

1. Introduction

During the formative period of Islamic law (2nd and 3rd centuries AH), hadiths were accepted as a source of law next to the Koran. The hadiths that were collected and written down did not only deal with ritual matters and questions of positive law, but treated a variety of other topics as well. Among the hadiths there were sayings that contained dietary rules or advice on the treatment of illnesses. Some of these hadiths related that the Prophet had been ill and that he had urged the Muslims to treat the sick. For example the Prophet is reported to have said: "Feed the hungry, treat the sick and help the distressed". There were also sayings that reflected the traditional curing practices among the Arabs such as cupping and cauterization. The Prophet is reported as having said: "There is health in three things: drinking of honey, incision made by the copper's knife and cauterization with fire; I forbid my people to cauterize".

These medical hadiths aroused the interest of some scholars who endeavoured to assemble them into collections. The collections were entitled *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī* (The Prophet's medicine) and they formed a genre of hadith literature. The earliest texts were written in the 3rd/9th century and thereafter the genre underwent a gradual development from hadith collections to actual medical books. In this final stage of the development the authors not only presented the Prophet's medical guidance but also discussed the relevant medical theory.

I have limited my study to three texts that were written in the 8th/14th century by three scholars of the religious sciences, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Muḥammad al-Dhahabī and Ibn Muflīḥ. The reason why I have selected these texts to study is that they all represent the final stage in the development of the Prophet's medicine. The authors did not confine themselves to collecting and commenting on the hadiths as their predecessors had done, but attempted to combine the hadiths with the teachings of Graeco-Islamic medicine. The aim of my study is to determine the motives that led these three scholars of the religious sciences to devote themselves to the Prophet's medicine and to systematize the work of the earlier authors.

It is also significant that all three were contemporaries living in Damascus during the Turkish Mamluk period. In order to place the texts in their social context I shall describe the characteristics and the intellectual climate of the period. I am convinced that the authors did not take up the subject only because of a scholarly interest in hadiths, but had motives that arose from the social situation and from their desire to influence that society.

The authors' treatment of the subject was not identical. I shall compare their individual views on the various medical and theological ideas in order to give a fuller

picture of the issues presented in the Prophet's medicine. Because the authors combined the teachings of the Prophet with Graeco-Islamic medical theory, I shall compare their presentation of medical subjects with the views of Ibn Sīnā and al-Rāzī. The reason I chose to use these two as the main representatives of Graeco-Islamic medicine is that also al-Dhahabī, Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Muflīḥ frequently referred to them as their medical authorities.

I shall concentrate on analysing the theological and medical ideas presented in the texts. I shall not discuss the authenticity of the hadiths and their origin, i.e. the question of whether they really reflect the medical practices in the Prophet's time or whether they are later creations. According to the authors of the Prophet's medicine, the traditions that fulfilled the criteria of sound hadiths reported the actual practice of the Prophet.

1.1. Earlier research on the Prophet's medicine

There has been relatively little research on the Prophet's medicine, although it has been mentioned in passing in studies about Graeco-Islamic medicine. Manfred Ullmann devotes one chapter of *Die Medizin der Islam* (1970) to the Prophet's medicine, in which he presents some sources. He does not describe the texts in detail but gives a general evaluation that they are collections of popular practices and superstition (Ullmann 1970, p. 185). Also Felix Klein-Franke mentions the Prophet's medicine in his *Vorlesungen über die Medizin im Islam* (1982). Klein-Franke uses al-Dhahabī's *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī* as a source for medical hadiths, but he does not analyse or describe the author's presentation of the medical issues.

Christoph Bürgel briefly presents the Prophet's medicine in his article *Secular and religious features of Medieval Arabic medicine* (1976). His main sources of the Prophet's medicine were the medical hadiths recorded in al-Bukhārī's *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. Of the actual texts on the Prophet's medicine he only refers to Cyril Elgood's translation of a manuscript ascribed to Jalāl al-dīn Abū Sulaimān Dā'ūd. Bürgel does not discuss that text in detail, but quotes it to prove the mixture of magic and medicine that in his opinion is central to the Prophet's medicine. According to him the Prophet's medicine was a dethronement of Galen "in favor of Bedouin quackery and superstition sanctified by religion" (Bürgel 1976, p. 60).

A more thorough presentation of the Prophet's medicine is given by Fazlur Rahman in his book *Health and medicine in the Islamic tradition: change and identity* (1987). The book contains a chapter on the Prophet's medicine, in which the author discusses the various motives its originators had for creating it at some length. I shall refer to this discussion in Chapter 7 below. Rahman also deals with the contents of the Prophet's medicine but tends to present and discuss the hadiths themselves and not the various authors' interpretation of them; nor does he expound the underlying medical theory.

There are two further studies that present the treatment of particular diseases in

the Prophet's medicine. One of these is Ömer Recep's dissertation *Ṭibb an-nabī, Die Prophetenmedizin bei Ibn as-Sunnī und Abū Nu'aim unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Kapitel über den Kopfschmerz, die Augen-, Nasen-, Zahnkrankheiten und die Hämorrhoiden* (1969), in which the author compares Ibn al-Sunnī's and Abū Nu'aim's texts on these diseases with the views of al-Rāzī as expressed in his *al-Ḥāwī*. Apart from giving concise information on 25 manuscripts, Ömer Recep does not discuss the development of the Prophet's medicine; nor does he attempt to assess the reasons that led to the creation of the genre. His sole interest is in the medical content of the texts he studied.

The second study to present the medical issues dealt with in the Prophet's medicine is Michael Dols' *Majnūn—the madman in medieval Muslim society* (1992). Dols describes the treatment of two diseases connected with mental disturbances—epilepsy (*ṣarʿ*) and passionate love (*ishq*). His description of these illnesses is based on Ibn Qayyim al-Jauzīya's *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī*. Apart from presenting these illnesses Dols also gives a short assessment of the Prophet's medicine. In contrast to Ullmann, Klein-Franke and Bürgel, he gives a more positive valuation. According to Dols the supporters of the Prophet's medicine defended the practice of healing against the opponents of medication but preferred a medicine divorced from its pagan past (Dols 1992, p. 249).

There are some further studies on the Prophet's medicine published in Arabic over the past few decades—such as Muḥammad al-Khalīlī, *Ṭibb al-Imām al-Ṣādiq*, al-Najaf 1374/1954-5, Dr. al-Sayyid al-Jumailī, *Iʿjāz al-ṭibb al-nabawī*, Beirut 1398/1977 and Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Suyūṭī, *Muʿjizāt fī al-ṭibb lil-nabī al-ʿarabī Muḥammad*, Beirut 1404/1984. Common to these studies is that they do not take up the history of the subject, but rather concentrate on the modern interpretation of the medical hadiths. Maḥmūd Nāzīm al-Nasīmī's three-volume work *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī wa-ʿilm al-ḥadīth* (1407/1987) differs somewhat from the others in that it also contains a section dealing with the medieval texts of the Prophet's medicine. The author gives a rather detailed description of 10 existing manuscripts listing their contents and giving information on the sources the authors had used. However, he confines himself to this description and does not offer any historical analysis of the genre.

1.2. The sources of my study

My primary sources are three texts of the Prophet's medicine: Muḥammad al-Dhahabī's *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī*, Ibn Qayyim al-Jauzīya's book with the same title and Ibn Mufliḥ's *al-Ādāb al-sharʿīya*.

The edition of al-Dhahabī's *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī* that I use is by al-Sayyid al-Jumailī, Cairo s.a. It is based on the manuscript (no. 588 ṭibb) in Maʿhad al-makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿarabīya, Cairo and it has been collated with the edition made by Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, printed in Cairo 1380/1961. When referring to this edition I shall use the

abbreviation **DH**. On some dubious points I consult the edition made by ‘Abd al-Mu‘ī Amīn al-Qal‘ajī, published in Beirut 1986. This edition is based on the Cambridge University Library manuscript no. 99.161. The title page of this manuscript ascribes the text to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī and gives as its title *al-Ṭibb min al-kitāb wal-sunna*.

The text has been translated twice. A. Perron published a translation of one manuscript, *La Médecine du Prophète*, Paris-Alger 1860. The same text was translated by Elgood in 1962. Elgood’s translation is entitled *Tibb-ul-Nabbi or Medicine of the Prophet* (Osiris, vol. 15, pp. 33-192). The manuscripts that Perron and Elgood translated are both ascribed to Jalāl al-dīn Abū Sulaimān Dā’ūd, although Elgood considers Jalāl al-dīn al-Suyūṭī to be the actual author. I shall discuss the authorship of the text in Chapter 3.1.1. below.

As to *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī* of Ibn Qayyim al-Jauzīya, I use the edition made by ‘Abd al-Ghanī ‘Abd al-Khāliq, in which the medical notes are made by ‘Ādil al-Azharī and traditions verified by Maḥmūd Faraj al-‘Uqda. The edition was printed in Cairo 1957. When referring to this edition I shall use the abbreviation **IQ**. I compared this edition to *Zād al-ma‘ād fī hady khair al-‘ibād Muḥammad*, vols. 1-4, Cairo s.a., where *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī* is in vol. 3, on pp. 63-199 and found no discrepancies between this and the separately printed *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī*. There are two English translations of the text. Muhammad al-Akili has translated it with the title *Natural healing with the medicine of the Prophet: from the Book of the provisions of the hereafter by Imam Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya* (Philadelphia 1993). The other English version is entitled *Medicine of the Prophet* (Cambridge 1994) and was translated by Penelope Johnstone. Because both of the translations were only published very recently, I have not had the opportunity to use them.

The third source is Ibn Mufliḥ’s *al-Ādāb al-shar‘īya wal-minaḥ al-mar‘īya* edited by Muḥammad Riḍā and printed in Cairo 1348-49 AH. The text is in three volumes, with the medical chapters in volume 2, pp. 358-487 and volume 3, pp. 2-143. The problem of contagion is presented separately in a chapter entitled "Augury, bad luck, evil and good omens" in volume 3, pp. 376-384. When referring to Ibn Mufliḥ’s text I shall use the abbreviation **IM**.

Apart from his book on the Prophet’s medicine, Ibn al-Qayyim also dealt with some of the relevant medical and theological issues in his other writings, and they can be used to amplify the views he expressed in his *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī*. The four books I shall refer to are: (1) *Miftāḥ dār al-sa‘āda*, (2) *al-Jawāb al-kāfi li-man sa’ala ‘an al-dawā’ al-shāfi* (also known as *al-Dā’ wal-dawā’*), (3) *Ighātha li-lahfān min maṣāyid al-Shaiṭān* and (4) *Kitāb al-ṭuruq al-ḥukmīya fī al-siyāsa al-shar‘īya*.

I shall also deal with the authors’ attitudes towards the Prophet’s medical advice and in estimating this I shall compare their explanations of the hadiths to the views held by the representatives of Graeco-Islamic medicine. I use Ibn Sīnā’s *al-Qānūn fī al-ṭibb* in connection with physical diseases and the uses of drugs and foodstuffs. As mentioned above Ibn Sīnā was an authority often referred to by the authors of the Prophet’s medicine. A further reason for my choice is *al-Qānūn*’s encyclopaedic

character: it contains all the relevant information on the individual diseases in an easily accessible form. In connection with the diseases of the soul, I supplement the information given in *al-Qānūn* with two special treatises: al-Rāzī's *al-Ṭibb al-rūḥānī* and Ibn Bakhtīshū's *al-Risāla fī al-ṭibb wal-aḥdāth al-nafsānīya*. A further special treatise I use is Qusṭā ibn Lūqā's *Kitāb al-i'dā'*, which clearly and concisely expresses the Graeco-Islamic views on contagion.

The English translations of the medical terms and the names of drugs are mainly taken from Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Studies in Arabic and Persian medical literature* (1959) and al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-ṣaidana fī al-ṭibb* (*Book on pharmacy and materia medica*), edited and translated by Hakim Mohammed Said (1973).

If not otherwise mentioned, the English translations of the verses of the Koran are from A. J. Arberry, *The Koran interpreted*, Oxford 1964. The numbering of the verses follows the Egyptian edition.