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NOTES ON THE INTRODUCTION AND
COLOPHON OF THE LEIDEN MANUSCRIPT
OF DIOSCORIDES' 'DE MATERIA MEDICA'

K. P. 05

In the course of studying all surviving copies of Arabic Dioscorides manuscripts I have come across some interesting statements in the introduction and colophon of a Leiden manuscript of *De Materia Medica*. This manuscript belongs to the Warner Collection or Legatum Warnerium of the Library of the University of Leiden, Cod. Or. 289.¹ This vast and valuable collection of oriental manuscripts was acquired by Levinus Warner in the early seventeenth century during his term of appointment as Dutch ambassador to the Ottoman court in Istanbul. The collection was given to the university upon the death of Mr. Warner in 1665.

My researches indicate that the Leiden manuscript is the most complete of all the Arabic Dioscorides and that it is the earliest extant dated copy. Several translations of *De Materia Medica* were made from Greek and Syriac into Arabic. According to the introduction of the Leiden Dioscorides this manuscript is a copy of the original work of a scholar by the name of al-Nātīlī, who revised the earlier translations of Ştefan and Ḥunayn ibn Işhāq.²

I identify the author of the Leiden Dioscorides, referred to in the introduction by his full name, al-Ḥusayn ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Khurshid al-Ṭabari al-Nātīlī, as the tutor of Ibn Sīnā mentioned by several Arab historians by the more familiar name of Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Nātīlī. My identification is based upon the name itself as cited by various Arab historians, descriptions of al-Nātīlī's profession and writings, and the coincidence of time and place with where and when the author completed his manuscript of *De Materia Medica*.

The earliest Arab historian to mention al-Nātīlī as the tutor of Ibn Sīnā was Ibn Funduq³ followed by Ibn al-Qiftī⁴ and Ibn Abī Uşaybi'a.⁵ Ibn Funduq lists

¹ Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* (Leiden, 1937-1949), I, 299, no. 207; Supp., I, 371; P. de Jong and M. J. de Goeje, *Catalogus codicum orientalium Bibliothecae Academiae, Lugduno Batauae*, Vol. III (Leiden, 1865), pp. 227-229. No. mceci.

² We draw most of our information about the translation of Dioscorides's *De Materia Medica* from Ibn Abī Uşaybi'a who tells us that Ştefan ibn Basil and Ḥunayn ibn Işhāq were responsible for the translation. Abū al-Abbās Aḥmad ibn al-Qāsim ibn Abī Uşaybi'a, *'Uyūn al-anba' fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibba'*, ed. August Muller, Vol. II (Cairo, 1882), p. 48. There is also another edition by Nazar Rida (Beirut, 1965), p. 281.

³ Zahir al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Zayd al-Bayhaqī ibn Funduq, *Tatimmat Şiwān al-ḥikma*, ed. Muhammad Shafi' (Lahore, 1935), pp. 22-23, 40.

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