

## BOOK REVIEW

Hakim Mohammad Said (Ed.). *Greco-Arab Concepts on Cardio-Vascular Diseases*. Hamdard Foundation Press, Karachi-18, Pakistan, 1983, pp.201.

This is a noteworthy volume edited by Hakim Mohammad Said whose global contribution to different arts and sciences in general, and medical sciences in particular, does not require any introduction.

Besides the historical information regarding the anatomy and physiology of cardio-vascular system and blood circulation, the book also embraces the cardio-vascular diseases and their treatment as described by Ibn Sīnā (980-1037 A.D.) and other masters of Unānī medicine. The treatise also contains the therapeutic action of cardiac drugs as mentioned in *Avicenna's Tract on Cardiac Drugs*. This volume further discusses chemical, pharmacological and clinical appraisal of some medicinal plants and herbs commonly used in Indian traditional medicine. The last chapter of the book is on the pharmacological studies on *Khamīrah Abreshām* of Ḥakīm Arshad Khān and includes information on its use and effects in cardiac diseases for the readers. The study of this valuable book would be of immense use not only for the practitioners of Unānī medicine but also for those who are investigating the drugs to relieve the cardiac ailments, as this is the first modern treatise on the subject, to the best of my knowledge. The embellishment of the book-cover with fortyone postal stamps of different countries depicting 'heart' and 'heart patients' makes the book more attractive. The printing and general get up of the book is quite satisfactory.

However, some important points which seem to have been missed, may be taken into consideration while bringing out the second edition :

- (1) The book does not include the information and concepts of Greek authors like Hippocrates (460 B.C.), *etc.* on the subject, though the title of the book is *Greco-Arab Concepts*.
- (2) It may be suggested that the chronological order of the medical scientists or Ḥakīms could be maintained for better understanding of the first chapter.
- (3) Alāud-Dīn Qarshī and Ibn al-Nafīs (*d.* 1288 A.D.) are not two different Arab medieval scientists but one and the same Arab physiologist whose full name is 'Alāu'-d-Dīn Abū'l Hasan 'Alī ibn Abī-l-Ḥazm Ibn al-Nafīs al-Qarshī al-Miṣrī al-Shāfi'ī (Sarton).

- (4) The correct name of Ḥakīm 'Alī Ḥusain Gilānī is Ḥakīm 'Alī Gilānī (d. 1608 A.D.) who flourished during the reign of Emperors Akbar and Jahāngīr in medieval India as has been stated in the present volume (vide p.24).
- (5) The figures mentioned in the text (vide p.200, 201) have not been given. This appears to be a grave omission, but could be just a printing mistake.
- (6) Surprisingly, the book does not contain an index, which may be provided in the next edition.

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S. Mahdihassan (Ed.), *Bazar Drugs and Folk Medicine in Pakistan*,  
Hamdard Foundation Press, Karachi-18, Pakistan, 1984,  
pp. xiii+ 182, illustrated, Rs. 75/.

The in-depth information on simple drugs and compound medicaments of herbal, animal, and mineral origin being used since antiquity in Āyurvedic, Unānī and Folk medicine in the sub-continent has been collected in this volume in the form of twenty-five papers containing mines of data. The book also contributes some new insight into the curative powers of hot-water springs especially in relation to Mangho Pir, a hot-spring resort about sixteen kilometre north of Karachi. Contrary to popular belief that the sulphur contents of the hot-water makes it undrinkable but relieves the skin ailments by bathing, the book asserts that it is the trace of arsenic (1 part to 225 millions) which renders the beneficial effects to the patients suffering from mild and chronic skin diseases including leprosy, not only by bathing but also by drinking. The book also states that heat-drying of the spring water and reconstituting the residue with distilled water negates the curative powers.

There are two scientific papers on calcined metals (*Kuṣṭas : Bhaṣmas*) which give useful information on the subject. It may be mentioned here that in India, the Unānī physicians are divided into two camps, one at Lucknow, preferring vegetable drugs and the other at Delhi, extolling calcined preparations. This volume also contains some interesting articles on samples of Unānī pharmacy, the use of lizard oil and animal skin in Folk medicine which provide

first-hand information in this field. *Fagonia cretica*, a supposed cure for cancer stated in the book deserves special attention. If proved really efficacious, it will be a landmark in the medical history. The treatise also contains a chapter dealing with the possibility of longevity and rejuvenation. It is an established fact that efforts have usually been made to find an effective remedy and/or food to achieve longevity, but so far such efforts have not given any promising result.

As regards the printing and the general getup of the book, it is quite satisfactory. It is surprising that the book does not have an index. This may be taken into consideration while bringing out the next edition.

To sum up, the book provides ample valuable materials to the scientists and medical scholars for research and their therapeutic evaluation.

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