

Book Reviews

that emerges from the first half of the discussion offers constructive insights not only into the heterogeneity, and alleged “social blindness”, of the pharmaceutical industry, but also into the manner in which innovative training schemes often required, and clearly benefited from, close financial and intellectual engagement between pharmaceutical companies and academic departments. The second half of the Witness Seminar focuses largely on the growing regulation of medicines in the post-war years by the Committee on Safety of Drugs (later the Committee on Safety of Medicines), the Medicines Act of 1968, the Medicines Commission, and, more recently, the Commission on Human Medicines. The transcript is illuminating, effectively revealing the personal and political determinants of decision-making, the persistent under-resourcing of regulatory authorities, the on-going tensions between laboratory and clinical experience, and the gradual encroachment of European regulations on the control of drugs.

Given the complexity of the history, it is not surprising perhaps that the discussions failed to resolve certain issues. It remains unclear, for example, precisely which social, political, professional and cultural factors drove the emergence of clinical pharmacology during the post-war years, or indeed precisely what clinical pharmacology was during that period. Equally, it will be a project for future historians to determine whether the recent move towards “translational medicine” manages to improve the sometimes strained relationships between academia, the pharmaceutical industry, the National Health Service, and patients.

The parameters for the debates covered during these two Witness Seminars are clear, the discussions are open and challenging throughout, and the contributors are expertly (and humorously) managed by the chair on each occasion, Professor Rod Flower. In conjunction with the excellent editing, the constructive bibliographies and the biographical snippets of key actors, these two volumes offer an intimate and effective

introduction to critical aspects of modern medicine.

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Charles Burnett (ed.), *Ibn Baklarish's book of simples: medical remedies between three faiths in twelfth-century Spain*, Studies in the Arcadian Library, No. 3, Oxford, The Arcadian Library in association with Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 217, illus., £85.00 (hardback 978-0-19-954306-9).

This book contains the proceedings of a symposium held in response to the Arcadian Library's acquisition of a copy of Ibn Baklarish's *Kitāb al-adwīya al-mufrada li-l-Isrā'īlī* (The Book of Simple Medicines by al-Isra'ili), which is commonly referred to as the *Kitāb al-Musta'inī*, in honour of the author's patron, al-Musta'in bi-llāh Abū Ja'far Aḥmad, who ruled in Saragossa from 1085 to 1110 CE. As Charles Burnett explains in the preface, the Arcadian Library manuscript is dated to 1130 CE, not long after the text's composition, and is in remarkable condition.

In the first paper, Ana Labarta opens with a discussion of the Arcadian manuscript, references to Ibn Baklarish and his *Kitāb al-Musta'inī* in the Arabic bibliographical sources, and a summary of modern scholarship concerning both book and author. She then comments on the author's full name and the few details we have about him, namely that he flourished in Saragossa at the end of the eleventh century and during the early twelfth century CE. Little more is known about the historical context in which the book was composed. The *Kitāb al-Musta'inī* is a learned, yet practical, medical reference work based upon a great number of earlier sources. It lists about 700 simple drugs, in alphabetical order, providing the following information in tabular form: drug name, nature and degree, synonyms, substitutes, uses, properties and methods of use. It is a remarkable

achievement, both as regards the scope of substances and sources consulted and the number of synonymous terms given in other languages (Syriac, Persian, Greek, Latin, Berber, various dialects of Arabic, Romance and even Coptic and Nabataean). Labarta states, with good reason, that the Arcadian manuscript is the best textual witness to the *Kitāb al-Mustaʿīnī*, and should be used as the basis for the planned critical edition.

This is taken up by Joëlle Ricordel in the next chapter, in which she presents a survey of the various manuscripts in both European libraries and those in the Maghreb. The Arcadian Library manuscript is then analysed in more detail and compared with the others. Ricordel is currently preparing a critical edition, and this is very much reflected in her contribution, which displays an admirable intimacy with the primary sources.

Juan Carlos Villaverde Amieva's essay is the longest contribution. It focuses on the Romance terms that occur both in the Arabic transcription and in the glosses in Latin script. These vary from manuscript to manuscript, which allows the author to analyse the various textual witnesses and to present a *stemma codicum*. He then analyses the Romance terms in Arabic script, and concludes that they are drawn from other, earlier sources that Ibn Baklarish (or his sources) consulted. Thus, contrary to what has been assumed in the past, they are not derived from the Romance language that Ibn Baklarish would have encountered in his own day. This contrasts with the marginal glosses, added by generations of copyists and readers, which shed further light on the various Romance dialects of the Iberian peninsula.

The fourth contribution, by Jan Just Witkam, should probably have been the third in this volume, thus placing the essays that deal with manuscripts together, followed by the two that deal with more philological matters. Witkam discusses the copy of the *Kitāb al-Mustaʿīnī* which Leiden University Library has housed since the early seventeenth century in the light of two early seventeenth-century letters that help to prove that this

manuscript was produced with the aid of two earlier ones. Following this, the author provides a description of the Leiden manuscript and a comparison with that in the Arcadian Library.

Geoffrey Khan then discusses the 31 Syriac terms that occur in the Arcadian Library manuscript, concluding that they are not all from literary Syriac, but reflect a range of dialects. Indeed, two are actually post-classical Hebrew terms, suggesting that one of Ibn Baklarish's sources, or the author himself, probably consulted a Jewish text and failed to distinguish between Aramaic and Hebrew. Those that are Syriac, in the sense that modern scholars understand the term, are realized according to the Nestorian vocalization.

In the next paper, David J Wasserstein studies the *Baklarish* and *al-Isra'ili* parts of Ibn Baklarish's name. Noting that the latter appellation is required only in a non-Jewish context, he argues that Ibn Baklarish is not really very Jewish, and offers other evidence to reinforce this, such as the absence of Hebrew in the *Kitāb al-Mustaʿīnī*, the lack of any mention of Ibn Baklarish in any Jewish source, the apparent non-use of any earlier Jewish source such as the Talmud, and the use of Arabic script in the *Kitāb al-Mustaʿīnī*. He concludes that Ibn Baklarish was completely integrated into the pervading Islamic culture of the day and, but for the use of the term *al-Isra'ili*, his Jewish identity would be lost on modern readers. This is extremely problematic and based, for the most part, on arguments from silence. For instance, we move from observing the lack of Hebrew in the *Kitāb al-Mustaʿīnī* to concluding that "he shows no knowledge of Hebrew" (p. 111). In this respect, Wasserstein should consider Khan's remarks in the previous chapter and also those of Emilie Savage-Smith in the penultimate chapter.

Savage-Smith analyses the synoptic tables in which Ibn Baklarish arranged and presented data on 704 medicinal substances, comparing them with those of Ibn Butlan's *Kitāb Taqwīm al-ṣiḥḥa* with specific regard to the entry for

myrtle. Ibn Butlan composed his text in Baghdad, a generation before Ibn Baklarish produced his in Spain, so we have a near contemporary comparison between two geographically remote sources. Both texts share some structural features, but have little in common when it comes to details. Similar comparisons are then made, again with reference to myrtle, with al-'Ala'i's *Kitāb Taqwīm al-adwiya al-mufrada* and al-Tiflisi's *Kitāb Taqwīm al-adwiya al-mufrada wa-l-aghdiyya*. The most interesting results, however, come from the final comparison with Maimonides's *Sharḥ Asmā' al-'uqqār*, where a closer relationship is apparent, suggesting that Maimonides made use of Ibn Baklarish's earlier work or that they both shared a common source. Savage-Smith asks whether it is a coincidence that the only clear evidence for Ibn Baklarish's influence on later writers occurs in the work of another Jewish scholar. Was his work primarily circulating within the Jewish community?

In the final chapter, Anna Contadini asks how the medicines derived from animals that occur in the *Kitāb al-Musta'īn* compare with those in contemporary literature, specifically the *Kitāb Manāfi' al-ḥayawān* of Ibn Bakhtishu'. After discussing the structural differences between the two works, she moves on to more specific issues such as whether the animal parts are said to have the same properties, methods of preparation, uses, etc. In the specifics, there is a striking degree of difference, once again, between the two works. Finally, the sources used by Ibn Bakhtishu' and Ibn Baklarish are compared, and, not surprisingly, the only common sources are Aristotle, Galen and Dioscorides. Caution is advised by Contadini, however, against concluding that the differences between the two works are due to the existence of two geographically distinct schools or traditions, as there is sufficient evidence for mobility among physicians in this period.

The book ends with a useful bibliography, an index, and fifty-two excellently reproduced colour plates of the manuscript (in addition to

the numerous colour plates that occur throughout the volume).

Inevitably in a multi-authored work such as this, there are some apparent points of contention. For example, will readers agree with Labarta, who states that "Ibn Baklarish was both original and comparatively modern in the way in which he collected the material . . . and arranged it in tables that facilitate quick consultation" (p. 23)? Or, in the light of Savage-Smith's reference to the probable earlier use of tables in the 'Alexandrian Summaries', will they think that Labarta slightly overstates the case? Perhaps more importantly, will Savage-Smith's intriguing conclusion regarding the influence of Ibn Baklarish within the Jewish community prove to be more persuasive than Wasserstein's attempt to diminish Ibn Baklarish's Jewish identity? In both cases, I find myself inclined to agree with Savage-Smith.

As each article is self-contained, there is a fair bit of repetition, especially in the introductory sections (compare, for example, pp. 15, 27, 43 and 95) but sometimes in other respects as well (see pp. 27–31 and 47–9). Overall, however, this is a delightfully well-produced and informative volume that will bring great pleasure to the present reviewer for many years to come. It serves as a paradigm for how such manuscripts should be brought to the attention of both the wider scholarly community and the general public and, for this, the publishers are to be congratulated.

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Bronwen L Wickkiser, *Asklepios, medicine, and the politics of healing in fifth-century Greece: between craft and cult*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008, pp. xiii, 178, £29.00, \$55.00 (hardback 978-0-8018-8978-3).

The cult of the healing god Asklepios was immensely successful in antiquity. Wickkiser