

Oriental medical manuscripts in Uzbekistan : an overview

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Summary

For many years now the Oriental manuscripts of the libraries in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Tadjikistan, and Pakistan are almost inaccessible for the majority of Western historians. In contrast to these countries, manuscript collections of Uzbekistan became much more open for the scholars after the Soviet Union break-up. There are hundreds of medical manuscripts written in Arabic, Persian, Chagatai Turk, Uzbek, Hebrew and Judeo-Persian languages in the Uzbek Republic collections. This article describes this heritage.

Résumé

Depuis plusieurs années maintenant les manuscrits orientaux conservés dans les librairies en Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Tadjikistan et Pakistan ne sont quasiment plus accessibles pour la majorité des historiens occidentaux. Contrairement à ces pays, les collections de manuscrits d'Uzbekistan peuvent être facilement consultés depuis la dissolution de l'Union Soviétique. Il y a des centaines de manuscrits médicaux écrits en arabe, en persan, en turc chagatai, en Ouzbek, en hébreu et en judeo-persan dans les collections de la République d'Uzbekistan. Cet article tente de décrire cet héritage.

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Oriental medical manuscripts of Uzbekistan were not extensively studied. The last twenty years, however, brought Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan to semi-isolation. For centuries Uzbekistan had intensive relationships with these countries in many ways including medical. Many medical manuscripts were brought to Uzbek states (1) from different parts of Islamic world. Many works, including some writings of Abu Ali Ibn Sina (Avicenna) were composed there.

Now it is possible to use Oriental medical manuscripts of Uzbekistan for historical medical research. The newly independent post-Soviet Uzbek Republic of Central Asia is an open country. It welcomes researches in different fields and is ready for scientific co-operation. This country is

not rich and does not provide grants. The life in Uzbekistan is inexpensive. The historical heritage of the country is impressive: Bukhara, Samarkand, and Khiva are the main historical cities. Uzbekistan is a birth place of al-Biruni, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), al-Bukhah, and Timur (Tamerlane). Tashkent is a capital of the republic. What do medical historians have there?

There are four main collections of Oriental medical manuscripts in Uzbekistan:

1. The Collection of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, (further: "TheUzbekCollection"). Practically it is affiliated with the Institute of Oriental Studies in Tashkent.
2. The collection of Oriental manuscripts of the Tashkent State Medical School.
3. The collection of manuscripts of the Supreme Islamic Council of Uzbekistan. The Academy

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Fig. 1 Anonymous commentaries to the medical treatise of Yusuf b. Muhammad b. Yusuf-i-Yusufi al-Herevi. Arabic, 17th century. The collection of the State Medical School library, Tashkent.



of the Islamic Studies, Tashkent, has an access to this collection.

4. Private collections of manuscripts.

The Uzbek Academic Collection has a catalogue. It includes 181 medical manuscripts. The oldest manuscript is a copy of the book of Ibn al-Baitar *Kitab li-mughani fi al-adhuiya al-mufrada* ("A complete book on medicinal herbs"). The book was written about 1244 - 1248 (641-646 H.). The copy was made in 1265-66 (664 H.) from the original (2). The main number of the manuscripts are copies of the older manuscripts of the 10th -16th centuries. The surviving copies of these works were mostly made in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. There are even some handwritten copies made at the very beginning of the 20th century. At the same time the Uzbek Collection has many manuscripts written in the 13th - 15th centuries.

For example, the Academic collection keeps a 19th century copy of the well known book of Abu-Bakr ar-Razi (d. between 923-935) *Bir assarha* ("Cure in a Short Period Time" or "Cure in an Hour") (3). The "Useful Short Manual" (*Muhtasar mufid*) is perhaps even more peculiar example. It is said in introduction, that the book was prepared for the Persian king Khosrov Anushirvan (531-579 AD) to serve him as a domestic medical manual. However, the text of the surviving copy of the manuscript is in Arabic. The retained copy was made in 1824-25 (1240 H.) (4).

There are several groups of manuscripts in this collection. The large group of works written or related to Abu Ali Ibn Sina includes, together with commentaries, 13 manuscripts. The incomplete copy of the Canon (*al-Qanun*) was made in 1601 (1010 H.) (5). This manuscript is written in Naskh and has numerous decorations.

An anonymous author left his commentaries on difficult places in the Canon. He wrote his manuscript in Arabic in the 13th century. The retained manuscript could be the original or a copy

made during the author's lifetime (6). The commentaries to "The Smaller Canon" (*Sharh al-faenujiya*), a short version of the Canon of Ibn Sina, written by Abdulfattah b. Said Ismail al-Husseini as-Sultanpuri, is not described in any other Oriental catalogue (7). The known copy was made in 1695 (1107 H.) and perhaps is unique (8).

Six copies of the works of Abu Bakr ar-Razi (including *Bir'assarha and Kitab b'ae*) make up another group of the manuscripts. Several copies were made in 1843, 1853-54 (1259 H., 1270 H.) (9). This copies have students' remarks on the pages. It seems that ar-Razi's manuals were studied for practical purpose for a thousand years they were written ! Ar-Razi was translated from Arabic into local Tadjik language and one Tadjik copy of 1842 survived (10).

The largest group of the manuscripts consists of the medical manuals and poems written by Yusuf b. Muhammad b. Yusuf (first half of the 16th a), the son of a distinguished physician of Herat. There are 25 manuscripts of this author in the Uzbek Collection, some of them are well known (11) and some of them unique (12). Brockelmann (12) and Leclerc (13) called him Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Labib al-Harawi. The Uzbek texts present his name in another variation: Yusuf b. Muhammad b. Yusuf-i-Yusufi al-Herevi. Sometimes the author called himself simply "Yusufi" (15). This author was so famous in Central Asia that his works were copied and studied till the end of the 19th century.

The main part of the manuscripts are general manuals on medicine. In addition, eleven manuscripts of different authors are dedicated to various sexual problems. There is, for example, a Persian



Fig. 2 A 18th century copy of the medical manuscript of Ibn Al-Nafis (d. 1288/89). Arabic. The collection of the State Medical School library, Tashkent.

manuscript *TehakAstamana* ("Measures Against Masturbation") by Imamuddin b. Sheikh Muhammad Omar b. Sheikh Pir-Muhammad, written in 1830 (16). This work presents views of the Naqshbandi dervish sheikh on the problem of masturbation.

There are 32 pharmacological treatises including, for example, *Ihtiyarot Badiai* (Pharmacopoeia) of AN b. Hussein al-Ansari of the 17th century. *Rasaal (masael) al-usul ila (fi) masael al-fusul* is a treatise on human anatomy written by Mansur b. Muhammad b. Ahmad in 1404 at the court of Timur (17). The rare treatise on paediatrics, *Tahfat al-Maasumin*, was written by Salikh al-Kandahari in Bukhara between 1785 and 1800 (18). There are also several works on ophthalmology (19), cardiology, psychiatry, hygiene, and even medical astrology. There are also 44 works of anonymous authors. Some of these manuscripts have no usual Moslem religious blessing (*bismilla*) in the beginning of the book. Presumably these works were written by the Jewish doctors and additional research is needed to reveal names of some of them.

There are numerous works in Arabic, but the main languages of the Uzbek Academic Collection are Persian and Uzbek. The medical works of the Uzbek Collection, however, are written mainly

in Arabic. Being a *lingua franca* of the educated part of the Moslem world, Arabic was not a spoken language in Central Asia since the Mongol invasion of the 13th century. In fact, the Uzbek language belongs to the Turkic group of languages, and the Tadjik relates to the Persian language. Nearly all the manuscripts are written in Naskh or Nastalikh scripts. Many manuscripts have specific Islamic decorations, and some works have anatomical drawings.

The collection of the library of the Tashkent Medical School has 93 Oriental medical manuscripts. These collection has no catalogue. Special permission from the Rector of the School is needed to get access to the collection. The collection is kept in a room of a one-storey hundred years old library building. The room is dark and sunlight does not affect the books. The room has no ventilation. The collection grew up by special efforts of the Russian doctors of the 1890's - 1920's who hunted the rare medical manuscripts all over Uzbekistan. The majority of these manuscripts were written in the 19th century, but many of them are actually copies of books composed 500-700 years earlier. For example, there is a 19th century copy of a medical poem *Muftah al-Hikma* ("A Key to Wisdom"), written by Darvish Muhammad Hakim-i Kilasabadi in the 13th century (20).

There are four medical manuscripts in this collection written in Judeo-Persian, or in the Judeo-Tadjik dialect of Judeo-Persian, by anonymous Jewish authors. One of these manuscripts is pure magical, and contains numerous incantations for healing. Another manuscript contains numerous medical aphorisms and is presumably a copy of an older treatise.

The Supreme Islamic Council of Uzbekistan has a rich collection of Oriental manuscripts. Not all of them are religious. There is no official catalogue of the collection but it is said that it contains up to a thousand manuscripts. Special permission from the religious authorities is needed

- **Fig. 3** A medical Persian manuscript of an undetected author, 18th century. A private collection, Tashkent



to work with the collection. There are several purely medical manuscripts in this collection and several religious manuscripts dealing with health. A special religious treatise of *mullah* Salikh b. Muhammad Tashkandi of the 18th century is entirely dedicated to masturbation. There is a unique original manuscript of an anonymous (21) Uzbek pilgrim of the 17th century. This pilgrim was himself a physician and went on a *hajj* in the second half of the 17th century. He visited Mecca and Medina and wrote numerous medical observations in his travel diary. He left also numerous important medical advice for future pilgrims.

Finally there are several private collections of manuscripts in Tashkent and in Samarkand. They are not numerous because of the previous 70 years of Soviet domination which led to numerous requisitions. However these collections contain several hundreds of Oriental manuscripts including medical works. Some of these works, hidden under poetical titles like *Bahr al-Jawahir* ("The Sea of Pearls"), or *Tahfat Shaiste* (Arabic - Persian, "The Worthy Gift"), or *Mufraeh al-Kulub* ("Joyforthe Hearts"), represent, however, purely academic medical treatises of well-known, less known, and anonymous authors. Some other medical works are written in a form of religious reasoning or spiritual admonition, but their contents are generally medical.

The Uzbek historians and Orientalists of the Soviet and post-Soviet periods have concentrated their research efforts on manuscripts written by medieval historians. They published numerous textual works (22). As for medical manuscripts, only the works of Ibn Sina were intensively researched. The complete text of the Canon was translated into Russian and modern Uzbek and published in five huge volumes. All the other medical manuscripts were not seriously investigated.

Uzbekistan is an open country now. Medical historians have an opportunity to explore its untouched treasures.

Appendix

A list of the authors of the medical manuscripts of the Uzbek Academic Collection in chronological order.

- Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Zakariya AR-RAZI (850/865 - 923 / 935)
- AH b. Isa Sharaf al-din al-Kahhal (i.e. "an eye doctor") (10th c.)
- Abu-Ali al-Hussein ibn Abdallah IBN SINA (Avicenna) (980 - 1037)
- Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Ilaki (11th c.)
- Jamaluddin Abu-l-Faraj Abdurrahman b. abu-l-Hasan b. Ali al-Jauzi(d. 1200)
- Badraddin b. Muhammad b. Bahram al-Kalanisi (12th c.)
- Zainuddin Abu-Ibrahim Ismafil b. Hasan b. Ahmed b. Muhammad al-Husseini al-Jurjani (d. 1139)
- Ismafil al-Alevi al-Jurjani (? after 12th c.)
- Said al-Imam Ismafil b. al-Hasan al-Husseini (?)
- Allauddin Ali Abu-l-Haram al-Qarshi (IBN AN-NAFIS) (d. 1288 or 1296)
- Diyauddin b. Abdallah b. Ahmed b. Muhammad al-Maleki (Ibn al-Baitar) (d. 1248)
- Muhammad Hakim-i-Kilasabadi, Darvish (13th c.)
- Kutbuddin (Qutb-ul-Din) Mahmud b. Mas'ud ash-Shirazi (d. 1311)
- Jamal-ud-din Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Aksarayi (Al-Aqsra'i) (14th c.)
- Mahmud b. Muhammad b. Omar al-Jagmini (d. 1344)
- Ibrahim b. Haekim al-Kishi (14th c.)
- Mansur b. Muhammad b. Ahmed 14-15th c.)
- Muhammad b. Yusuf (d. 1414)
- Nifmatullah b. Mugis-ud-din Muhammad b. Fahr-ud-din Mubarak-shah (HAKIMI) (15th c.)
- Nafis b. Ivaz al-Kirmanani (15th c.)
- Muhammad b. Allah-ud-din b. Haibetullah as-Sebzavari (15th c.)
- Bahaud-Daula b. Mir Kivamuddin Kasim Nurbahsh ar-Razi (16th c.)
- Muzaffar b. Muhammad al-Hasani al-Yafani (ash-Shifai?) (d. 1555-56)
- Yusuf b. Muhammad b. Yusuf -i-Yusufi Al-Harevi (YUSUFI) (16th c.)

Shah-Ali b. Suleiman al-kahhal ("an eye doctor") (16th c.)
 Sheikh Ahmad b. Yusuf ash-Sharif (16th c.)
 Sultan AN of Horassan (16th c.)
 AN b. Hussain al-Ansari (Hojja Zain al-Attar) (16-17th cc.)
 Nuraddin Muhammad Abdallah Ainalmulk-i Shirazi (17th c.)
 Abdulfattah b. Said Ismafil al-Husseini as-Sultanpuri (17th a?)
 Abduljani Muhammad Arzanib. Mir HajjiMukim (MUHAMMAD
 AKBAR)(17thc.)
 Mir Muhammad Zaman-i Tenkabuni Deilemi (17th c.)
 Sei'id Subkhankuli Muhammad-bahadur-Khan (17th c.)
 Muhammad Taki b. Hojja Muhammad-i Tabrizi (17th c.)
 Ubaidullah b. Yusuf AN, an eye doctor (17th c.)
 Muhammad Kazim (18th c.)
 Hakim Muhammad Sharif-Khan (18th c.)
 Sei-id Amir Bahshi Husseini Hasani-yi Mecci (Sei'id Netkhu
 shahDarvish) (18th c.)
 Salikh b. Muhammad b. Muhammad Salikh-i Kandahari Kaini
 (18th c.)
 Muhammad Akbar-i Arzani (18th c.)
 Gulam Muhammad (18th c.)
 Habatullah b. Abu-I-Muzaffar b. Muhammad b. Ardashir b.
 Miras Jamasp (18th a?)
 Amanullah Hanazad-kahn Firuzjang b. Mahabat-khan
 sipahsalar (b. Gayur-beg)(18th c.)
 Hafiz-i-Kalan b. Badruddin Kari (18-19th cc.)
 Muhammad Sharif b. Muhammad Niyaz-i Bukhari-ya-
 naqshbandi (19th c.)
 Mustafa b. Muhammad Ibrahim al-Horassani (19th c.)
 Imam-ud-Din b. Shaikh Muhammad Omar b. Shaikh Pir-
 Muhammad (19th c.)
 Abdullatif (19th c.)
 Abd-al-Aziz b. Ahmad b. Hamid (19th c.)
 Ibadallah an-Nari (Muhammad Salikh al-Bukhari) (19th c.)
 Kazi Sei'id Kamar (19th c.)
 Muhammad Mahdi b. AN Naki (?)

Notes

1. There were three Uzbek states in Central Asia before the Russian invasion of the 1860-80s and Russian Revolution of 1917: The Bukhara Emirate, the Khiva Khanate, and the Kokand Khanate.
2. N°:3237ofthecatalogueoftheAcademisCollection.See in Semenov, A.A., ed. *Sobranie vostochnikh rukopisey Akademii Naud Uzbekskoy SSR*. Tashkent, Izd. Akad. Nauk UzSSR, 1952, vol. 1, p. 282.
3. #3390/i of the catalog. Semenov, 1952, vol.1, p.241.
4. #1356/vii. Semenov, 1952, vol.1, p.241.
5. #3316/i-ii. Semenov, 1952, vol.1, pp.244-5.
6. #3235. Semenov, 1952, vol.1, pp.245-7.
7. Among the manuscripts of the Academic Collection, 114 titles are described in other catalogues and works, including, for example : Blochet, E. *Catalogue des manuscrits Persans de la Bibliotheque de Pahs*. vols. I-IV, Paris, 1905-1934; Brockelmann, C. *Geschichte der Arabischen*

- Litteratur*. B-de I-II. Weimar - Berlin, 1898-1902; Rieu, C. *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*. 3 vols., London, 1879-1883; Rieu, C. *Catalogue of the turkish Manuscripts in the British Museum*. London, 1888.
8. #2556.Semenov, 1952, vol.1, p.250.
 9. ##3390/i, 2612/ii, 2828/iii, 2612/vi. Semenov, 1952, vol.1, p.241-3.
 10. #3390/ii. Semenov, 1952, vol.1, p.242.
 11. Iskandar, A.Z. "*Jawahir al-lugha*" and "*Bahr al-Jawahir*"-two different lexicons by Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Herewi. *Al-achiq*, 57 (1963): 331-334, (Arabic).
 12. Such as #2992/v : *Dalael al-Baul* ("On Urine").
 13. Brockelmann, C. *Geschichter der arabischen Literatur*. 2 vols. Weimar, Felber, 1898 & Supplement. 3 vols. Leiden, Brill, 1937-42, Suppl. Vol. 2, p.592.
 14. Leclerc, L. *Histoire de la Medecine arabe*. 2 vols. Paris, Clermont, 1876, vol.2, p.335.
 15. #575/viii, p. 135b. Al-Harevi called himself (Yusufi) in this poem dedicated to hygiene and treatment of several diseases. See also # 361/v *Mukhtaata Yusufi*.
 16. #2974/ii, Semenov, 1952, vol.1, p.278.
 17. #2105, Semenov, 1952, vol.1, p.255. The survived copy was made in 1683(1101 H.).
 18. #2612/i, Semenov, 1952, vol.1, p.275.
 19. Including *Kitab Tathkirotal-Kahhalin* of AN b. Isaal-Kahhal, the Christian physician-ophthalmologist in Baghdad in the 10th c. #1832, Semenov, 1952, vol.1, p.243-4.
 20. The exact years of life of Muhammed Hakim-i Kilasabadi are not known, however he states in the introduction in prose to his poem that he was a pupil of the Indian Sufi Sheikh Farid-ud-dinShakarganj(d.1265/664H.) and wrote this poem by the order of his teacher.
 21. He was not anonymous but the front page of the manuscript did not survive.
 22. See, for example: Arends, A.K. et al. *Bukharskiy VakfXIII v.* (The Bukharian Waqf of the 13th c.) Moscow, 1979; Chehovich, O.D. *Bukharskie Dokumenti XIV v.* (The Bukharian Documents of the 14th a), Tashkent, Nauka, 1965; Yusupova, D.Y. *Fasih Ahmad al-Havafi: Mujmal-i Fasihi. Russian translation, commentaries, indexes*. Tashkent, Fan 1980; Yusupova, D.Y., Jalilova, R.P. *Sobranie vostochnikh rukopisey Akademii Nauk Respubliki Uzbekistan - Istoriya* (The Collection of the Oriental manuscripts of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan - History), Tashkent, Fan, 1998.

Biography

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