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*An Analytical Survey of Persian Works  
on Indian Learned Traditions*

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## AN ANALYTICAL SURVEY OF PERSIAN WORKS ON INDIAN LEARNED TRADITIONS

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## *Ḥikmat-i Sulaymān-Šāhī*

The *Ḥikmat-i Sulaymān-Šāhī* is a medical book written by Ḥakīm Qāsim ibn Quṭb ibn Ya‘qūb. The author, who according to his introduction finished this book in 902/1496-1497, has remained unknown until now. He dedicates the divine reward for his work to his noble patron, whom he qualifies as the adviser of kings and sultans (*nāṣiḥ al-mulūk wa al-salāṭīn*), helper of the weak and the poor (*mu‘īn al-ḍu‘afā’ wa al-masākīn*), the protector of the lordly community (*milla*), architect of the foundations of sultanic power (*mu‘assis mabānī al-dawlat al-sulṭāniyya*), the noble Šayḥ-zāda Sulaymān Šāh, son of the servant (*bandagī*) of the highest throne (*masnad-i ‘ālī*) and office (*manṣab-i muta‘ālī*), A‘zam Humāyūn Ḥān-i Ḥānān. The name of the father of his dedicatee might refer to Sikandar Lodī’s general Ḥān-i Ḥānān Farmūlī, governor of Bayana (Rajasthan), since 897/1491 until his death in 907/1501 (Firišta 1908, pp. 332, 337). The author’s patron could accordingly be identified as one of Ḥān-i Ḥānān’s sons, mentioned by Firišta as Sulaymān Ḥān Farmūlī (“Sooliman Khan Firmully”, Firišta 1908, p. 329, as a son of Khān-i Khānān on p. 338). His qualification as Šayḥ-zāda, “descendant of the [Sufi] Šayḥ”, would then relate him to the Šayḥ-zāda from Farmūl (a region south-east of Kabul) who were a highly reputed group of supporters of the Lodī sultans (see Bābur 1922, p. 220). A “Miyān Sulaymān Famulī” is also mentioned as an important noble in Agra in that period, and as owner of a valuable sundial, which indicates his own scientific interests (Siddiqui 2009, p. 132). The author of the book thus probably was a physician patronized by this prominent retainer of sultan Sikandar Lodī.

In the introductory sermon (*ḥuṭba*) of his book, the author praises God who created man and taught him medicine (*tibb*) and religion, providing him with cures for every disease, also for animals. The Prophet was granted both wisdom (*ḥikmat*) and prophethood. The most gifted and talented people can be found among the doctors

(*aṭibbā'*) and the wise (*ḥukamā'*). Metaphysics (*'ilm-i ilāhī*), the principles of nature (*uṣūl-i ṭabī'at*), the science of astronomical observation (*arṣād*, erroneously written as *arṣāl*), and the science of the humours (*'ilm-i ṭabī'at/'ilm-i ruṭabiyya* in Ms. Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh Oriental Library and Research Institute, *ṭibb* 329, f.1b) are all in the realm of the wise, as they are built on deduction from the states of sensual perception which are known through the assistance of the senses (*bar istidlāl ba-aḥwāl-i maḥsūsāt al-ma'lūmāt ba-mu'āvanat-i ḥiss*). The science of the bodies is the most required, since "Knowledge has two (branches): that of the bodies and that of the religious norms" (*al-'ilm 'ilmān, 'ilm al-abdān wa-'ilm al-adyān*, a well-known saying often attributed to the prophet Muḥammad (Ms. London, Wellcome Library, WMS Per. 368, ff. 2a-b). Quran 2: 269 is quoted for the high value of wisdom (*ḥikma*), which is one of the signs of sanctity (*walāyat*), and from which many goods are derived. Luqmān, the first (*manša'*) of the wise men, was offered to choose between prophecy and wisdom, and, as stated in the Quran (31: 12), God granted him the latter.

The author invokes the name of God for his endeavour to describe the diseases with their required remedies and their treatment. He states that he gathered this collection of well-tried recipes (*mujarrabāt*) from the acknowledged books like those of Luqmān, Plato, Aristotle, *Baṭālīnūs* (i.e. Ptolemy?), Galen and Ibn Sīnā, from other doctors, and also from the Quran, which equally stands out as a major source of health (Quran 17: 82). His aim is to enable mankind to decide about the right treatment for every disease, and to heed the order of the wise doctors (*ḥukamā'*) to pursue the path of moderation (*i'tidāl*) in their habits of eating and drinking (supported by Quran 2: 141).

The text is divided into one hundred and fifteen chapters (*bāb*), each with a varying number of subchapters (*faṣl*), which give descriptions of diseases and their various treatments. The arrangement of the chapters loosely follows the established order from head to heel of Arabic and Persian medial texts, with interspersed systematic chapters of a more general character, moving towards pharmacology and alchemy and adding a final section on the treatment of animals. It starts out with the diseases of the different parts of the head (chapters 1-6), including madness and melancholy, then moves to chest, lungs, liver and spleen (chapters 7, 10-12), and finally to uro-genital and anal disorders (chapters 16-22). Other less localized diseases and general topics are then grouped together, like skin diseases (chapters 31-41), swellings and distensions (*āmās, bād*, chapters 42, 44), problems on hunger, thirst and digestion (chapters 46-50, 58-60), and an extensive section on sexual medicine,

hygiene and baby care (chapters 53, 55-70). A pharmacological section deals with the production of oils and colouring ingredients (chapters 80), with the therapeutic use of a local liquor (chapters 81), and with the calcination (*kuštan*) of mercury, talc, iron, copper and tin (chapters 82-86.). From the final part of the book after chapter 88 (f. 100a), only the chapters on sleep (chapters 94-95), and food (chapters 96-102), and the larger part of the final veterinary section (chapters 111-114) survive in the London manuscript (Wellcome Library, WMS Per. 368), which is concluded by a long chapter on horses (114) The available part of the Hyderabad manuscript (Andhra Pradesh Oriental Library and Research Institute, *ṭibb* 329) already breaks off in chapter 4 and sets in again towards the end of chapter 114. Chapter 115 (on the names of drugs), mentioned in the overview of content, is equally lacking in both manuscripts.

In several chapters verses are quoted. For the most part they were apparently culled from Šihāb al-Dīn Nagawrī, *Šifā' al-marāz* (see some examples below), who is also in one case explicitly mentioned as author of some verses on problems of digestion (“Šayḥ Šihāb”, Ms. London, Wellcome Library, WMS Per. 368, ff. 59a-59b, identical – with some variants – with Nagawrī, *Šifā' al-marāz*, Ms. Leiden, University Library, OR 14193, f. 21b). Other authors coming up with verses in the same chapter are “Luqmān al-Ḥakīm” and “Amīr Junayd” (both Ms. London, Wellcome Library, WMS Per. 368, f. 59a). In accordance with the outline given in the introduction, medical recipes are often augmented with Quranic verses and Islamic prayer and invocation formulas, magic diagrams and squares (e.g. Ms. London, Wellcome Library, WMS Per. 368, ff. 80b, 82a). In one case, even a non-Islamic invocation can be identified (see below).

For many diseases and their affected bodily parts, and also for some drugs, the names used in “Indian” language (*hindawī*) are added. The following list of such names (extracted from and referring to Ms. London, Wellcome Library, WMS Per. 368) includes only those which could be related to Urdu/Hindi or Sanskrit terms with some plausibility. The nosological and therapeutic framework directing their transfer into a Persian text often still remains to be clarified. *Parwāl* (f. 12a, chapter 2), a disease of the eyelids (Platts 1884, p. 255); *pīnas* (ff. 2b, 14b, chapter 3) cold, inflammation affecting the nose (Platts 1884, p. 1146); *naklōhū*, *naksīr* (ff. 2b, 14b, chapter 3), two terms for types of nose-bleeding (Platts 1884, pp. 972, 1141); *jīpī* (f. 3a, chapter 5) tongue (Platts 1884, p. 412 *jībh* ); *kandwāl* (ff. 3a, 17a, chapter 5) scrofula (Platts 1884, p. 851: *kanth-māla*; Vāgbhata, 2009-2012, III, p. 278: *gaṇḍamāla*); *pandrūg* (ff.

3b, 27a, for *bād-i yaraqān*, chapter 10) anemia, icterus (Platts 1884, p. 220 *pāndu*, *pāndur*, Vāgbhata, 2009-2012, II, pp. 122-125: *pānduroga*); mentioned already by Fārūqī 1937, p. 93; *mirgi* (ff. 3b, 45b, chapter 24) epilepsy (Platts 1884, p. 1025); *dhanuk bād* paralysis, hemiplegia (f. 4a, 47a, from Hindi *dhanuk*, “bow”), for Persian *bād-i fālij*, *bād-i laqwa* (chapter 27); *bād dhanuk* spasm, convulsion, tetanus (ff. 4b, 55b), for Persian *bād-i qaws* (chapter 43; cf. for both Platts 1884, p. 548: *dhanuk-bā`ī*); *ardhāng* (f. 47a, chapter 27 section 1) hemiplegia, palsy (Platts 1884, p. 40); *dakār* (ff. 4a, 47b, chapter 28) belch (Platts 1884, p. 565: *dakār*); *rīknī*, *rīkhan* (ff. 4a, 48a, chapter 29) sciatica, hipgout? (cf. Platts 1884, p. 613: *rengnī*); *thanēla* (ff. 4a, 48b, chapter 32) inflamed breast (of a woman), enlargement of the breasts (Platts 1884, p. 348); *bārī pittī*, *rakt pittī* (f. 49a, chapter 33) erysipelas; *rakt pitt* (ff. 5b, f. 86a-86b, chapter 78) “blood-bile”, disturbance of blood caused by bile (Platts 1884, p. 596: *rakt pitt*, *rakt pittī*, *rakt-pīth*; *āmla pitt* (ff. 5b, 86a-86b, chapter 78) Myrobalan bile (unidentified, cf. Platts 1884, p. 82: *āmlā* emblic myrobalan); *darbahra* (ff. 5b, 94a, chapter 81) intoxicating spirit made from rice (used here for treatment) (Platts 1884, p. 510); *hijkī* (ff. 4a, 52b, chapter 35) hiccough (Platts 1884, p. 1221: *hičkī*); *massa* (f. 81a, chapter 71) wart (Platts 1884, p. 1029: *masā*, *massā*); *jhātī* (f. 52b, chapter 36) freckle (cf. Platts 1884, p. 424: *čittī*); *makrī* (ff. 4b, 81a, chapter 40; for Arabic/Persian ‘*ankabūt*) spider; skin disease arising from the bite of a spider (Platts 1884, 1059); *abrak* (f. 97a, chapter 83) talc (Platts 1884, p. 3); *rāng* (f. 5b; chapter 86; f. 98b, line 6) tin, pewter (Platts 1884, p. 584).

Several terms and descriptions of diseases and their treatments suggest a strong interaction with Indian medical lore and practice, even if any direct translations from Ayurvedic texts (as suggested by Fārūqī 1937, p. 93) are yet to be identified. A particularly complex case of this can be observed in the frequent use of the term *bād* “wind”, which occurs with the following diseases: *bād-i yaraqān* “anemia, icterus” (f. 27a, chapter 10, see above); *bād-i fatq* “hernia” (f. 42b, chapter 20); a general chapter on the diseases caused by wind (*bād*), phlegma (*balgam*), bile (*talḥa*), and blood (*hūn*) (f. 46b-47a, chapter 26), largely consisting of verses quoted from Nagawrī’s *Šifā’ al-maraz* (see Nagawrī, *Šifā’ al-maraz*, Ms. Leiden, University Library, OR 14193, ff. 4v-5r); *bād-i fāliḡ*, *bād-i laqwa* “paralysis, hemiplegia” (ff. 4a, 47a, chapter 27, see above); *bād-i rīkhan* sciatica, hipgout? (f. 48a, chapter 29, see above); *bād-i qaws* “spasm, convulsion, tetanus” (ff. 4b, 55b, chapter 43, see above); on *bāds* (*bādhā*) causing swellings in seven different parts of the body (f.4b, 56a, chapter 44).

It can be observed that most of these diseases connected with *bād* show remarkable parallels to Ayurveda descriptions of maladies with a strong agency of the *doṣā* (humour) *vāta*. This can be seen in Vāgbhata's *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasamhitā*, where aggravations of *vāta* in different parts of the body may cause hernia (Vāgbhata 2009-2012, II, p. 149), tetanus and sciatica (Vāgbhata 2009-2012, II, pp. 150-151), a "body bent inwards like a bow" (Vāgbhata 2009-2012, II, p. 152), and some diseases affecting half of the face, half of the body or lower parts of it (Vāgbhata 2009-2012, II, pp. 154-155). In the verses quoted from Nagawrī's *Šifā' al-marāz* in chapter 26 (Ms. Leiden, University Library, OR 14193, ff. 46b-47a, see above), *bād* can be found in the list of the four humours instead of black bile (*sawdā'*), which otherwise only occurs rarely (e.g. in the chapter on melancholy, chapter 6, Ms. Leiden, University Library, OR 14193, f. 18a).

Similar to what was brought out for Nagawrī, *Šifā' al-marāz* by Speziale (2014b), *bād* in the *Hikmat-i Sulaymān-Šāhī* appears to indicate a fusion of the Ayurvedic concept of *vāta* with the Arabo-Persian one of black bile (*sawdā'*). *Vāta* indeed shares a good number of qualities with black bile, like coolness, dryness, the causing of mental disturbance, and also a black discolouration under abnormal increase (see Vāgbhata 2009-2012, I, pp. 8, 154, 156; III, p. 57). Another *doṣā* of Ayurvedic medicine, *pitta* "bile", explicitly figures in the topics of two chapters (33, 78, see above). The second of them covers *rakt pitt*, thus referring to another important concept of Ayurveda nosology, namely the mutually reinforcing effects caused by aggravating blood and bile (for *raktapitta* "bleeding disease" and its treatment, Vāgbhata 2009-2012, II, pp. 206-215; see also Sigaléa 1995, pp.113-114).

The lengthy chapter on the calcination of mercury (*kuṣṭan-i sīmāb*, chapter 82) provides detailed descriptions of the production of cinnabar (*šangarf*) and "mortified", i.e. sublimated mercury (*sīmāb-i murda*) and their use for oral consumption in sweetened pellets (*galūla*) together with other ingredients (Ms. London, Wellcome Library, WMS Per. 368, ff. 95r-97r). The invigorating and sexually enhancing functions of mercury prevail over other protective uses against diseases caused by phlegm. The author gives a recipe of his own, never described by previous physicians, presenting it for the common use of every Muslim; an offer which can be regarded as an indication of his practical interest and experience in this special field of iatrochemistry. With his rather enthusiastic attitude towards the universally invigorating qualities of

mercury and his focus on its oral medications, the author follows the close engagement with Ayurvedic *rasasāstra* practice that had set in among Persian-speaking scholars in India since the fourteenth century (see Speziale 2018), with a predecessor already in Samanid Iran (Muwaffaq ibn ‘Alī al-Harawī, between 965 and 975, see Thomann 2015; for the role of mercury in Arabo-Persian and Indian medicine, see Raisuddin 2004; Wujastyk 2013, 2015; Bashour 2015; Preckel 2015). In the following chapters, the calcination and use of other metals or metallic derivatives like talc (chapter 83, Ms. London, Wellcome Library, WMS Per. 368, ff. 97a-97b), iron (chapter 84, f. 98a), copper (chapter 85, f. 98a) and tin (chapter 86, f. 98b) is equally described.

A range of protective recitations of different origin comes up in chapter 79 (ff. 5b, 86b-88a), which deals with the protection against a “were-hyena” (*kaftār*). This refers to a person with magical powers attacking or possessing children under the age of 12 years. Its Indian names, given as *dāk* or *dāyin*, still have to be verified (cf. Pl. p. 538 *dhāk* “awe, dread, terror”?). Apart from some Quranic recitations, Islamic magical formulas, and a magic square Ms. London, Wellcome Library, WMS Per. 368, f. 87b-88a), it also includes a short and fully vocalized invocation of *siddha* and *mahāsiddha* Ms. London, Wellcome Library, WMS Per. 368, f. 87a), words which clearly refer to the holy sages and semi-divine beings of Indian religion (cf. Platts 1884, p. 646). A chapter on the were-hyena, summarized by Ivanow (1926, pp. 197-199), was already included by Ilyās ibn Šihāb al-Dīn Ziyā’ in chapter thirty-four of the *Rāḥat al-insān*, a text written for the sultan of Delhi Fīrūz Šāh Tugluq (r. 1351-1388). This shows the preoccupation of the Indo-Persian physicians of the 14th and 15th centuries with magical and demonic influences on the health of children, which they shared with their Ayurvedic colleagues (see Vāgbhata 2009-2012, III, pp. 27-37, for a chapter on evil spirits and demons affecting children). The nosology behind this affection, and the textual relation between the *kaftār* chapters of the two works still await further scrutiny, as also their comparison with Iranian folk medicine (see also Frembgen 1998 for a general ethnological overview of magical concepts and practices related to hyenas in Africa and Asia).

Taken as a whole, *Ḥikmat-i Sulaymān-Šāhī* shows a remarkable merger of medical knowledge with Quranic and Islamic “wisdom” (*ḥikma*), which is outlined already in its introduction. The praise of wisdom and the reference to Luqmān the Wise may be taken as arguments for the divine origin of worldly wisdom in general, by which the author justifies his synthesis of religious and non-religious medical



traditions, and his adaptation of Indian medical concepts and therapeutic devices. With his almost seamless integration of Indian material into the framework of Arabo-Persian medicine, Qāsim ibn Quṭb ibn Ya‘qūb can thus be seen in line with other medical writings of the sultanate period, like those of Nagawrī, *Šifā’ al-marāz* (written in 790/1388), which he quotes in several chapters, Ilyās ibn Šihāb al-Dīn Ziyā’s *Rāḥat al-insān* (14th century), and finally the comprehensive work compiled by his contemporary Miyān Bhuwa ibn Ḥawāṣṣ Ḥān, the *Ma’dan al-šifā’-i Sikandar-šāhī* (compiled in 918/1512). Fāruqī’s assumption, however, that Qāsim ibn Quṭb ibn Ya‘qūb’s book was a translation of an Indian medical source (Fāruqī 1937, p. 93), is difficult to maintain. The structure of the text, which by and large remains closer to the models of Arabic and Persian medical literature, rather hints to a synthetic selection made by the author than to a translated text, as he uses material – largely without naming titles and authors, with the exceptions mentioned above - from both Muslim and Indian medical sources. His work thus testifies to an ongoing trend of interests among Muslim Persian speaking scholars in certain features of Indian medicine, such as the focus on *bād/vatā* and on iatrochemistry (see for these interests Speziale 2014a, 2014b, 2019). On the other hand, the inclusion of a considerable number of Quranic verses, Islamic prayer texts and magic squares shows the firm roots of the author in a Muslim religious milieu. Both tendencies together would seem to reflect the cultural climate of the Lodī era, such as in the case of work compiled by the Lodī vizier Miyān Bhuwa, where the translation of Ayurvedic texts is introduced by a chapter discussing Islamic and prophetic traditions on medicine (see Speziale 2018, pp. 105-107).

**Manuscripts:** **London**, Wellcome Library, WMS Per. 368, ff. 114, **ii**) undated, Keshavarz (1986, p. 93), traces the manuscript to the 11th/17th century, **vii**) the manuscript lacks some of the chapters (89-93, 115) and is partly in disorder: chapters 94-96 follow on f. 113a-b after chapters 111-114 (ff. 105b-108a), with the latter continuing on f. 114a; the author seems to be a Sunni, as he mentions at the end Abū Bakr al-Šiddīq (transmitting an amulet for horses from the Prophet in Medina) with the eulogy *raḍiya llāhu ‘anhu* (f. 114a), **viii**) Keshavarz 1986, p. 93. **Hyderabad**, Andhra Pradesh Oriental Library and Research Institute, ṭibb 329, ff. 84, **ii**) 1174/1760-1761, **iii**) Muḥammad Šadr al-Dīn, **v**) the copyist declares his Shi‘a affiliation by describing himself as “servant of the infallible imams” (*‘abd al-a’imma al-ma’šūmīn*) (f. 84a); in the final part Abū Bakr is replaced by ‘Alī as a transmitter of an amulet for the

protection of horses, **viii**) Storey 1971, p. 230; title given as *Ṭibb-i Salmān-Šāhī*, in accordance with the handwriting of the name in the dedication on f. 2a (*Salmān Šāh*; even a reading *Musulmān Šāh* seems possible).

Legend: i) Place of copying; ii) Period of copying; iii) Copyist; iv) Commissioner; v) Information on colophon; vi) Description of miniatures/illustrations; vii) Other remarks; viii) Information on catalogue(s)

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