

HEALTH SERVICES IN BAGHDAD DURING THE AGE OF ETHID AL-DAWLA AL-BUWAIHI 324-372 AH, 936-983 AD

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Abstract

This paper will look into the Bimaristan of Ethid Al-Dawla Al-Buwaihi in Baghdad under the Buwaihi and stress its significance in the development of medical services and health systems at that time. The paper, by referring to several sources, describes how Bimaristan came into being, was organized and administered, and played a crucial role in the progress of medical science because of the contribution of Arab and non-Arab physicians and the patronage of the government. Bimaristan, in terms of its administration, the supervision of physicians by the Muhtasib, and the care that was provided, will be returned. The institution is at the heart of initiatives that flourished regardless of political instability, denoting an exceptionally dedicated society of Baghdad towards health and cleanliness during its so-called dark ages. It is one phase in history where different cultural backgrounds had made enormous progress in the practice of medicine, contributing major advancements to the medical legacy of the region.

Keywords: Ethil Al-Dawla Al-Buwaihi, Medical History, Baghdad Health Services Physicians.

INTRODUCTION

In the name of Allah, the Merciful Most Compassionate. All praise is due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the most noble of all creation Muhammad and upon his family. All the good and perfect praise belongs to Allah alone for He is the one who taught us that which we knew not.

First of all, the medical profession is one of the most important and the noblest professions since the birth of mankind, which concerns the invention, diagnosis, and treatment of different diseases. Yet there are still some imperfections in their achievements, that certain theories have to be rectified and improved. The issue of healthcare in Baghdad during the reign of Mu'iz Dawla Buwayhi was one of the most important issues because it was related to the people's lives, security, health problems and relevant factors. The customs and public baths were related to public health as well. It shows urbanization, Islamic civilization during the period of Buwayhids in Iraq.

Ancient societies limited health services and medical practices to herbal remedies and natural remedies because herbs and plants were believed to have the efficacy of treating certain diseases. Some ancient religions regarded prayers, spells, and witchcraft as means of

treatment and healing. In summary, very limited health services during this period relied on traditional knowledge and simple medical techniques.

This topic we remain dedicated to the health services that prevailed in Baghdad under regime Al-Mu'izz al-Dawla Al-Buwaihi which were consequential owing to the political turbulence in Baghdad and deplorable economic and social conditions at that time. We concentrate on this architectural healthcare achievement founded by Al-Mu'izz al-Dawla Al-Buwaihi which not only treated patients in a very advanced manner but was also turned into a teaching hospital. It became a symbol of civilization, reached remarkable success in elevating social, economic and health status of Iraq. The physician played a critical role in public service at the hospital. In giving treatment and care to the patients, he also gave health advice to make the choice at an appropriate location with regard to cleanliness and ventilation. Hospital started taking civilized form and medical profession became organized and respectable.

The study is divided into two themes. The first theme discusses the general health status of Baghdad in the period 132-334 AH, by famous scholars' health services and medical activities during this period, and the role of supervisors in cleanliness of streets and baths. The second theme reviews the historical development of the Health Care System in Baghdad during the Abbasid period from 334 to 372 AD, giving more detailed analysis on the development of the healthcare system through the historical sources. It relates to the Health Care System during the reign of Al-Mu'izz al-Dawla. Also briefly introduced in the study are his life and interests, as well as how close he was to scholars, his donations to them, the coming into being of the discipline of medicine, maturation of medical science and fusing it with scientific and empirical research, and progress of translation.

General Health Conditions in Baghdad from 132 AH to 334 AH

The Arabs were interested in medicine and their knowledge was a contribution of experience, and treatment was more of practice than a perfection in the field of medicine. For example, during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) Prophetic Medicine emerged, which was spread by the Prophet and his words as general rules for maintaining health included bathing, diet and marriage. Regarding diseases and their treatment he (peace be upon him) said, "Verily, Allah has sent down diseases and their treatments, and has created treatments for each disease so seek treatment but do not seek unlawful treatments" (Abu al-Sadat, vol. 7, p. 512).

The concept of a hospital as an institution for treating the sick first evolved when during the Battle of the Trench a tent was pitched in the courtyard of the Prophet's Mosque at Madina, and the Messenger of Allah ordered that treatment of the wounded be given in a tent set up for this purpose. (Tabari, n.d., p. 249)

Besides, Ibn Khaldun surely observed that medicine should be 'the maintenance of human health and prevention of disease beginning from natural science, with the human body as its object' (Ibn Khaldun 1981 (Vol. I): 508). That is to say, medical knowledge is based precisely on everything related to the human body and its organs. He underlined that medical knowledge was incumbent in towns and regions for it was of very many benefits; it kept healthy the healthy and allowed the sick to cure their diseases with medicine until they were

cured. According to him, the origin of all diseases was life. The medical profession was “a profession that deals with the human body (whether healthy or sick), with the goal of maintaining health and curing diseases through medicine and food after treating the diseases of the various organs that cause these diseases and the corresponding drugs”. The corresponding diseases were identified. He based them on “the medicine’s properties and benefits and symptomatic features of the disease and the response of the treatment” (Ibn Khaldun, 1981, Vol. 1, pp. 520, 650). Everything in the field of medicine was of interest to the Abbasids, right down to the establishment of hospitals. The word *maristan* is derived from the Persian word “*Bimaristan*” which simply means “house of the sick” (al-Zabidi, 2001, Vol. 1. 6, p. 500). For their part, the physicians provided medical attention to society. Includes ‘Doctors who provided all health services examined patients’ (al-Maqri, 1900, Vol. 7, p. 383). Being highly esteemed by society, the practice of medicine during the Abbasid period has conditions that reflect their anxieties about the lives of men. The most important was "the body's makeup, organ substance, seasoned diseases, reasons for them, symptoms and indications, and drugs that produce results; also those for which alternatives did not exist, together with modes of their procurement and administration retaining a balance in the number of diseases and drugs; and ways of differentiating between them. Those who do not meet these standards may not treat patients, perform risky treatments, or do anything they do not know about" (Ibn al-Akhwa, n.d., p. 166). "Al-Mansur (136-158 AD) started scientific and literary life at Baghdad and was the first to initiate medical and religious schools here while spending a large amount of money" (Ibn Qutaybah, 1992, p. 32).

They got the physicians into their field and then they ranked them among their scholars. They wanted to translate books on medicine. One of them was Yahya ibn Khalid al-Barmaki, who was appointed by al-Rashid to translate ancient medical works from Anuriya, Amuria, and Rome, and also hired some good writers for this purpose. Rashid provided members of Barmak's family, Amin's family, and Mamun's family until Mutawakkil time where he was able to get medical knowledge, secrets which he wrote for people. Jabir ibn Bakhtiyush was a reputed and royal doctor who wrote the books on the study of medicine and had served under the Abbasid king. Qusta ibn Luqa al-Balabaki became renowned for his writings on medicine in the reign of Caliph al-Muqtadir while al-Razi was an eminent physician of vast learning who composed a number of fine books during the period of al-Muktadi (289-295 A.H.) (Ibn Jāḥar, 1955, pp. 64–77).

Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Speaking of Baghdad, Noted There Was a Bridge Leading to The Hospital Over the Tigris Near the Al-Muhal Gate (al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, 2002, vol. 1, p. 126). The Bridge Seems to Have Been Built Near the Hospital Which is Considered to Be One of the Earliest Hospitals in Baghdad Built Under the Patronage of Caliph Abu Mansur at the Founding of Baghdad.

One of the leaders of Baghdad’s *Bimaristan al-Bamarjid* was Mankh ibn Dahan Hindi, who translated Hindi books into Arabic. Yahya ibn Khalid al-Barmaki had him translate a book that contained 10 articles on hospitals. The book dealt with medicine and medical treatment, diseases and their treatment, and appears to have also included a chapter on the hospital. The translator wished to profit from these instructions.

The above text indicates an interest in health services and concern for the healthcare needs of people. We further observe that Caliph al-Muqtadir (295-320 AH) used to put physicians through tests to enhance their standard of health services and taking care of the lives of people. A physician during the time of the Caliphate caused the patient to take the wrong medicine and this resulted in the death of the patient because he did not have sufficient diagnostic information and experience. The news reached Caliph al-Muqtadir who required that the regional overseers, who are responsible for supervising the work of the physicians, put them under a ban from practising until they took an examination. The Caliph issued a written decree giving the regional overseers this power; those tried from both sides around Baghdad were 800. The overseers should make them swear the Hippocrates oath that he had given to all doctors. And make them swear not to give anyone any hurtful medicine, not to prepare poison in order to harm other,, not to deceive patients, and not to offer preservatives for others. They do not know them? (Ibn al-Akhwa, n.d., p. 128).

After the death of Caliph Al-Radi Billah (322-329 AD), he summoned Bujkam Sinan ibn Thabit of Wasit, Iraq. Bujkam approached him and asked him to rely on him to manage and monitor his health and behavior. Sinan suggested that he build a hospital (Bimaristan) in Baghdad. Bujkam followed Sinan's advice and founded the hospital, and Sinan was treated with the highest honors (Al-Qifti, 2005, p. 149).

Although the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad experienced chaos and weakness under the Buyid rule, especially in terms of politics, the Buyid princes were very inclined to scientific interests and clearly took into account the needs and demands of the people. Health care continued to develop during the era of the Buyid princes, which was particularly evident during the reign of the Buyid prince Adh-Dhu al-Nasr (324-372 AD). He was "the most powerful and influential prince of the Buyid dynasty", providing scholarships for the poor, translators, scholars, as well as poets, grammarians and doctors, and dedicating his house to philosophers (Ibn Kathir, 1997, Vol. 15, p. 356) (Al-Tai, 2018, No. 66, pp. 175-176).

The founder of Bimaristan was Abu al-Shuja' Fana Khusraw ibn al-Hasan ibn Buwayh, a prominent figure among the sultans who had a major influence on the scientific movement in Baghdad in the 4th century AH/10th century AD. He was born in Isfahan in the month of Dhul-Qi'dah of that year (324 AH/946 AD) and grew up under the care of his father, Rukn al-Dawlah (Ibn Tawus, Farhat al-Ghiri, p. 151). He had northern facial features, blue eyes and light blond hair (Al-Namash) (Ibn al-Jawzi, 1992, vol. 14, p. 290).

He was described as a tolerant and compassionate person. An example of his tolerance was when in 370 AH/980 AD he released Sabi, who had been in prison since 367 AH/977 AD, as he had advised his master in his correspondence with Bukhatar (Sabi, Customs in the Islamic World. House of the Caliphs, p. 77). Other characteristics of Adul Nasr included modesty and a habit of charitable donations. Every year he would donate his wealth to the needy and those in distress (Ibn al-Jawzi, 1992, vol. 14, p. 293).

According to sources, Adh-Dhu al-Nasr was fluent in Arabic, as evidenced by his correspondence with princes and military leaders (Ibn Kathir, 1997, vol. 15, p. 255). He stressed the best manners and morals in raising children. Ibn Miskawayh noted: "This shows his ambition and good behavior in raising children, and how he divided his children's days

into the art of bravery, time for seriousness and play, and moderation in spending, and being mature and educated by those who are educated." (Miskawayh, *The Experience of the Nation*, vol. 6, p. 46).

"Adul Nasr showed great respect for the Caliph, revived the Caliph's house until every corner was filled with people, sent large amounts of money and valuables to the Caliph, killed many corrupt elements and cunning fraudsters among the Turkish rebels, renewed the architecture of Baghdad and its beauty, rebuilt shrines and mosques, provided salaries and allowances to scholars, imams, doctors and others, and gave grants to the nobles, while requiring the landowners of Baghdad to maintain their houses and property, improved the roads, abolished taxes, repaired the road from Baghdad to Mecca for pilgrims, and opened the hospital he founded... He organized doctors and staff and brought there a large amount of medicines, drinks and treatments" (Ibn Kathir, 1997, vol. 15, pp. 356, 410).

He quotes the following regarding the letter of Ma'iz al-Dawlah to Tahir ibn Musa "ordering him to construct a new jail in Baghdad, to be turned into a hospital [...] giving specified endowments in the Baghdad's Rassafah district from revenues in his handed-over properties that would total five thousand dinars — in Kalawadh, Qutrabull, and Jirjaria" Ibn al-Jawzi (1992), vol. 14, p. 175). Note all read property and shifted to our handed-over properties for insertion into the Glossary. Ensure consistency with usage.

It seems that this step was an innovation his son Adh-Dhu al-Nasr. As noted by Ibn al-Jawzi, the prince Bujkam founded a hospital but left it unfinished for reasons. Adh-Dhu al-Nasr "brought in what was needed for every profession, established a market for tailors, and endowed many properties" (Ibn al-Jawzi, 1992, p. 292).

One of the travelers mentioning the existence of this bimaristan was al-Tatili, who said that to the west of Baghdad, between the Tigris and a river heading to the Euphrates, stood a bimaristan made up of a complex of buildings wide, stocked with provisions for impoverished patients seeking cure. The hospital had a medical staff of sixty physicians who provided care to patients and also prepared medications for them, which were then supplied by the caliph from the treasury (al-Tatili, 2002, pp. 297-298). Ibn Jubayr the traveler comments, "Market of the bimaristan between the street and the Bab al-Basra neighborhood :small city ... with the famous hospital in Baghdad situated on the Tigris, where physicians check on the patients every Monday and Thursday overseeing their conditions and arranging for their needs, with provisions for cooking medicines and food. It is a large palace with quarters and houses, along with all the facilities for living and royalty, and water enters from the Tigris" (Ibn Jubayr, n.d., p. 180).

A well-known physician in the medicine sector was Al-Razi, prominent for his excellence in different sciences, termed as "skilled in methods of the ancients" (Al-Umari, 1423 AH, vol. 9, pp. 55-56). He was the so-called "Bimaristan curator" consulted by Prince Adh-Dhu al-Nasr for the bimaristan's site, directing his workers to hang pieces of meat on every side of Baghdad. He considered the area where the meat remained unchanged as the best site for building the bimaristan. There is an opinion that Al-Razi frequented the bimaristan before it was renovated by Adh-Dhu al-Nasr since he had a book on the characteristics of hospitals and everything the patients needed, their conditions, and their treatments (Zayyan, 2020, p.

181). Adh-Dhu al-Nasr constructed the new bimaristan near the bridge on the western side at the Bab al-Taq.

He appointed some physicians, including Abu al-Husayn Kaskray, said to have been a disciple of Sinan, Abu Yaquub al-Ahwazi, Abu 'Isa al-Baqiyah, and the Roman Christian and others. Some of the distinguished physicians were Abu Nasr ibn al-Dahli and the surgeons Abu al-Khayr and Abu al-Hassan ibn Tuffah and their colleagues, besides the bone setters Gabriel ibn Abdallah ibn Bakhtishu, the same post earning two salaries: three hundred dirhams by way of a special grant and three hundred dirhams from the bimaristan, apart from the stipend, jointly with Abu al-Hassan al-Harani and Sinan whom he deputized over his physicians. Ali ibn al-Abbas al-Majusi was one such personality, highly acknowledged for his achievements in the field of medical sciences; he wrote the book "Royal" for Prince Adh-Dhu al-Nasr Fana Khusraw ibn Rukn al-Dawlah, from which he found honor. He also wrote a book about medicine which comprised twenty articles. He was Abu al-Husayn ibn Kaskary, a physician remarkable for both his temper and his expertise in medicine. He was serving Prince Adh-Dhu al-Nasr Hamedan and when the prince built the Bimaristan in Baghdad he used it, so that by then his status had risen.

Conclusion

The research aims to discuss the basic health services in Baghdad during the Adh-Dhu al-Nasr Al-Buwaihiera. The professional medicine industry actively developed during this period, due to the perfection of health services and excellent incentives of the doctors in the Abbasid Dynasty, resulting in the promotion of constructions in Bimaristan.

Moreover, the study has furnished a number of results, namely: The development of medical science evidenced by translations and studies of books from Bimaristan reflects advanced scientific and practical thinking.

2. The appearance of Arab and non-Arab individuals in the medical profession needed the Caliph's patronage as well as the senior state officials to inspire health services.
3. The doctors were under the supervision of the Muhtasib, which indicates the patronage and interest of the government regarding the medical services for the citizens.
4. Bad political conditions in a country do not mean a lack of care about health; on the contrary, there is development and guidance in this matter.
5. Health services were not restricted to Bimaristan and included the cleaning of streets, roads, markets, and bathrooms.
6. A noble mission was for doctors to serve the public by dealing with matters related to health. Because of the enormous value they attached to human life, they placed this profession under the supervision of the Muhtasib and held examinations to guarantee that they were in a position to practice this profession without fear.
7. Baghdad society was concerned about health and civilized aspects. It recognized the importance of the environment. They cared about it by being concerned about the environments in which they lived and worked and played. They focused on measures protecting themselves from environmental damage. And they gave priority to health by maintaining personal, domestic and public cleanliness.

8. Muslim Arabs did not confine their excellence in medicine to themselves through their knowledge and practice or through composing books and theories. They considered medicine to be a legacy of culture, heritage, and humanity and permitted contributions from others in this area of profession. Prominent Christians and Jews figured in medicine, making some remarkably valuable contributions to the field of medicine.

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