLEMIN FI'L-ṬEBB

HEDĀYAT AL-MOTA'ALLEMIN FI'L-ṬEBB, the complete title of the oldest extant treatise on medicine written in Persia, which is also commonly referred to simply as *Ketāb-e Hedāyat*. Although it is not known exactly when the author Abu Bakr Rabi' ebn Ah-āmad Aḳawayni Boḳāri lived, he appears to have written the book before 373/983-4 (Minovi, *Yaḡmā* 3/12, 1950, pp. 497-510). Aḳawayni was the student of Abu'l-Qāsem Maqāne'i Rāzi, who himself studied under Moḡammad b. Zakariā Rāzi (d. 313/925 or 323/935; Aḳawayni, p. 303). He apparently composed the *Hedā-yat* at the request of his son, who did not know Arabic, as a "light and simple" text (p. 14). Although this work, which was based on Rāzi's principles of medicine, appeared before the more famous *Qānun* of Ebn Sinā (Avicenna, d. 428/1037; q.v.), the *Hedāyat* did not become obsolete in subsequent centuries. Neẓāmi 'Aruzi (fl. 1110-61) mentions it as an intermediate medical text that every physician ought to study thoroughly under a professor's tutelage (Neẓāmi 'Aruzi, pp. 109-10). The author of *Mujaz-e kommi* also cites the *Hedāyat* as one of the sources of his work, several times ranking Aḳawayni's ideas on medicine alongside those of celebrated, contemporary clinicians (fols. 264b, 272b, 280b, 295b).

The *Hedāyat* is divided into three major parts and two hundred sub-sections. Aḳawayni describes his twenty-three years of experience as a clinician, during which he tested the views of his predecessors with his own experiments. While he points out their errors several times, he also freely admits when his



own experimental treatments fail. Aḳawayni relates that due to his own success in treating melancholy, he is known as the “physician to the insane.” His innovations in the treatment of diseases and the understanding of medical issues are also remarkable. For example, he invented around ten chemical remedies, which he lists by their names, and he also fashioned an instrument for force-feeding the sick out of a bull horn.

Besides being of major important for the history of medicine in Iran, the *Hedāyat* is exceptionally valuable as a Persian text. A work which perfectly exemplifies the simple and expressive prose style of the Samanid period, the *Hedāyat* is also valuable on account of the Persian medical terminology that Aḳawayni has translated from Arabic. The author’s pioneering efforts in this respect preceded those of the more celebrated Abu Rayhān Biruni and Ebn Sinā.

See also AḲAWAYNI.

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