



NEWSLETTER OF IBN SINA ACADEMY

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**An Official Newsletter of the
Ibn Sina Academy of Medieval Medicine & Sciences**

IAMMS ACTIVITIES

Collaboration of Ibn Sina Academy with the Project of Traditional Knowledge

Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine (Aligarh), vide letter No. 3-46 (k)/CCRUM/Tech dated 22.10.2003 in connection with the work of completion of information on additional hundred plants in the list of Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), deputed Hakim Mohd Saleem (Asst. Regional Officer [Unani], LRIUM, New Delhi), Hakim S. T. H Zaidi (Regional Officer) and Mr. M.A. Rasheed (Assistant Regional Officer) to work with Prof. S. Zillur Rahman in the Library of Ibn Sina Academy.

It is to recall that to update the list of medicinal plants for the project of TKDL, by the Unani Section of the Department of Indian Systems of Medicine (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare), Government of India set up committees to finalize the list of medicinal plant, in order to include particularly correct botanical nomenclature by using details studies of various flora. The Ministry set up also groups to update the list of medicinal plants with the help of literature available at the Library of Ibn Sina Academy (vide letter No.U 20012/8/02-APC, Dated August 29, 2003).

Special Events in the Ibn Sina Academy:

On the occasion of Sir Syed Day (October 17, 2003), the Ibn Sina Academy organized a painting competition for high school children. The competition was held on 16th October 2003 under three groups, viz., Group A (Class I – III), Group B (Class IV – VI) and Group C (Class VII – X). The topics were also allotted groups-wise. To Group A: 1. University Emblem, and 2. Sir Syed's Staff / Stick and his Cap. Group B: 1. Work of Art on Sir Syed and His Companions in the form of a Tree. 2. Frontage Title of the first / old Tahzibul Akhlaq. Group C: 1. Line Sketch of Sir Syed or One of his Close Associates, 2. Picture of any one of the building/ structures: Sir Syed House, Victoria Gate and Baab-e-Sir Syed. To note is that seventy-nine children of different schools participated in the competition.

Prizes (1st, 2nd, 3rd and Consolation) were given to each group at a special function on 18th October 2003.

On 18th October, an exhibition of books / publications on "Sir Syed and Aligarh", extant in the library of Ibn Sina Academy including postal stamps on Sir Syed and Old Boys, important photographs, traditional university uniform, memoirs of dignitaries, mementoes/ relics, was arranged at the Academy. We may recall that Sir Syed was the founder of Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh, which later on became The Muslim University in 1920.

13th Lecture of Ibn Sina Academy Series

Dr. Suhail Ansari, an orthopedic consultant from Liberal Kansas, USA delivered the 13th Guest Lecture of the Ibn Sina Academy on October 18, 2003 at 4.30 PM. The topic of the lecture was: "Growing up with Arthritis". Prof. Ather H. Siddiqi presided it. Very senior retired professors and principals of various colleges of the Aligarh Muslim University attended it. The audience included many senior teachers of Aligarh Muslim University including Nawab Ibn Said Khan Chattari (Pro-Chancellor). The lecture was a unique attempt to involve the highly educated audience, many of whom suffer from arthritis. The lecture was followed by an active question hour and comments by the learned members of the audience.

Individual Activities of Members of IAMMS

Prof. H. S. Zillur Rahman, founder president of Ibn Sina Academy of Medieval Medicine & Sciences, has been appointed as Member Board of Advisory, Journal for the History of Arabic Sciences (Aleppo / Syria). Prof. Dr. Aladine LOLAH (Director, Institute for the History of Arabic Science, Aleppo, Syria) in his letter no. 14/920MT dated 16.12.2003 informed that a new Advisory Board and Editorial Committee of the Journal for the History of Arabic Sciences has been created under the able guidance of Dr. Ahmad Y. Al-Hassan (Founder Director, Institute for the History of Arabic Science). It is hoped that the quality of the Journal would further rise under the new committees.

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Dr. Syed Ziaur Rahman, Lecturer in the Department of Pharmacology at Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College (Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh), was invited to deliver a Guest Lecture on "Impact of Pharmacogenetic and Pharmacogenomic on Adverse Drug Reaction Monitoring" at the International Workshop on Adverse Drug Reaction Monitoring, Society of Pharmacovigilance, India (SOP1), Agra, December 11, 2003. He also attended following conferences:

36th Annual Conference of Indian Pharmacological Society, December 5-7, 2003, VPCI, New Delhi and presented poster, entitled, Role of Delphinium denudatum Wall. in Heroin Addicted Patients – A Case Report.

26th Annual Meeting of the National Pharmacovigilance Centers, in collaboration with WHO International Drug Monitoring Program, New Delhi (India) December 8-10, 2003.

3rd Annual Conference of the Society of Pharmacovigilance, Hotel Howard Park Plaza, Agra, December 11-13, 2003. He presented a paper entitled, "Nimesulide Induced Coronary Artery Insufficiency – A Case Report".

Dr. Ruzi Ahmad, Lecturer in the Department of Pharmacology at Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College (Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh), attended the 36th Annual Conference of Indian Pharmacological Society, December 5-7, 2003, VPCI, New Delhi. He presented a poster, entitled, "Ototoxicity by Quinolones".

NOTICES ON NEW WORKS / BOOKS

1. *Studies in the History of the Exact Sciences in Honour of David Pingree*. Edited by Charles Burnett, Jaan Hogendijk, Kim Plofkar and Michio Yano, (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science, Text and Studies, Vol. LIV, Eds. H Daiber and D. Pingree), Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2004, ISBN 90 04 132023. 890 pages.

This volume consists of 29 articles divided into three parts, namely, Mesopotamia (5), Classical and Medieval Europe (5), India and Iran (11) and Islam (8). It consists also a Bibliography of Pingree's publications complete until the end of July 2003 (19 pages), and an Index of Names of Ancient and Medieval Authors (8 pages)

This *Festschrift*, presented to Prof. David Pingree (Dept. of History of Mathematics, Brown University, Providence, USA) on his seventieth Birthday, spans pre-modern mathematical-astronomical/astrological texts, coinciding with the expertise of Pingree, viz., textual studies of ancient Mesopotamia, Greece, India, Iran, Arabic-Islamic countries and medieval Europe. The contributors are experts of their fields, N. Swerdlow, Anne Tihon, Charles Burnett, J. Berggren, J. Hogendijk, David King, Jamil Ragep, and George Saliba, to name only a few. Here we may list only selected articles concerning history of science in India.

Ansari, S. M. Razaullah (Aligarh), "Sanskrit Scientific Texts in Indo-Persian Sources, with Special Emphasis on Siddhāntas and Karanas".

Gupta, R. C. (Jhansi), "Area of a Bow figure in India".

Hayashi, T. (Japan), "Two Benares Manuscripts of Nārāyana Pandita's Bijaganitāvātamsa".

Ikeyama, S. (Japan), "A Survey of Rules for Computing the True Daily Motion of the Planets in India,

Kusuba, T. (Japan), "Indian Rules for the Decomposition of Fractions".

Plofkar, Kim (USA), "The Problem of Sun's Corner Altitude... in Medieval Indian Astronomy".

Sarma, S.R. (Aligarh), "Setting up the Water Clock for telling the time of Marriage".

Van Dalen, Benno (Frankfurt), "The *Zīj-i Nāstri* by Mahmūd ibn 'Umar: The Earliest Indian *Zīj* and its Relation to the *Alā'i Zīj*".

Yano, M. (Kyoto, Japan), "Planet Worship in Ancient India".

The Volume has been produced with lots of devotion and commitment. The printing is superb, so also the illustrations. It is hoped that this volume will be utilized fully by historians of astronomy, astrology and mathematics, the community of which is grateful to the editors for their singular efforts

SMR Ansari (Aligarh)

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2. Biruni's "Chronology": *al-Athâr al-bâqiyya 'an al-qurûn al-khâlîyya*, ed by Parviz Azka'i (Tehran: Miras-i Maktub, 2001 -- ISBN 9646781543). This laudable edition, based on all available MSS, is much superior to Sachau's text (and the additions by Garbers and Fück). See: <http://iranfarhang.com/mirasemaktubEN.asp> (sixth row from top, on the left).

But as is very well known, most publications do not reach such philological standards. For example in the Widener Library of Harvard University two other "editions" of important treatises by al-Biruni are extant, both of which are worthless, namely

* *Kitâb al-tafhîm li-awâ'il sina'at al-tanfîh* (Dimashq: Ninawa, 2003)

[This simply reproduces the text of the facsimile of MS British Library Or. 8349, which accompanies Ramsay Wright's translation (1934)]

* *al-Athâr al-bâqiyya 'an al-qurûn al-khâlîyya: wada'a hawâshiyahu Khalîl 'Umrân al-Mansûr* (Bayrut: Dâr al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000) -- ISBN-2745121901. [Plagiarized from Sachau's 1878 edition without taking the additions by Garbers and Fück into account]

On the other hand, there is a recent _editio princeps_ of Biruni's *Ist'ab al-wujûh al-mumkina fî san'at al-asturlah* by Muhammad Akbar Jawadi al-Husayni (Mashhad: Majma' al-buhuth al-islamiyya, 1380 Hijra shamsi [2001/2] -- ISBN 9644443551), which, although by no means satisfying, is certainly useful.

Beirut edition of Biruni's *al-Qânûn al-Max'ûdi* (Dâr al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2002, in 3 vols -- ISBN 2754133055) seems to be quite useful, even though it is not a piece of critical scholarship. The text nevertheless appears to be better than the Hyderabad edition (though this statement is based on very partial and cursory inspection). The layout is also much more appealing.

Francois Charette (Canada)

3. *The Life and Science of Leon Foucault: The Man Who Proved the Earth Rotates*, by William Tobin, Cambridge University Press, 2003, ISBN 0-521-80855-3 xiv+338 pages, hardback. 97 line

diagrams. 204 half-tones or engravings. 24 colour plates. 21 tables. £40, US\$60, Aus\$120.

Foucault made many contributions to astronomy, including his invention of the telescope in essentially its modern form and his measurement of the speed of light, which was really a determination of the distance to the Sun. With Fizeau he took the first solar daguerreotypes, which showed clear evidence of limb darkening. In later years he worked on governors for telescope tracking. And of course his famous pendulum demonstration of the Earth's rotation is not disconnected from astronomy! As David DeVorkin says in the foreword "If Foucault is not remembered today as a dominant figure in the history of modern physics and astrophysics, it is only because our histories do not yet fully elucidate the complex root structure of the system that created those fields."

The book is heavily illustrated in black and white and colour. The physics underlying Foucault's work is described at the level of the typical *Scientific American* reader, and thus I believe my book provides great enrichment reading for physics and astronomy students. A French adaptation was published last year, and a word used about it by many reviewers was *passionnant* (enthralling).

At the price of £40/US\$60/Aus\$120, the publisher has unfortunately priced my book for libraries rather than individuals. If my book is of interest, I am sure you have a library for which you can recommend it! A very abbreviated account of Foucault's accomplishments will of course be appearing in the *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Astronomers*, Ed. Thomas Hockey, (Kluwer), to be published shortly.

William Tobin (New Zealand)

4. *Sharh al-Urjûza al-Yâsimîniya*, by Ibn al-Hâ'im

Arabic Text edited and commented by Mahdi Abdeljaouad, 428 pages, published by the Tunisian Association of Mathematical Sciences, Tunis 2003, price, 20 dollars (plus shipping costs)

Ibn al-Hâ'im (1352-1412) is the author of many books of arithmetic and algebra: *al-Hâwi fî ilm*

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al-hisâb (1380), *al-Ma'ina fi'l hisâb al-hawâ'i* (1389), *al-Wasila fi 'ilm al-hisâb* (1390), *al-Muqni' fi'l jabr wal muqâbala* (1410), etc.

Sharh al-Urjûza al-yâsimînya, written in 1387, is a commentary of *al-Urjûza fi'l Jabr wa'l Muqâbala*, of Ibn al-Yâsamîn (d.1204 in Marrakech). The author aims in this textbook to teach all known algebraic concepts, methods and rules based on the works of al-Karâjî (d.1020) and Ibn al-Bannâ (1256-1321). The following themes may be noted.

Presentation of algebraic terminology and different methods of resolutions of first and second-degree equations.

Monomial and polynomial expressions; multiplication, division, addition, subtraction and square roots of algebraic expressions.

Multiplication, division, addition, subtraction and square roots of irrational numbers of the form \pm .

Methodologies for solving algebraic problems.

Resolution of 45 problems.

This Book is divided into three parts:

In Arabic language: an introduction with annotations (52 pages) and the text edition of *Sharh al-Urjûza al-yâsimînya*, (208 pages).

In French language: a presentation, which includes a detailed analysis of the algebra, used by Ibn al-Hâ'im (124 pages).

Two bilingual tables summarizing mathematical contents of the *Sharh* with modern algebraic formulas and with North African algebraic symbols (44 pages).

Mahdi Abdeljaouad (Tunisia)

4. *Mathematicians, Astronomers and other Scholars of Islamic Civilization and their Works* (ISBN 92-9063-127-9, Series of Studies & Sources on History of Science. 11, PC 2003/3, Editors Boris Rosenfeld and Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu). Price: US dollars 80, postage included.

To a large extent, this work represents an English translation with considerable updating (esp. from Ottoman sources) of G.P. Matvievskaia and B.A. Rozenfeld, *Matematiki i astronomi musulmanskogo srednevekovya i ikh trudi* (VIII-XVII vv.) [Mathematicians and astronomers of

the Muslim middle ages and their works (VIII-XVII centuries), Moscow 1983.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES / SEMINARS

Medicine Across Cultures: 600-1600

The Nineteenth Barnard Medieval and Renaissance Conference will be held on December 4, 2004. The conference will be centered on medieval and renaissance medical theory and practice from around the world. Possible topics include: theories of the body and its workings; signs and cures of sickness; definitions of health; ideas on the circulation of fluids; notions of equilibrium; pharmacological theory; connections between medicine and empirical science; the relationship of medicine to theology and psychology; medical education and practitioners; medicine and the arts; medicine and music.

For details, contact: Joel Kaye, Dept. of History, Barnard College, 3009 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10027. E-mail: jkaye@barnard.edu

22nd International Congress of History of Science

The 22nd International Congress of History of Science will be held in Beijing from July 24 to 30, 2005. The quadrennial celebration of the International community of the history of Science will be held in China, which is a huge and developing country, with the most dynamic economy in the world today. The history of science also benefits from this prosperity, and is receiving more and more attention and support both from the state and society at large. The Congress Website has now been restructured, and will be updated frequently in order to keep participants informed about important information concerning DHS activities and organization of Cong.: <http://2005bj.ihns.ac.cn>. On-line Registration is also accepted.

Society for Ancient Medicine, European Meeting 2004

The Society for Ancient Medicine, European Meeting 2004 will be from June 16-19, 2004 at Centre for the History of Medicine, University of Birmingham, School of Medicine. The theme of

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the meeting is "Anatomical knowledge in the ancient world: from prehistory to late antiquity", supported by the Institute of Pathology, Bogenhausen Academic Hospital, Munich, Institute of Ancient History and Culture, University of Salzburg

This international conference aims to bring together, for the first time a gathering of classicists, ancient historians, medical historians, medical practitioners, archaeologists and biological anthropologists to explore understanding of the body in ancient medicine and philosophy. The conference will look at all aspects of anatomy and anatomical knowledge from prehistory to late antiquity, with special reference to the Classical World (and its predecessors), Europe, Egypt, the Near East, the Indian Sub-Continent and China.

The multi-disciplinary programme will include papers (or posters) on the following general themes:

1. Anatomy and disease
2. Anatomy and the philosophy of the body
3. Anatomy and medical practice
4. Anatomy and gender
5. Anatomy and medical education
6. Anatomy in ancient art
7. Anatomy and Sport

The Society for Ancient Medicine (SAM) is dedicated to fostering scholarly work on all areas of ancient medicine, including its impact on later traditions. It regularly holds a panel at the APA/AIA Annual Meeting in the USA and SAM members contributes to the Ancient Medicine Newsletter/Bulletin de Médecine Ancienne, with its on-line bibliography at <http://www.bium.univ-paris5.fr/amn>. This is the first of a series of SAM meetings in Europe.

For more information of the meeting, please contact: Robert Arnott, Director, The Medical School University of Birmingham, Birmingham B15 2TT United Kingdom. Fax: +44 (0) 121-414 4036. Email: R.G.Arnott@bham.ac.uk

The 8th Maghribi Meeting on the History of Arab Mathematics

The 8th Maghribi Meeting on the History of Arab Mathematics will be at Tunis from December 19-21, 2004. It will deal with the following themes:

1. Mathematics and Astronomy
2. Applied mathematics
3. History of teaching mathematics in Arab and Muslim countries
4. Mathematics and Society

The scientific programme of the 8th Maghribi Meeting will consist of contributions presented by distinguished historians of Arab Mathematics, especially focusing on the contribution of Andalusian and North African mathematicians. The International Committee is presided by Professor Ahmed Djebbar (Paris) and the National Organising Committee is presided by Professor Mohamed Souissi (Tunis). The second Announcement will contain detailed and practical information. In order to receive it, please contact: mahdi.abdeljaouad@isefc.rnu.tn

The Fifth Conference of the Jordanian Society for the History of Science

A conference on the renowned mathematician al-Karaji is being organised by the Society. It will be held during October 2-3, 2004 in Amman, Jordan. The precise title is: "*A Science and A Scientist: Abu Bakr Mohammad Ibn al-Hassan al-Karaji & Islamic Mathematics*". The official language of the Conference will be Arabic, but the non-Arabic speakers could use English. The following deadlines can be noted:

- 1.12.2003: submission of abstracts
- 1.1.2004: initial acceptance
- 1.5.2004: full text of the paper
- 1.7.2004: final acceptance

The Society will provide free accommodation for participants whose papers have been accepted.

The following are the themes for the contributions: 1. Al-Karaji, his life, scientific achievements, works in mathematics and other works. 2. Arab/Muslim contribution in mathematics: arithmetics, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and music. Contact person: Prof. Abdul Kader M. Abid, Dept. of Geology, University of Jordan, Amman, 11942, Jordan. E-mail: aabed@ju.edu.jo

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SEMINARS / CONFERENCES HELD

9th Annual Meeting of the International Society for the History of the Neurosciences

The 9th Annual Meeting of the International Society for the History of the Neurosciences (ISHN) will be held during June 26-29, 2004, on the campus and in the vicinity of the University of Quebec at Montreal (Université du Québec à Montréal: <http://www.uqam.ca>). The ISHN encourages contributions on all of the history of all neurosciences, including basic and clinical specialties, ancient and non-Western topics, technical advances, and broad social and cultural aspects.

The structure of the ISHN meeting will consist of paper-sessions and poster papers as well as thematic symposia. All papers will be refereed by the Program Committee. At the sessions, each paper will be normally of about 15-20 minutes duration, followed by 5-10 minutes for discussion. Thematic symposia consist of 3 or 4 papers/session, on a specific theme. Poster papers will be displayed on a poster board whose size is yet to be determined.

The last date for application is February 1, 2004. The program will be finalized by late March 2004. Further enquiries may be made by e-mail (preferably) surface mail, or air mail from the Chair of the Program Committee, Edward Fine, M.D., or ISHN President P.M.B. 162 7954 Transit Road Williamsville, New York 14221 USA. E-mail: efine@acsu.buffalo.edu

For information on membership, please contact the ISHN Secretary, Russell Johnson, Neuroscience History Archives, UCLA Brain Research Institute, Los Angeles, California 90095-1761 USA. +1-310-825-0465 (Fax); e-mail: rjohnson@library.ucla.edu

The ISHN encourages all contributors to submit complete papers to the Society's official publication, the *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences: Basic and Clinical Perspectives*: <http://www.szp.swets.nl/szp/journals/jh.htm>.

The Iago Galdston Memorial Lecture: Medical History for the Masses

The New York Academy of Medicine Library organized the Iago Galdston Memorial Lecture on Medical History for the Masses: Heroes of Medicine in Children's Comic Books of the 1940s on October 14, 2003 at the Library of the New York Academy of Medicine Library. Historian Bert Hansen, Ph.D., discussed how comic books in the 1940s depicted significant moments in medical history.

For more information, please contact Christian Warren, Ph.D. E-mail: cwarren@nyam.org or Patricia E. Gallagher, MLS, MA, AHIP New York Academy of Medicine New York. E-mail: pgallagher@nyam.org

AWARDS / SCHOLARSHIPS

Research Fellowships at the New York Academy of Medicine

Each year the New York Academy of Medicine offers the Paul Klemperer Fellowship in the History of Medicine, and the Audrey and William H. Helfand Fellowship in the Medical Humanities to support work in history and the humanities as they relate to health, medicine, and the biomedical sciences. Each Helfand or Klemperer Fellow receives stipends of up to \$5,000 to support travel, lodging and incidental expenses for a flexible period between June 1, 2004 and May 31, 2005.

For details and to download application materials, visit website: <http://www.nyam.org/grants/history/index.shtml>

Applications must be received by the Academy by March 1, 2004. Candidates will be informed of the results by April 30, 2004. Requests for application forms (for those unable to access the forms through the web) or further information should be addressed to: Office of the Academy Historian, New York Academy of Medicine, 1216 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10029. Email: history@nyam.org.

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Bakken Research Fellowships and Grants

The Bakken Library and Museum in Minneapolis offers Visiting Research Fellowships and Research Travel Grants for the purpose of facilitating research in its collection of books, journals, manuscripts, prints, and instruments. The focus of the Bakken's collections is the history of electricity and magnetism and their applications in the life sciences and medicine. Significant holdings include the works of natural philosophers, scientists, physicians, electrotherapists, and electrophysiologists of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries. Related subjects and materials include mesmerism, animal magnetism, and hypnotism, 19th-century ephemera concerning alternative electromedical therapies, miscellaneous scientists' letters, and trade catalogues. The instrument collection includes electrostatic generators, magneto-electric generators, induction coils, physiological instruments, recording devices, and accessories.

Visiting Research Fellowships up to a maximum of \$1,500 are to be used to help to defray the expenses of travel, subsistence, and other direct costs of conducting research at The Bakken. The minimum period of residence is two weeks. Preference is given to researchers who are interested in collaborating with The Bakken on exhibits or other programs. Travel Grants up to a maximum of \$500 (domestic) and \$750 (foreign) are to be used to help to defray the expenses of travel, subsistence, and other direct costs of conducting research at The Bakken. The minimum period of residence is one week. The deadline for all 2004 applications is 16 February 2004. For more information, please contact: Elizabeth Ibrig, Librarian, The Bakken Library and Museum 3537 Zenith Avenue So. Minneapolis, MN, 55416. E-mail: ibrig@thebakken.org. Website: www.thebakken.org.

WEBSITES

<http://perso.club-internet.fr/jfabrefl/medicinaromana/default.htm>

The website of Medicina Romana is a site focused on Ancient medicine, pharmacy and botanical Sciences. In annex, you will find the main text references, an iconographic documentation and a bibliography.

DOCUMENTATION

Letters of Dr. O. C. Gruner

Compiled by A. Haneefa & S. Akhtar

Gruner, Oskar Cameron (1877-) was a leading medical scientist in the field of pathology and became famous in Europe and America when he did pioneering work in finding cancer cells in blood. He was a member of the Pathology Department of the McGill Medical Faculty from 1910 to 1914. Some of his memoirs are preserved in the Osler Library (Canada) under the category: Originals and Typescripts, 1929-1950 (Acc. 241, 304, 392). The collection includes papers relating to cancer research, 1932-1946; an address, 1950; Gruner's translation of "I tung cheng mo: ch'uan shu" (A Chinese work on the pulse), ca 1932, and the vocabulary index, 1929, to his translation of Avicenna's "Canon of medicine," vol. 2. He wrote many books and several articles. One of his famous books is: *The exact diagnosis of latent cancer: an enquiry into the true significance of the morphological changes in the blood* (1919), H. K. Lewis & Co., London (extant in the Loyola Health Sciences Library [Acc. QZ 200 G891e 1919]). He will be remembered in East and West more so for his works in history of medicine particularly after translating *Al Qanun fil Tib* (vol. 2) of Ibn Sina in English.

Professor Hakim S. Zillur Rahman had correspondence with Dr. O. C. Gruner from 1965 to 1968, when he was the editor of *Al Hikmat* (a classical monthly journal of Unani Medicine from 1965 to 1970). All these letters are now preserved in the library of Ibn Sina Academy (Aligarh). For history of medicine point of view, these letters of Gruner should make known for the scholars working in the field of history of medicine. Hakim S. Zillur Rahman published six of his letters on current issues of that time in his journal *Al Hikmat* in 1965 and 1966. For the same reason, other important letters are being produced herewith.

From: Dr. O. C. Gruner, dated October 28, 1965, Montreal, Canada.

"I received your kind enquiry when I returned home from my brief trip to England, and wrote a long letter to you about your request. However,

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after writing it, I wondered if I had done it satisfactorily, so I have held it back for a few days to think over!

Besides, I was thinking of a paper read by Dr. M H Shah in Switzerland some time ago, at a Congress, in which he showed how mental disease can be prevented by a due observance of the Quran: this appealed to me very much, as it would accord with Ibn Sina; so I wished to look his quotations through again, and be better equipped for answering your letter.

I wrote to say I did not able to submit writing for your paper, but you might see something in what I wrote down that could be re-arranged under your kind Editor-ship – not as a connected essay but as “stray thoughts” or something to that effect. Appreciating your writing very much”

Sincerely, O.C Gruner

From: Dr. O. C. Gruner, dated November 2, 1965, Montreal, Canada.

Published in *Al Hikmat*, Vol. 1, No. 9 (January 1966): 5-9

From: Dr. O. C. Gruner, dated, January 19, 1966, Montreal, Canada.

Published in *Al Hikmat*, Vol. 1, No. 12 (April 1966): 4-5

From: Dr. O. C. Gruner, dated February 17, 1966, Montreal, Canada.

Published in *Al Hikmat*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (October 1966): 5-6

From: Dr. O.C. Gruner, dated, March 30, 1966, Montreal, Canada

“You were asking for a portrait, and I was considering how to find one for you. I enclose a photograph taken some years ago, and also a news-paper cutting which gives a copy of a photo taken about 7 years ago, with a brief account of a luncheon held in my honour in New York last May. They had been “raking up” my life long years ago, beginning with when I was at school (!), but chiefly because of the work I have done for so many years on the changes in the blood in Cancer.

I think I will send you a booklet about this subject, and also one I call a “fantasy”, a

“biography of cancer”. It is called a fantasy because there are no proofs given: I intended to make a sequel with the scientific references, but this has never been done. The medical authorities are so set against all that I suggested in that booklet of the statements that I decided it was useless to expect them to notice the references.

The first part of this “fantasy” is about the relation between poisoned food and the disease, since many carcinogenic substances are added to canned foods with governmental permission, besides, experiments with rats, (feeding) have proved that cancer will follow the use of “buttery yellow” (Japanese work).

I have been looking through my notes towards a new edition of Ibn Sina; so plan to devote much time to this, and see if it can be published before I find myself no longer on this “plane”. I fear the Karachi work will not see the light while I am here to see it. I have been hoping for so long for this version to “come out”.

With kindest regards, Sincerely, O.C. Gruner

From: Dr. O.C. Gruner, dated, April 15, 1966, Montreal, Canada

Published in *Al Hikmat*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (December 1966): 5-6

From: Dr. O. C. Gruner, dated June 1, 1966, Montreal, Canada.

Published in *Al Hikmat*, Vol. 2, No. 9 (January 1967): 4

From: Dr. O.C. Gruner, dated, July 4, 1966, Montreal, Canada

Published in *Al Hikmat*, Vol. 2, No. 9 (January 1967): 4

From: Dr. O.C. Gruner, dated, August 14, 1966, Montreal, Canada

“I received your kind letter yesterday, just when I had been going through the issue of *Al-Hikmat* containing a reprint of one of my letters. I have collected quite a few of the magazines and was looking for them, also trying to make out the headings, when I wondered whether I had acknowledged them. I very much hope I did, anyway this is to thank you very much for the one recently received, which gives my letter of January 19.

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I know I wrote to thank you very much for the copies you had made of the many letters you have received remarking on what you had published of my compositions which I had written down very quickly, and perhaps being in need of revision or something like that; but they seem to read all right, perhaps you touched them up here and there! As I know I am not very good literally speaking.

However, now I know you have the letter I send to your vacation address, and also the one sent to Delhi. I think I can give you a nice surprise, because that Goetheanum piece of work is in my notes, and I have been able to put it in a handy place, so can send you an abstract. The book was by E and L. Kojisko; "Agriculture of Tomorrow" It must be long out of print. A friend interested in Compost Farming lent it me quite a few years ago. Much of the book was a description of thousands of experiments bearing on agriculture, but I can perhaps give you the gist of these chapters. However, I will write to Foyle's in London and see if a copy is available, for your Library. Otherwise will copy out some of my notes, also some more details about the mathematics of plants. But it will be a few weeks, I fear, because some relatives are coming over from England, who wants to see Canada, and we will be occupied until they move on to the Canadian Rockies.

Well, I cannot say I have been working with Dr. Shah's Canon, but I had a letter from him to say it was on the verge of publication. I wrote a foreword for him at his request. I will be interested to see the finished work on which he has been occupied for several years (over ten); and I know he has "gone through the mill" over it. So I do hope it will be off his hands soon; I imagine it would be nearly Christmas before I can get a copy here, as it would have to go by water. We have been in touch with each other during all this time, and he has been forbearing with my comments (which were chiefly about the printing technique; and such like. With every good wish for you".

Sincerely, O.C. Gruner

From: Dr. O.C. Gruner, dated, May 29, 1967, Montreal, Canada

"This is to let you know I received *Al-Hikmat* containing my contribution "Avicenna and the subject of Cancer". Thank you very much for sending the Journal, and for your interest in my "Thoughts about Avicenna".

The Canon is a storehouse of "hidden knowledge"; in that a few words give a clue to what may need pages to unveil what is in them. Those who practice Unani Medicine are best equipped for opening up the vistas of thought by means of their practical experience with the sufferers from disease.

May your work continue to be blessed!"

Very sincerely, O. Cameron Gruner

From: Dr. O.C. Gruner, dated, August 6, 1967, Montreal, Canada

"Your letter of the 29th reached me quickly- a few days ago... If I was not writing you it was through doing work for Hakim Mohammad Said's Hamdard. He had asked permission to reprint my "Treatise"; but I thought that would not be suitable after having spent 14 years in helping Dr. Shah to get out his translation from the Urdu. So I set to work to prepare "selections" from that part of my "Treatise" which is a commentary on the Canon. I rearranged this and rewrote some parts in the light of my reflections on the Canon, which has been a daily companion for several years.

I congratulate you on having finished the History of Anatomy. I can see it is a "must" for the Osler Library here, and will advise them to write for a copy. You say you enclose a copy; but nothing can be enclosed in an air letter. So when it arrives, I will take it personally to the library in question, with my personal recommendation. (Of course I will be reading it well, first!)

The news about *Risala-i Joodia* is also very impressive. I will have to try and stir the medical people here up to take notice of Ibn Sina. They are so wrapped up in their surgery. A dying patient gets a new heart, a dead kidney gets replaced by a machine costing \$5000, and then costs \$1000 a year (? month?) to run, and the patient has to carry it about with him; and there is

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much more-of course the newspapers are full of these "advances". (The other side, the patient's side, one does not hear of, though some innovations are accepted by them, and as they have not got these thousands of dollars to buy the machines, there are "appeals" in the papers and money is poured in for a special fund to supply the need. So, financially, the makers of these electronic machines are the ones who profit! It will remain to be seen how long such patients live. In five years, the machine will be out-of-date like a motorcar, and you have to get a "much improved" machine.

On the contrary, I came across an article by a layman extolling a fruit-diet- nothing but fruit which will within six months or so enable a person to recover health completely whatever his disease was and add years of good health to his life. This makes sense to me, but the only ones whom I have met who can attempt such a way of life have been bachelors or widowers. Just fancy- no cooking utensils, etc. shortly after the first war I lived that way (for several months, doing my ordinary work); and I know it has a wonderfully beneficent effect on the health.

You feared about my health; it has been good till a few weeks ago, when we had a bout of very wet weather, and fog everywhere. Air-pollution in this city is extreme, but so far nothing is being done to alter it. Windows and curtains get covered with film of some slimy material. Obviously we get that into our air-cells.

Please do not put all this into *Al-Hikmat*, though; I will send you something about Vol. II of the Canon. (The top nine lines could be used by you. Though, but it may takes me 3 months to analyse the drugs".

Sincere greetings from O.C. Gruner

From: Dr. O.C. Gruner, dated, October 17, 1967, Montreal, Canada

"Just a few lines to thank you for the last issue of *Al-Hikmat* which you as kindly sent. I looked through the titles of the articles but could not translate them adequately!

It prompts me to make a more determined effort with Urdu, so as at least to know the copies presented. With all good wishes".

Very sincerely, O.C. Gruner

From: Dr. O.C. Gruner, dated, October 21, 1966, Montreal, Canada

"A few days ago I had a thought to write the enclosed about "Cancer" in terms of Avicenna. It is here enclosed.

I have been abstracting my notes on the Kolisko book for you, but they take up quite a few sheets, so I will mail them separately. Having my memory refreshed about this book, I see it has indications which might be an advantage for India's famine conditions; unfortunately agriculture people in government here took no notice of Pfeiffer's bio-dynamic methods I suppose that as they seem to have fabulous crops in Western Canada which they sell for equally fabulous sums to Russia, they don't want to change; besides the fertilizer interests would fight anything that would put them out of business. However, I think farmers in India might be disposed to try something that costs nothing and may yet yield very good crops. I am thinking of trying to get a copy of the book itself, from England, to send you, it will take some time. Meanwhile you will have the notes. I had forgotten that I did a lot of work on the capillary analysis, so I know what it says in the book is right. As I had to do this work at my own expense, I know it can be done very cheaply, by a person of ordinary intelligence.

I have been writing an essay on "Life, health, and disease", of which I hope to send you a copy. But I find I cannot get through as much writing as I would like because of "senescence" and, because I cannot get about on my own to (especially) the Osler Library of the adjacent medical Library, where one could see some journals of recent textbooks.

My difficulty, in part, is that I have been trying for 2 years to leave "Medicine" alone, and get rid of books and notes. Then something crops up, which I can't evade, and it is necessary to take up the threads again.

Dr. M. H. Shah's translation of Avicenna is evidently now on the market. My involvement in it has therefore ceased. The idea of a revised translation of my own "version" is impracticable.

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Quite a big accumulation of typed matter prepared for it will have to go into the Osler Library records instead; for I am still thinking over the question of the indigenous herbal remedies of India (and, I suppose, Pakistan) searching for something along the lines of the essay mentioned above.

We are on the verge of another nation-wide strike among the Post Office employees. I can get this letter off, and, I hope, the Kolisko abstract before it begins, as it will mean complete arrest of all interchange even inside this country itself. Last year's episode was bad enough.

With sincere greetings and good wishes,

O.C. Gruner

From: Dr. O.C. Gruner, dated, November 9, 1967, Montreal, Canada.

"My answer to yours of Oct. 26 is much delayed as I was taken ill as "emergency" and taken to hospital. My wife brought your letter, but of course I could not collect my thoughts in regard to the letter Hakim Ekramuddin Shamsi till after I got home.

Then a few days after returning for convalescence there was a relapse, and further delay resulted.

Nov. 17 I have been trying to work out an answer to the questions raised by your correspondent, but finally realized that I would have to go back thirty years to deal with his letter properly; moreover his prominence to Paracelsus seems puzzling to me. May be it an impression arising out of my "Treatise", but I would have to reconstruct all reference to Paracelsus in the Treatise and new books on Paracelsus, in the Osler Library, give conflicting attitudes to that personality.

The relation of sulphur to cancer, implied in Avicenna, are explained by pre-modern organic chemistry and modern Biochemistry, the latter is out of my reach, as I disposed of all medical literature when I returned.

So I am sorry but it will take quite a few days to prepare an answer to Hakim Shamsi.

In my present state of health I cannot be sure that I can meet your kind suggestion of a foreword – or its equivalent. Since entering my ninety-first year I seem to have removed at least five years from my capacities, and a developing cataract makes reading very tiring. So I must apologize to you both for my delayed reply.

I have re-read the item on "Avicenna and Cancer", a few times but without finding anything to alter in the presentation. However, there is evidently a hiatus to fill, this I will do as soon as I can. With kindest regards"

Very sincerely, O.C. Gruner

PS: Re-reading your letter of Oct. 26, I note your reference to Part II of the Qanoon. But I have not translated Part II. I heard it was being undertaken elsewhere, no details, though and in any case had no funds for publishing, it would be quite a serious undertaking.

From: Dr. O.C. Gruner, dated, November 29, 1967, Montreal, Canada

"At length I have prepared an answer to your correspondent Hakim Shamsi. Having gone into the question of the sulphur compound found in the liver, especially in yellow and black bile, as known by modern organic chemistry and its successors Biochemistry, I hope I have answered the question as to where sulphur comes into the subject of cancer, and therefore into the subject of the humours on the Qanoon. I have remarked that human beings still have the four humours, although modern medical education ignores them. So if we want to know the chemistry there are textbooks in use, which tell us all about the chemical substances involved in "metabolism". Obviously Avicenna could not know the details and yet what he wrote is still applicable for us today.

Trusting that this will dispel the difficulties stated in Hakim Shamsi's letter"

Very respectfully, Yours O.C. Gruner

From: Dr. O.C. Gruner, dated, January 12, 1968, Montreal, Canada

"Your attraction took " History of Anatomy" arrived here Jan. 10, 1968.

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The writing is very clear and tempts me to try and read it. However, the occasional titles in Western Tibbi enables me to see the scope of your researches. Your introduction of Sanskrit terms strikes me as very advantageous.

Even without understanding the text, I can see that this is a valuable book and a notable evidence that the western historians should realize that they are not the sole contributors in this field. It is nearly four months since I began my illness, but it is slowly mending & the winter with its zero & subzero weather must come to an end!

Thank you so much for sending the History of Anatomy. I will speak of it when opportunity arises among my medical fraternity"

Very best wishes for 1968 from O.C. Gruner

Reply to Hakim Ekramuddin Shamsi's enquiry re "Avicenna and the subject of Cancer" (Al-Hikmat), dated nil

"The question of Sulphur entering into the metabolic cycle refers to the chemical element of atomic weight 32; (John Dalton lived from 1766 to 1844). The sulphur of Paracelsus (500 years since Avicenna) is not at all the same.

Though the "physiological chemistry" had already dispensed with the "four humours" by the end of the 19th century, human beings still have blood, phlegm, and the two bilious humours, and they can be studied today by the methods of "organic chemistry" (science of the carbon compounds), and of biochemistry (chemistry of living processes) dating from 1828, the synthesis of urea.

So we know that there are the following sulphur compounds in the liver, (including the two biles and the variants of black bile (sauda) given in the Qanoon). Cholic acid ($C_{21}H_{40}O_5$) joins with taurin ($C_2H_7NO_2S$) to produce taurocholic acid, whose sodium salt is also in bile. So here is where sulphur comes in, it has to get out of the body too, and this is through the urine in the form of sulphonic acids, through the saliva as sulphocyanic acid; and in jet-black hair, and moles as melanin. The bile-pigments do not contain sulphur. But Biotin is made in the liver,

and sulphur is part of the ring-compound ($C_{10}H_{16}O_3N_2S$) This is the important vitamin H. Then there are the cysteines and the cystines, the sulphhydryls, sulphones, sulphites, sulphides. This does not exhaust the part played by sulphur in normal and abnormal metabolism – in which the liver is involved. Obviously Avicenna could not know all this, as such; but he could have intuitive knowledge in realizing the importance of sauda in producing disease. When I wrote the commentary on the "Qanoon" my aim was to indicate that it should not be put aside just because its language is so different from modern medical teaching. Dr. Shah's translation (pp.41-46) shows that Avicenna had a very good idea of what was going on in the course of what is now called "metabolism" than medical historians think. The processes described in biochemistry could still be "Summarised" in Avicenna's words.

As to the subject of Paracelsus – it is some forty years since I studied his works. The latest biography I know of is as follows:

Henry M. Pachter: "Paracelsus, Magic into Science" Henry Schuman Inc. New York, published in 1961. It is however of interest that Glauber's salt (sodium sulphate, Na_2SO_4), and Epsom's salt (magnesium sulphate, $MgSO_4$) are still used effectively for emptying the gallbladder of sulphur bile.

I should also add that I have not translated Volume II of the Qanoon"

With Compliments from O.C. Gruner, MD



GRUNER, OSKAR CAMERON

AVICENNA AND THE SUBJECT OF CANCER

By O. Cameron Gruner (Oct. 17, 1966)

The modern Cancer Research Societies would not associate a sound knowledge of the nature of Cancer with Ibn Sina! It could not be suspected that his Canon of Medicine could throw any worthwhile light on a subject that has baffled thousand of skilled research men for many years.

Under the heading of "swellings", Avicenna speaks of those composed of atrabillious humour (sauda, M.H. Shah), which has undergone an abnormal change. This abnormality is attributed by the translator (Luzac Edition 1930, p.166 of Treatise) to the entry of sulphur into the pathological metabolic cycle. Then we read of "the difference between cancerous swelling and in duration—the former is progressively increasing in size, is destructive, and spreads roots which insinuate themselves amongst the tissue-elements. The difference is less in substance than in the inseparable accidental qualities".

The nature of the disease is, of course, traced back to the four elements among which there is disharmony: thence it involves the Temperament, and finally the humours- the abnormal make-up of which manifests in growth-formation. But, as one repeatedly reverts to the subject of "breath", it is the obstruction to this that leads to the abnormal growth, since the breath is seeking an outlet all the times, and, not finding a normal or natural means of leaving the body, it operates on the materials of the obstructed area, with the result of giving rise to a "tumour" (swelling; i.e. cancer as we know it) which grows at the expense of the "host" (as we might say, today). These "roots" of which Avicenna speaks are formed as the mass infiltrates in search of materials on which it is nourishing itself - a purposive action. In Dr. M.H. Shah's version, cancers are referred to on p.148, under "Sauda".

I should not let the subject of Cancer in the Canon rest here, because my pre-occupation with this ancient work especially during the past fourteen years is naturally pervaded with 14 years of concentrated study of cancer, and the essential relation between this disease and liver-function - which has been recognized in a two - volume work of "The Liver" by Kasper Blond (John Wright and Sons, Ltd, Bristol, England, 1950 and 1955) strongly accords with Avicenna's stress on the atrabillious humour (sauda, M.H.Shah) is prophetic in value. It is the abnormal metabolic processes in the liver, which forms the key to the origin of this disease. Where I referred to the sulphur cycle in a general manner, a more detailed consideration would take up the sulphonic acids in combination with the sterols of bile. But it is not these substances, or any other derivatives, that signify, it is the fact that the precipitation in a form which cannot be realized from the body by natural routes that blocks the minutest tissue-channels in the hepatic vascular area, and compels the "life-breath" to seek another outlet.

That is to say that the "life-breath" is the most important thing in the body, because as it says in *Adviat-e qalbiya*, this is the "divine emanation" which imparts life in the first place - if not at the time of conception, certainly at the time when the heart has formed and begins to beat. This life- force is activating the tissues involved in the cessation of the flow of its energy, and inevitably causes them to proliferate and produce the new-growths to satisfy its innate "desire" to expand. One does not hesitate to introduce the thought of purposive action, because it seems implicit in the Holy Quran that the power of God is at work within the physical body of every living thing (being) not excluding the activity of the "mental body" - which as Avicenna remarked is either a base or a pleasure to the soul, like a garment presented it when it enters this world, (Second section of the *Adviat* published by Luzac in 1910, (p.536 of the "Treatise"). Watching people through the years, with this section of Avicenna in mind so frequently, and considering how psychologists have questioned whether cancer is not a result of disorder in the emotional make-up, of the subconscious mind -or, to anatomise it - some part of the solar plexus which supplies the liver as well as all abdominal viscera - one is thrown back again "into the arms" of the Canon, and view his work as a sort of prophetic book, which could only be relegated to oblivion with dire consequences to those who seek restoration to health.

One cannot but have a certain fear that the Western medicine will not rest till it has superseded Unani, so devoted is it to the purely material side of human existence. Whatever the modern researcher may say, cancer is a disease of the "inner" as well as of the "outer", and its eradication should be sought from quite early in life, as there is no doubt that it exists many years before a visible new-growth forms. A search among the 760 remedies of Volume II (concentrating on those of vegetable origin) might lead to a clue to provide the factors missing in those who are born into a temperament liable to produce this cancer- in temperament.



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NISA is an official quarterly newsletter of Ibn Sina Academy of Medieval Medicine & Sciences - a non-governmental, non-political and non-profit trust.

The news items should be sent at least four weeks prior to publication, and whenever possible through e-mail or disk (Microsoft Word or Page Maker 6.5), accompanied by a hard copy.

Please send all Newsletter correspondence to:

Copies are free to members of the Academy Only.
Annual Subscription: Rs. 100 to individual non-members and academic institutions.

Membership form can be downloaded from the website of Ibn Sina Academy: www.ibnsinaacademy.com

Published By:

Publication Division, IAMMS
Tijara House, Dodhpur, Aligarh - 202002 India
E-mail: rahmansz@sancharnet.in

Editor, Printer and Publisher

Hakim S. Zillur Rahman, Ibn Sina Academy of Medieval Medicine & Sciences, Tijara House, Dodhpur, Aligarh - 202002, India
E-Mail: editor_nisa@rediffmail.com

Printed at: Litho Colour Printers, Aligarh, India.

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