

Abolhassan Ahmad bin Mohammad Tabari Taranji; The famous Iranian Physician

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ABSTRACT

Tabaristan (current Mazandaran), in northern Iran and the south of the Caspian Sea, is considered as one of the scientific and medical centers in both scientific and Islamic worlds. The emergence of numerous scholars in this area indicates the centrality of science in this amazing geography. One of the greatest men of this land is Abolhassan Ahmad bin Mohammad Tabari Taranji. Information about him is very limited in historical sources but he is recognized for writing a scientific book on al-mu'alaja al-buqratiya. Moreover, he has also played a role in the political system of Buyid dynasty and Abbasid Caliphate. In this research, his life, his scientific experiences and his medical works are discussed.

KEY WORDS: *Abolhassan Ahmad bin Mohammad Tabari Taranji, Medicine, al-Mu'alaja al-Buqratiya, Tabaristan, Iran.*

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Introduction

Tabaristan (current Mazandaran), in northern Iran and the south of the Caspian Sea, is one of the major centers of civilization in Iran, and this region has witnessed the advent of many physicians and scientists. In this study, the details about “Abolhassan Ahmad Bin Mohammad Tabari Taranji”, one of the scientists from this area are investigated.

Biography and Medical Works of Abolhassan

Ahmad ibn Mohammad Tabari Taranji: Abolhassan ibn Mohammad Tabari, one of the greatest men in the field of medicine in the 10th century, was born in Taranj city (in the South of present Babol City in Mazandaran Province), Tabaristan Province.^{1,2} Information about him is very limited in historical sources. His date of birth is unknown, but historians believe that he died in 970, 977 and 985 AD.^{3,4}

It is also known that he was a student of Abu Maher Shirazi, one of the scientist and physicians of Shiraz Scientific Center in southern Iran.⁵ As he himself has said in his book entitled “Kitab al-Mu'alaja al-Buqratiya”, his skill in the surgical knowledge was confirmed by his instructor and as a surgical assistant, he once helped Abu Mohair with performing surgical operation to cure heart disease with an exemplary skill.² Tabari also had a prominent role in holding medical office and educating medical science seekers, and he has had noted many experiences and innovative thoughts in his book which is not yet considered by researchers of traditional medicine and modern medicine as it should be.^{4,6}

Furthermore, he was busy doing political activities, and during his youth, he made his way to the court of Abū Abdullah Bīrādī's apparatus (r. 928-949) from Abbasid dynasty, and he served twice as the minister. He was also associated with the son of Abu Abdullah, Abul Qasim, who was one of the greatest men of the caliphate system himself.

Once, Abu Abdullah Bīrādī sent him to Ahvaz to treat a certain illness of Moezo Dawlah Dilmai (r. 967-945). But after the death of Abu Abdullah Bīrādī, he joined the court of Rokn al-Dawlah Dilamī (r. 935-976 AD) and often treated his relatives. Abolhassan was best known for his compilation of a book entitled “al-

Mu'alaja al-Buqratiya”. This book is a valuable medical text book and it was at least a unique at its own time. As it is seen in many of the pages of this work, in spite of serving in the Empires system and the ensuing incursions, Abolhassan had a great deal of opportunity to travel, visit many cities, and use the experiences of various groups of people. He also lived in Tabaristan, Rey, Ahvaz, Shiraz, Abadan, Basra, Baghdad, Mosul and Damascus, and learned to treat some eye diseases from Kahhalan (ophthalmologists) of Basra, the water properties of the sulfur springs in treatment of dermatological diseases in Mosul, snakebite from the people of an area between Isfahan and Ahvaz, the bite of weasel (which is found in Khuzestan more than any other region) from the people of that province, and the bite of moles and vipers from the people of Sistan province.²

As we said, his most important work is the treatment of baccalaureate, which is based on ten articles. The first article, which is discussed in about fifty chapters, is about preliminary topics which must be learned by a physician who is not familiar with the concept of philosophy; the second article is on the diseases of the head and the third article is on internal diseases, the fourth article is on eye diseases, the fifth article is on the nose and ear diseases, the sixth is on oral and dental, gum, and throat diseases, the seventh is on skin diseases, the eighth is on cholecystitis, veins, and ventricles diseases, as well as stomach and esophagus, liver, spleen, and abdominal gut diseases.^{4,7}

Risalah fi Zekr Alqaruruh, Alaj al'atfal, Kitab Alfard, Al-Ain al-Mu'aliqi and Al-Qarabadin are his other works that no trace is left from the last two books and they are just cited as reference in the works of the other authors of medical science.^{2,4,8}

Discussion

Hakim Abolhassan Ahmad bin Mohammad Tabari Taranji is considered as one of the wise and astute physicians of Mazandaran Province and Babol City. He is known for his book entitled “al-Mu'alaja al-Buqratiya”, a work that has been used for centuries by physicians, scientists and scholars. It is hoped that we

can show respect to this wise physician from Babol by publishing this article in the Babol Journal of the Babol University of Medical Sciences.

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