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Bani Zuhr Family and its Medical Role in Andalusia

عائلة بني زهر ودورها الطبي في الأندلس

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Abstract:

This study examines the role of scientific families in Andalusia in promoting intellectual and scientific life, focusing on the Banu Zuhr family as one of the most prominent medical families of the 6th–7th centuries AH (12th–13th centuries AD). The research aims to analyze their scientific and medical contributions and assess their impact on the development of medicine in Andalusia. Adopting a historical-analytical methodology, the study relies on classical medical texts, biographical sources, and historical records. The findings show that members of the Banu Zuhr family made significant contributions to clinical practice, medical education, and medical writing, with works that influenced both the Islamic world and medieval Europe through Latin translations. Some family members also excelled in religious sciences and literature. The study concludes that the Banu Zuhr family represents a distinctive model of a scientific family that played a crucial role in the advancement of medicine and scientific life in Andalusia.

Keywords: Bani Zuhr Family; Medicine; Scientific Contributions; Andalusia; Seville

المخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إبراز دور العائلات العلمية في الأندلس في تنشيط الحياة الفكرية والعلمية، مع التركيز على عائلة بني زهر بوصفها إحدى أبرز العائلات الطبية خلال القرنين السادس والسابع للهجرة (الثاني عشر والثالث عشر للميلاد). وتعتمد الدراسة المنهج التاريخي التحليلي من خلال فحص المؤلفات الطبية، وكتب التراجم، والمصادر التاريخية. وتُظهر النتائج أن أفراد عائلة بني زهر أسهموا إسهامًا بارزًا في تطوير الممارسة الطبية والتعليم الطبي والتأليف العلمي، حيث تركت مؤلفاتهم أثرًا واضحًا في العالم الإسلامي وأوروبا بعد ترجمتها إلى اللاتينية. كما برز بعض أفراد العائلة في العلوم الشرعية والأدبية. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن عائلة بني زهر تمثل نموذجًا متميزًا للعائلة العلمية التي كان لها دور محوري في ازدهار الطب والحياة العلمية في الأندلس.

الكلمات المفتاحية: عائلة بني زهر؛ الطب؛ الإسهامات العلمية؛ الأندلس؛ إشبيلية

1. INTRODUCTION

The Seville is one of the cities of Andalusia that has gained great fame, as it is a center of cultural diffusion and a beacon of scientists. Thanks to the interest of its princes in science, and the appearance of several scientific families, the construction of civilization was supported by an overflowing cultural and scientific production. Among these lighthouses, we mention the Bani Zuhr family, which is one of the most evident scientific clans in Seville, Andalusia. In other words, the Bani Zuhr Family has left an incredible influence on scientific production, particularly in medicine. From this standpoint, the following problematic comes to our minds: How did the Bani Zuhr family contribute to the cultural construction of Andalusia?

2. Overview of Seville

Seville is a city on the Guadalquivir River in southwestern Spain; capital of the province of Seville. In other words, Seville is a large city in Andalusia, three days' walk from Cordoba. It is on the Great River side, which is one of the largest and most important rivers in Andalusia. Its name in Arabic (Ishbilia) is derived from the word 'Ashbali', which means 'flat city'. It is pretended to be built by Julius Cesar. Seville witnessed its fabulous scientific era during the reign of the Bani Abbad, then the Almoravids, and the Almohads. A large number of scholars are affiliated with it, including: Abu Bakr Muhammad Abdullah, known as Ibn Al-Arabi Al-Ma'afiri, and the Ibn Zuhr family... (Al-Himyari, 1975, 58).

3. The Origin of the Banu Zuhr Family

The Bani Zahr family originates from the Andalusian city of Seville. It is of ancient Arab origin, belonging to the Iyad tribe, which was in Iraq, which is related to their great-grandfather, Iyad Ibn Nizar Ibn Maad Ibn Adnan. Zuhri was the great-grandfather (Saad Issa, 1983, 21). He migrated from the Arabian Peninsula to Andalusia, and the sons settled in Xativa in the southeast of it. Then, the grandchildren spread to various cities (Nihad Abbas Zinel, 2013, 156-157).

4. The Scientists of the Banu Zuhri Family

The Banu Zuhri family was famous for various sciences such as jurisprudence, literature, language, Hadith, and especially medical sciences. It was rich of evident figures for a long period, from Abu Marwan Abd Al-Malik Muhammad Ibn Zuhri (died in 471 AH/1078 AD), until Abu Muhammad Abdullah Ibn Zuhri Al-Hafid (The Grandson), who died in the 7th century AH /13th century AD. In addition, many women arose from this family in medicine.

Ibn Khallukan described them by saying: "They are all wise scholars and leaders, and ministers who reached high ranks, and they had been treasured by kings. Thus, whose instructions were carried out" (Ibn Khallukan, without date, 434).

These scientific figures had an impact on the East and the West. Among them, we mention the following scholars:

1. Muhammad Ibn Marwan Al-Ishbili, nicknamed Abu Bakr, (died in 422 AH/1030 AD):

He is the great-grandfather of Ibn Zuhri. He worked in the science of Hadith in Toledo (Al-Dhabi, 1989, 170). He was also described as being knowledgeable in opinion, a memorizer of literature, a jurist, well versed in fatwas, proficient in sciences, and a collector of knowledge and narration (Al-Maqri, 1988, 244). He died in Talbira in 422 AH/1030 AD (Al-Maqri, 1988, 244).

2. Abd Al-Malik Ibn Muhammad, nicknamed Abu Marwan, (died in 471 AH/1078 AD):

He was one of the first members of the Banu Zuhri family to work in the medical

field (Al-Maqri, 1988, 244).

For the Andalusians, the scientific journey was associated with performing the pilgrimage. Hence, Abu Marwan Abd Al-Malik started it and visited Kairouan and Egypt, where he performed medicine for a long time. Then, he returned to Andalusia and settled in Daniya. Where its king honored him greatly and asked him to stay with him (Al-Maqri, 1988, 244). He was not only a skilled physician, but also a jurist with rich knowledge (Al-Azzawi, 2012, 149).

3. Zuhri Ibn Abu Marwan Abd Al-Malik Ibn Muhammad, nicknamed Abu Al-Ala (died in 525 AH/1130 AD):

He grew up in a house of knowledge. His father, Abd Al-Malik Abu Marwan, was one of the well-known physicians in Seville at that time. As a result, the son was positively influenced in learning. He traveled to Cordoba and got countless benefit from the great sheikhs lessons of his time, such as Abu Ali Al-Ghassani, Abu Bakr Ibn Mufawwaz, and Abu Ja'far Ibn Abd Al-Aziz (Ibn Al-Abar, 1995 268). Then he moved to Egypt, and studied under the teacher Abu Al-Aina Al-Masri (Harbi, 2006, 85).

He was one of a kind, as he had particular treatments that indicated his strength in the art of medicine and his knowledge of its ins and outs. Through the examination of the patient, he could know what he was suffering from; by knowing their conditions and the pain that they were facing, without asking them about them, by looking at their eyes, or by checking their pulse (Afifi, 1977, 200). In addition, he diagnosed diseases through the patient's urine (Aouf, 1997, 93).

Due to his medical fame, he attained a high status in the court of the Emir of the Muslims, Yusuf Ibn Tashfin, especially after the Great Lady became severely ill, and Abu Al-Ala Zuhri had been invited to Marrakesh by the Emir of the Muslims to treat her (Abd Al-Wahid Al-Marrakshi, (without date, 218). After the power was transferred to the Almohads, Abu Al-Ala became a minister

and a doctor to Abd Al-Mu'min Ibn Ali (525-558 AH) (Faraj, 2002, 175). Among his most prominent students in medicine, was Abu A'mir Ibn Yennag Al-Shatibi, the poet (Ibn Abi Usbu'ia, without date, 518).

With a group of writings, he enriched the medical movement in Andalusia. The most prominent of which are:

- The Book of 'Properties', in which he summarized the sayings of some wise men such as Galen, Hunayn Ibn Ishaq, and Al-Razi regarding the properties of the body's organs. Also, he dealt with some subjects of fetuses and childbirth (Ibn Abi Usbu'ia, without date, 518).

- The book of 'Abu Al-Ala Zuhri Al-Iyadi's Experienced Medicines': This book holds proven medicines for treating measles, flat smallpox, diseases, diet, and breast tumors. This is mentioned in a manuscript in the Hassaniya Library in Rabat (Nihad Abbas Zainal, 2013, 254)

- The book of 'The Clarification by the Signs of Exposure', in which, he criticized Ibn Ridwan Al-Masri's response to the book 'The Introduction to Medicine', written by Hunayn Ibn Ishaq (Ibn Usbu'iah, without date, 519).

- The book of 'Resolving Al-Razi's Doubts on Galen's Books', in which he enlightened Galen's statements and theories, based on an attributed book to Abu Bakr Al-Razi, where he called into questions about Galen (Yayush, Al-Shammari, 2013, 22).

- An article about 'The Response to Ibn Sina in Passages of his book Single Medications', which he wrote for his son Abu Marwan, in which he criticized some subjects of Ibn Sina's book 'The Law', especially everything related with single medications (Ibn Abi Usbu'iah, without date, 519).

- 'The Message of Secrets Medicine Collector', which covers researches about the time seasons, their natures, and the appropriate foods (Yayush, Al-Shammari, 2013, 22).

- The book of 'The Medical Fine Details': was written to his son Abu Marwan (Ibn Usbu'iah, without date, 519).

- The Book 'The Borders'.

- A book on medications, but he did not finish it (Ibn al-Abar, 1995, 268).

- 'Tested Methods' (Ibn al-Khatib, 1257 AH, 272), which was an article in response to Ibn Sina, in passages of the book 'Single Medications'. It was written when he was with the Almoravids in Marrakesh, in the year 526 AH (Al-Samarra'i, n.d, 171).

- A book on 'The Properties', from which Ibn al-Baytar learned about the properties of animal meat (Al-Samarra'i, n.d, 171).

- 'Health Management' book.

- The book of 'The Introduction to Medicine (Al-Samarra'i, n.d, p. 171).Yusuf (Al-Samarra'i, n.d, 171).

Sources have agreed that the death of Abu Al-Ala Zuhri was in the year 525 AH/1130 AD, because of a catastrophe that happened to him, at the end of his life, in Cordoba. He was carried to Seville and buried there (Ibn Usbu'ia, n.d, 519), (Ibn Qunfudh, 1983, 275), (Ibn Al-Abar, 1995, 268).

4. Abd Al-Malik Ibn Abu Al-Ala Zuhri Ibn Abu Marwan Ibn Zuhri, nicknamed Abu Marwan

He died in 557 AH/1161 AD (Ibn Usbu'ia, without date, 519). He was one of the most well-known doctors of Banu Zuhri and the most prominent among Europeans under the name 'Avenzoar' (al-Samarra'i, n.d, 171-172).

He grew up in a house of knowledge and good education. His father, Abu Al-Ala Zuhri, was a doctor of medicine, and his grandfather, Abd Al-Malik, was a doctor of kings and princes (Ibn Abu Usbu'iah, without date, 519), (al-Saba'i, 1985, 148). Abu Marwan traveled to the East, entering Kairouan and Egypt, and assumed the presidency of medicine in Baghdad. Then, he returned to Andalusia, and went to Daniya where he settled. Then, he moved to Seville (Ibn Khallukan, n.d, 434).

Initially, Abu Marwan served the Almoravid state, but his prince, Ali Ibn Yusuf Ibn Tashfin, afflicted him with the same hardships as his father before him, and

he was imprisoned for about ten years in Marrakesh. After the fall of the Almoravid state and the establishment of the Almohad state, Abu Marwan worked as a doctor and minister in the court of Abd Al-Mu'min Ibn Ali, who brought him close to him and honored him (Ibn Asbiaa, (Datt), 519-520), (Harbi, 2006, 87).

He was skilled in diagnosing Pericardium and pulmonary diseases, and was an expert in single and combined medications (Ibn Usbui'ah, without date, 520). In addition, he was the first to discover the *Sarcoptes Scabiei*, and invented the enema and synthetic food for various cases of stomach muscle paralysis. Also, he was the first to use a hollow tin tube to feed people with dysphagia (Aouf, 1997, 93).

Among his most prominent students: Abu Al-Hasan Ibn Asdoun, known as Al-Masdoun, died in 588 AH. He was a physician and literary author in the royal court of the Almohad Caliph al-Mansour, wanted for his service (al-Khattabi, 1988, 61). In addition, Abu Bakr Al-Qadi Abu Al-Hasan, judge of Seville, died in 543 AH (Nihad Abbas Zainal, 2013, 252). Moreover, Abu Muhammad Al-Shadhuni, and Abu Imran Ibn Abu Imran (Ibn Asbiah, (Datt), 521).

Abu Marwan Abd Al-Malik left behind a large collection of books. The most prominent of which are:

- 'Abhomeron Abynzohar' written to the Judge Abu Al-Walid Ahmad Ibn Rushd (Awf, 1997, 95), who considered him as the greatest physician after Galen (al-Najjar, 1994, 227). It included perfect innovations in medicine, strong opinions, and ancient medical theories. This book took into consideration extensive researches on heart illnesses, epidemic diseases, eye and lung conditions, oral diseases, and ear and nose disorders. It also comprised descriptions of some internal and skin diseases, making this book a valuable scientific encyclopedia.

- 'Foods': This book examined the health effects of foods, drinks, and medications. It reviewed the principles and foundations of general health, medications,

and their types. Likewise, it presented a group of types of grains, meat, fish, fruits, vegetables, and drinks, in which he explained many scientific facts and terms. He wrote it for Abd Al-Mu'min Ibn Ali (Ibn Asbiah, without date, 521).

- 'The Septuagint Antidotes': He wrote it for Abd Al-Mu'min Ibn Ali, shortened it to ten, and shortened it to seven, and it is known as 'The Antilla Antidotes' (Ibn Usbui'ah, without date, 521)

- 'An article on Kidney Diseases'.
- 'A Message on the Causes of /eprosy and Vitiligo'.

- 'The Balance in Healing Souls and Bodies': written for the Prince Ibrahim Almoravid.

- 'Foods and Medications': a manuscript in the Hassaniya Library at the Royal Palace in Rabat.

- 'A Message on the Treatment of Diseases'.

- 'A Reminder about the laxative Medications'.

- 'The Methods of Medications and Diets Preparation' (Ibn Usbui'ah, without date, 521).

- 'Preferring Honey over Sugar': He introduced this letter by talking about the doctors of his time, criticizing who preferred sugar over honey in the composition of medications. In addition, he listed the properties of honey, and its nutritional and therapeutic value. He compared between honey and sugar, and concluded by preferring honey over sugar in the composition of medications (Al-Khattabi, 1988, 61).

- 'The Brief Law'.

- 'A summary of Galen's Book The Trick of Healing'.

Abd Al-Malik Ibn Marwan lived a long life, between seventy and ninety years. He died in 557 AH, and was buried in Seville, outside Bab Al-Fath (Ibn Usbui'ah, without date, 521).

5. Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Malik Ibn Zuhr Ibn Abd Al-Malik Ibn Muhammad Ibn Marwan Ibn Zuhr Al-Iyadi, nicknamed Abu Bakr, known as Al-Hafid

(Grandson)

He died in 595 AH/1198 AD. He learned medicine from his father and grandfather, and was also brilliant in jurisprudence, as he accompanied Abd Al-Malik Al-Baji and he taught 'Al-Mudawwanah' of Abd Al-Salam Sahnun and 'Al-Musnad' of Abu Shaybah (Ibn Usbui'ah, without date, 521).

He served the Almoravid state and then the Almohad state (Al-Azzawi, 2012, 343). Because he was intelligent in medicine since an early time, one day his father prescribed a laxative medication for Abd Al-Mu'min Ibn Ali. When Abu Bakr Ibn Zuhr detected it, he instructed to change that single medicine by another one. Thus, his father did it (Ibn Usbui'ah, without date, 523).

One of his most celebrated students in the science of medicine was Abu Jaafar Ibn Al-Ghazal, who accompanied him and learned from him the art of medicine until he mastered it. Therefore, he joined the service of Al-Mansur Al-Muwahidi, since he was an expert in the synthesis of medicines (Ibn Usbui'ah, without date, 523).

He has several works on medicine, the most well-known of which are:

- 'A Dissertation on Ophthalmology': This thesis represents a scientific value in the field of medicine.

- 'The Pentecostal Antidote': This book was written to Al-Mansour Abu Yusuf Yaqoub (Ibn Usbui'ah, without date, 522).

- 'Clarification in Medicine'.

- Composite Medications' (Al-Azzawi, 2012, 368).

In 595 AH/1198 AD, he died in Marrakesh, because of poisoning (Ibn Usbui'ah, without date, 521), (Faraj, 2002, 176).

A summary of the book The Trick of Innocence by

6. Abd Allah Ibn Al-Hafid Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Malik Ibn Abu Al-Ala Zuhr Ibn Abu Marwan Abd Al-Malik Ibn Muhammad Ibn Marwan Ibn Zuhr, nicknamed Abu Muhammad

He grew up as a successful doctor in

the service of Caliph Al-Nasir Ibn Al-Mansur Al-Muwahidi (Ibn Usbui'ah, without date, 521), (Al-Khattabi, 1988, 66).

In 602 AH, he died because of poisoning in Sala, in the region called Rabat Al-Fath, and was buried there. He was heading to Marrakesh and then his body was transferred to Seville (Ibn Usabui'ah, without date, 521).

5. Conclusion

Andalusia in general and Seville in particular, witnessed widespread activity and great prosperity in the field of the medical movement. Due to several reasons, the most important of which was the care taken by the successive princes of Andalusia, who paid great attention to science and scientists, bestowed upon them gifts, and provided them with the appropriate conditions for research and achievement.

The Andalusian Ibn Zuhr family is considered one of the most prominent medical families, producing many famous doctors who excelled in Andalusia for three centuries. This family was one of the reasons for the flourishing of health conditions in Andalusia, through their teaching of medicine and medical treatment. They left us many medical books that resonated in Europe.

Many scholars and families emerged in the field of medicine in Andalusia who inherited medicine, the most prominent of whom was the Banu Zuhr family, which was not only a unique family in medicine, but also excelled in religious sciences and poetry, such as Abu Bakr Muhammad, known as Al-Hafid.

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