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## Frontiers of ophthalmology in Unani medicine

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### Abstract

It has become an un-fortune customary to dedicate all medical inventions of Unani medicine to great stalwart Hippocrates (460 BC). No doubt the modified approach of Hippocrates gave scientific status to unani medicine in general and in fundamental aspects in particular. In fact as per available evidences, Unani system of medicine was well flourished at least 1500 years before Hippocrates.

The study of Babylonian medicine reveals very systemic efforts of treatment including preparation of compound drugs were in practice. The physicians were trained in various branches of medicine. Ophthalmology was very successfully practiced in pre Hippocratic period. Hurmus (2500 BC) is considered as first ophthalmologist in Unani medicine who was inventor of cataract. Renowned medical historian Dr. Kamal Samarrai has specially acknowledged the surgical expertise of Babylonian physicians. Yahya Nehvi the first medical historian on record has listed 6 ancient physicians who were experts in different fields of medicine which include the name of Sarjas as Ophthalmic surgeon. After Aphlatic period Hippocrates added very valuable knowledge to the subject. Volume II of Al Hawi contains more than 50 physicians who have contributed in this field. Heeropheloos (300 BC) and Erastratoos (304 BC) have very exclusively covered the anatomy of Eyes. Roofas of Ephsus (140 AD) is regarded for his invention of ophthalmic membranes. Deesqooreedoos an army physician (70 AD) has mentioned more than 60 drugs used for treatment of ophthalmic disorders. Galen (131 AD) is known for his surgical discoveries especially for ophthalmic anatomy and treatment. The book KITAB-O-Ilajil AIN of Iskandartraliyoos (525 AD) provides basic information for ophthalmic treatment. After rise of Islam and advises of Prophet Mohammad (570 AD) for regular use of Ismid was adopted in prevention as preventive measure. During Arabian period more than 50 compilations appeared which mainly include TAZKIRATUL KAHHALIN of Isa bin Kohhal, AIHAWI of Razi, KITABUL AIN of Hunain, AIQANOON of Ibn-e-Sina, KITABUL TASREEF of Al Zahrawi, MOALIJJAT-E-BUQRATYA of Ahmad bin Mohd Tabri, FIRDAUS AL HIKMAT of Rabban Tabri and KAMILUS SANA of Majoosi. The details will be discussed in full paper.

**Keywords:** Deesqooreedoos, hippocrates, kitabul ain, tazkiratul kahhalin

### Introduction

It has become an unfortune customary to dedicate all medical inventions of Unani medicine to great stalwart Hippocrates (460 BC). No doubt the modified approach of Hippocrates gave scientific status to Unani Medicine in general and in fundamental aspects in particular. In fact as per available evidences, Unani system of medicine was well flourished at least 1500 years before Hippocrates<sup>[1]</sup>.

The study of Babylonian medicine reveals very systemic efforts of treatment including preparation of compound drugs were in practice. The physicians were trained in various branches of medicine<sup>[2]</sup> Ophthalmology was very successfully practiced in pre Hippocratic period. Hurmus is considered as first ophthalmologist in Unani medicine who was inventor of cataract<sup>[3]</sup>. Renowned medical historian Dr. Kamal Samarrai has specially acknowledged the surgical expertise of Babylonian physician. Yahya Nehvi the first medical historian on record has listed 6 ancient physicians who were experts in different fields of medicine which include the name of Sarjas as Ophthalmic surgeon<sup>[4]</sup>.

After Aphlatic, the great services of Hippocrates (460 BC) in the field of Ophthalmology established new records. His compilation KITABUL AIN an Arabic version appeared during Abaasi period (760- 850 AD). JAMIUL KAHHALIN translated by Hunain bin Ishaq (873 AD) provide valuable information on the subject<sup>[5]</sup>. This comprehensive manuscript is a part of precious collection of Asfia library, Hyderabad. Beside more than 100 quotations referred in second Vol of ALHAWI of Zakaria Razi, reflects success stories based prescriptions to combat various ophthalmic ailments. Heeropheloos (300 BC) and Erastratoos (304 BC) great Unani surgeon and master of anatomy added more inventions with their anatomical discoveries regarding eyes<sup>[6]</sup>. They also presented new surgical techniques and fundamental

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anatomy of cornea, retina, and lens is credited to their marvellous contribution till date. Roofas of Ephesus (140 AD) is regarded for his invention in respect of ophthalmic membranes and ophthalmic chiasma [7].

On the basis of cataract management, a physician with the title of QADIIH-E-AIN has been described by renowned historian Ibn-e Abi Usaiba. An army physician Deesqoreedoos (70 AD) who is the author of KITABUL HASHAISH first compendium on the single drugs has mentioned 60 drugs used for treatment of various ophthalmic conditions [8]. The book Kitab-O-Ilajil Ain of Iskandartraliyoos has a land mark status in the literature of ophthalmology. The book consists of 3 discourses which provide comprehensive knowledge [9].

The most famous Unani physician, surgeon and author during Roman Empire Jalinoos (131 AD) has rendered commendable services in ophthalmology. His success stories of clinical approach have been covered in different books such as Ghina Muna by Nooh Al Qamri, AlHawi by Razi and Kamilus Sana by Majoosi [10].

The book on anatomy of eyes with the title of Tashreehul Ain and Maqalatun FI Dalael-E-AIN are basis of modern anatomy and management of ophthalmic disorders [11].

Among ancient Unani physicians Dioscorides, Alkohhal, Iyoori and Iskandar Altawal are famous names in the history.

#### Arabian period the golden age

The contribution of school of Jundishapur a renowned institution of Iranian peninsula although upgraded the knowledge of medicine to a very high level, but the revolutionary changes and rise of Islam and advise of Prophet Mohammad (570 AD) gave new direction to the field of ophthalmology. First time the regular use of Ismid

was spiritually adopted throughout the Islamic world [12].

Besides surgical needs induced due to battle injuries also created new techniques, the Arabic poetry contains various verses highlights the status. After spread of Islam to almost entire parts of the world Muslim rulers and Khaliphate gave their full attention towards medicine.

Now the Arab was good successor of Unani Medicine in the world but they don't call it Islamic medicine the word Unani was frequently used. With other section of medicine ophthalmology also flourished. During Umayyad period KITABUN FIL AIN written by Masarjewah Al Basari Al Israeli (720 AD) was great source of information on the subject.

After translation of Greek books into Arabic. Arabs added, innovated and upgraded the book KITAB-O-ILAJIL AIN of Iskandartraliyoos (525 AD) provides basic information for ophthalmic management with their clinical researches in hospital founded by Muslim rulers which also upgraded the knowledge of management of ophthalmic diseases.

Family of Bakhteeshu, the learned physicians of Abbasi period were famous for treating the eye diseases.

The compilation of Maqalatun Fil Ain by jibrael bin Bakhteeshu (828 AD) and Kitabun Fi ELAJEL Ain of Obaidullah Bin Bakhteeshu tell success stories of their clinical expertise. In this period more than 50 important compendiums were appeared which mainly include Tazkiratul Kahhalin of Isa bin Kohhal, AL HAWI of Razi, KITABUL AIN of Hunain, ALQANOON of Ibn-e-Sina, Kitabul Tasreef of AlZahrawi, Moalijat- E-BUQRATIA of Ahmad bin Mohd Tabri, Firdausul Hikmat of Rabban Tabri and Kamilus Sana of Majoosi.

**Following list is a proof of their valuable contribution on the subject**

**Table 1:** Books on ophthalmology

S. No	Name of Book	Author's Name	Period
1	Kitabun fil Ain	Masarjowaih Basari	720 AD
2.	Maqala fil Ain	Jibrail bin Bakhteeshu	828 AD
3.	Kitabul Ain	Yuhanna Bin Masewaih	857 AD
4	Kitabo Tarkeebul Ain	Do	Do
5	Chapters of Kitab Al Mushajjar	Do	Do
6	Ilmul Ain	Hunain Bin Ishaq	873 AD
7	Ashr Maqalat fil Ain	Hakim Mohd Tayyab	NA
8	Maqalatun Fit Tadaul Bil Hadeed	Do	Do
9	Firdaus Al Hikmat	Rabban Tabri	893 AD
10	Kitabul Hawi	Zakariya Razi	925 AD
11	Kitabul Fi Haiatil Ain	Do	Do
12	Risala fi Fazil Ain Ala Sairi-Hawas	Do	Do
13	Risala fi Adviatul Ain	Do	Do
14	Elajul Ain Bil Hadeed	Do	Do
15	Maqala Fil Kohl	Ishaq bin Suleman	941 AD
16	Chapters of Moalijat-e-Buqratia	Ahmad Bi Mohd Tabri	985 AD
17	Kamilus Sana (Chapter)	Ali Bin Abbas Majoosi	994 AD
18	Kitabul Meah (Chapter)	Abul Sahl Al Maseehi	995 AD
19	Kitabut Tasreef	Abul Qasim Zahrawi	1013 AD
20	Alqanoon Fit Tib (Chapter)	Boo Ali Sina	1037 AD
21	Alisteear fil Ilaj-e-Amrazil Absar	Do	Do
22	Kitabul Manazir	Ibnal Haytham	1039 AD
23	Tazkiratul Kuhhal	Al Bin Eisa Kohhal	1039 AD
24	Kitab fil Amraz Ain	Mansoor Bin Eisa	1080 AD
25	Tabqatul Ain	Najeebuddin Samarqandi	1222 AD
26	Kitab Al Mughni	Ibn-e-Baitar	1248 AD [13]
27	Alkafi fil Kohl	Ibn-e-Abil Mahasin	1275 AD
28	Nateejatul fikr Fi Elajil Amraz il Basr	Abu Fatah Alqaisi	1259 AD

29	Al Mohazzab Fil Kohlel Mujarrab	Ibn-e- Nafees	1288 AD
30	Weqayatul Ain Fil Ahwalil Ain	Nooruddin Ali Bin Mohd Almanadi	1495 AD <sup>[14]</sup>

### Conclusion

The study of literature on ophthalmology reveals that Unani physicians/authors were well known to the subject since at least 1500 BC. Roofas of Efsus a great Unani author and physician has credit to discover the Vitreous fluid in the eye. Besides large number of books written on ophthalmology prove the expertise and deep concern to the Management. It is therefore suggested that the manuscripts on ophthalmology and practical approach adopted by Greeko Arab physicians may be studied deeply so that the new dimension of ophthalmology may also be benefited by ailing mankind.

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