

Contributions of Muslim Scientists to Medicine and Related Sciences

Abdi O. Shuriye
Raihan Othman



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Editors
Abdi O. Shuriye
Raihan Othman



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CHAPTER FIVE

ALI BIN ISA AL-KAHHAL: PIONEER IN OPHTHALMOLOGY

Nurizan Omar, Nassereldeen A. Kabashi

Fac. of Eng., International Islamic Univ. Malaysia (IIUM), Jalan Gombak, 53100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigates Ali bin Isa Al-Kahhal contribution to ophthalmology especially in eye disease. The main objective of this chapter is to emphasize the influence of Al-Kahhal theory and applications in ophthalmology. The importance of this chapter is to reveal the greatest contribution of Al Kahhal in ophthalmology. The methodology used in doing this chapter is library based research and most of data is collected from a medical journal which is from a reliable source.

5.2. HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN MEDIEVAL ISLAM

According to David W. Tschanz, medicine was the first of the Greek sciences to be studied in depth by Islamic scholars as discussed in his article,

“After Plato’s Academy was closed in 529, some of its scholars found refuge at the university at Jundishahpur, the old Sassanid capital of Persia, which had also sheltered excommunicated Nestorian Christian scholars among them physicians in 431. Persia became part of the Islamic world in 636, and Arab rulers supported the medical school at Jundishahpur. There, Islamic physicians first familiarized themselves with the works of Hippocrates, Galen and other Greek physicians. At the same time, they were also exposed to the medical knowledge of Byzantium, Persia, India and China”.
(David W. Tschanz,1997,pp. 20-31)

The Abbasid caliphs Harun al-Rashid (786–809) and his son, al-Ma’mun (813– 833) established a translation bureau in Baghdad, the Bayt al- Hikmah, or House of Wisdom, and sent embassies to collect Greek scientific works in the Byzantine Empire since they found out the importance of translating Greek works into Arabic. This steered the first era in Islamic medicine, whose effects what we feel today. Islam becomes one of the empire emerged after the fall of Rome in 476.