Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī’s Medical Work, al-Tuhfa al-Sa’dīya
(Commentary on volume 1 of Ibn Sīnā’s al-Qānūn fi al-Ṭibb) and its Sources

Taro Mimura
The University of Manchester
taro.mimura@manchester.ac.uk
(received: June 2013, accepted: November 2013)

Abstract
Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī wrote several huge works not only on mathematical sciences and philosophy, but also on medicine: a commentary on volume 1 of Ibn Sīnā’s al-Qānūn fi al-Ṭibb entitled al-Tuhfa al-Sa’dīya in nine volumes. This is not surprising because Quṭb al-Dīn came from a family of physicians and he received medical education in his youth by reading Ibn Sīnā’s Qānūn. This enormous commentary ought to give us comprehensive information about books on medicine and its allied disciplines available to Quṭb al-Dīn. In this article, I will elucidate how he utilized these books when composing such a huge work. Particularly, I will focus on how Quṭb al-Dīn used Ibn Rushd’s medical work in his al-Tuhfa al-Sa’dīya, and rethink the importance of Ibn Rushd in the East.

Keywords: Kitāb al-Kullīyyāt; Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī; al-Qānūn fi al-Ṭibb; Ibn Rushd, al-Tuhfa al-Sa’dīya

1. This article is a revised version of my paper “Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī’s Al-Tuhfa al-Sa’dīya (Commentary on Ibn Sīnā’s al-Qānūn fi al-Ṭibb, Book 1)” presented at “Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī Workshop” held on June 11-12, 2012, McGill University, Canada. I would particularly like to thank Professor Jamil Ragep (McGill), who gave me an opportunity to present this paper. I am deeply grateful to Dr Reza Pourjavady (Berlin), who encouraged me to research this topic and gave me precious insights on Quṭb al-Dīn, and also very grateful to Amir Gamini (Tehran), who patiently supported me to finalize the article. Rosalind Batten (Manchester) provided very precious comments on the early draft. This article is based upon work supported by the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the Quebec Government and McGill University under Grants Nos. 12587 (PL Prof Robert Wisnovsky) and 203634 (PL Prof. Jamil Ragep). Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the Quebec Government or McGill University.
Introduction

Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī amazes us with the fact that he wrote several huge works on mathematical sciences and philosophy. Moreover, we also realize that he wrote a voluminous book on medicine: a commentary on volume 1 of Ibn Sīnā’s al-Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb entitled al-Tuḥfa al-Sā’īya in nine volumes, dedicated to Sā’d al-Dīn al-Sāwajī (Savage-smith, p. 258), a vizier to the eighth Mongol Ilkhan, Uljāyū (r. 703-716AH/1304-1317AD). This is not surprising because Quṭb al-Dīn came from a family of physicians and he received medical education in his youth by reading Ibn Sīnā’s Qānūn, one of the most famous and comprehensive handbooks on medical knowledge in Arabic, which consists of the following five volumes:

- Vol. 1: on general principles of medicine (al-Kullīyāt);
- Vol. 2: on simple drugs;
- Vol. 3: on diseases of each part of the body;
- Vol. 4: on diseases affecting the whole body;
- Vol. 5: on compound drugs

In the post-Avicennian period, many medical students, including Quṭb al-Dīn, used the Qānūn as a medical textbook. According to the

---

introduction of the *Al-Tuhfa al-Sādiyya*, since the Kulliyāt (vol. 1) was the most difficult text for him, he started collecting its commentaries and other related books to understand it. Afterwards, he composed the *Al-Tuhfa al-Sādiyya* as the result of his research.

Due to the popularity of the *Qānūn*, several scholars wrote commentaries on it (Iskandar, pp. 33-51, Savage-Smith, pp. 242-268). The *al-Tuhfa al-Sādiyya* is one of the most voluminous, despite being only on the Kulliyāt. Because of the massive amount of its folios, it has not been analyzed sufficiently, except for its short introduction (Iskandar, pp. 43-47) and a study on part of the text.¹ But this enormous commentary ought to give us comprehensive information about books on medicine and its allied disciplines available to Quṭb al-Dīn. In this article, I will elucidate how he utilized these books when composing such a huge work.

Particularly, I will focus on how Quṭb al-Dīn used Ibn Rushd’s medical work in the *al-Tuhfa al-Sādiyya*. Recent scholarship agrees that in Quṭb al-Dīn’s days, Ibn Rushd was never mentioned by scholars who were active in and around the Iranian region, namely in the East, while he was very influential in the West.² Quṭb al-Dīn’s quotations of Ibn Rushd’s medical work urge us to rethink the importance of Ibn Rushd in the East.

**Manuscripts of *al-Tuhfa al-Sādiyya***

There exist quite a few manuscripts of the *al-Tuhfa al-Sādiyya* (Iskandar, p. 43, n. 2; Savage-Smith, pp. 258-263; Şeşen, pp. 69-71). I list some of them as follows:³

---


³ In the list, the manuscripts I examined are marked by an asterisk. For describing the Iranian manuscripts, I used the online database "Agha Bozorg (http://www.aghabozorg.ir)/".
• Istanbul, Şehid ‘Ali Pasa MSS 2047-2050 (copied in 717AH), these manuscripts contain the whole volumes of it (Şeşen, p. 69);
• Istanbul, Ayasofya MSS 3649-3656* (copied on 1st Sha‘ban 735AH according to the colophon’) (Idem, p. 70). Although Şeşen says that they have its nine volumes, they lack vol. 8. Adam Gacek identifies their owner from their flyleaf, Burhân al-Dîn al-‘Ibrî (d. 743AH/1343), a pupil of Qûţ al-Dîn;  
  - Tehran, Majlis shura MS 6304 (copied in 749AH)*, Vol. 2;  
  - Tehran, Majlis shura MS 3904 (copied in 889AH)*, Vols. 1-3, and vol. 9;  
  - Tehran, Majlis shura MS 5288 (copied in 10CAH)*, Vol. 3;  
  - Tehran, Majlis shura MS 4723 (copied in 1090AH)*, Vols. 1-4; it has a different introduction, which indicates that this is a manuscript of an early version of al-Tuhfa;  
  - Tehran, Majlis shura MS 6035 (copied in 1273AH), A partial manuscript;  
  - Tehran, Majlis shura II MS 2256 (copied in 9 or 10CAH), A partial manuscript;  
  - Tehran, Majlis shura II MS 1177 (copied in 727AH), A partial manuscript;  
  - Qom, Mar‘ashi MS 9106 (copied in 892AH), A partial manuscript;  
  - Qom, Mar‘ashi MS 4456 (copied in 10CAH), A partial manuscript;  

The Bodleian MS is especially important, since it has a note written by Qûţ al-Dîn himself (Savage-smith, pp. 259-260), which gives the information that he completed it in Tabriz during the middle of the month Rabî‘ al-Thânî of the year 707AH/1307. This description makes clear that it took him 24 years to complete the work, since in the introduction of the al-Tuhfa al-Sa‘diya he gives the starting date of its writing 682AH/1283. Furthermore, the fact that there is another report

1. Adam Gacek (McGill) kindly informed me this date.
on his completion of it in 710AH (Walbridge, p. 186), as well as the fact that Majlis shura MS 4732 has another (or a short) version of its introduction, lead us to consider the possibility that Quṭb al-Dīn revised it several times during this long period, as he did to al-Tuhfa al-Shāḥīya;\(^1\) to prove the existence of his revisions, however, we need to examine several manuscripts more thoroughly.

Described in the list, most of its manuscripts have only a part of the nine volumes. Among the manuscripts that I have examined, Ayasofya MSS 3649-3656 (lacking vol. 8) give the most complete text of the al-Tuhfa al-Saʿdiya\(^2\). Next, I would like to analyze the structure of its contents, using these Ayasofya MSS.

**Contents of al-Tuhfa al-Saʿdiya**

In al-Tuhfa al-Saʿdiya, Quṭb al-Dīn comments on each sentence of the Kulliyāt very carefully, often mentioning different readings of it in other manuscripts. Sometimes he comments on a few words by using dozens of folios. The huge amount of the comments shows his intensive effort at understanding the Avicenian text. The introduction of the al-Tuhfa al-Saʿdiya gives the detailed process of how he studied it. To comprehend its contents, as he wrote, he first obtained the commentaries of Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 606AH/1210),\(^3\) Al-Quṭb al-Miṣḥī (d. 618AH/1221; Iskandar, pp. 33-34), Aḍḍal al-Dīn al-Khūnajī (d. 646AH/1248), ʿAbd al-Hādī Raʿf al-Dīn al-Jīlī (d. 641AH/1244), and Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad al-Nakhjavānī (d. before 651AH/1253; Idem, pp. 34-35). However, he realized that these commentaries only repeated the words of the Kulliyāt and so did not satisfy his need. He then traveled to several regions to communicate with medical scholars and improve his knowledge, but “what was unknown to me [i.e. Quṭb al-Dīn] of this book [i.e. the Kulliyāt] remained more than what was known [to me]” (Idem, pp. 44-45 contains the Arabic text). So he continued to collect commentaries, and in 681AH/1282 he obtained the commentaries of Ibn Nafs (d.

---

2. Ayasofya MS 5649 is vol. 1, MS 5650 is vol. 2, MS 5651 is vol. 3, MS 5652 is vol. 4, MS 5653 is vol. 5, MS 5654 is vol. 6, MS 5655 is vol. 7, and MS 5656 is the last volume; i.e. vol. 9.
3. Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī is famous by his theological works; see Endress, “Reading Avicenna in the Madrasa”, pp. 397-410. On this commentary, see Savage-smith, pp. 245-248.
687AH/1288), Ya’qūb bin Ishāq al-Sāmirī (d. 681AH/1282), and Ibn Quff (d. 685AH/1286), through the help of the fifth Mamluk sultan, Mansūr Qalawūn (r. 678-689AH/1279-1290). He also had the commentaries of Ibn Jumai‘ (d. 594AH/1198), Ibn Tilmīd (d. 560AH/1165) and ‘Abd al-Latif Baghdādī (d. 629AH/1231; Idem, pp. 44-45). By reading them, he understood the Kulliyāt, and in 682AH/1283 he began to compose his commentary, namely the al-Tuḥfa al-Sā’diya.

This report suggests that among these commentaries, those of Ibn Nafīs, al-Sāmirī and Ibn Quff’s were very important for his study of the Kulliyāt, for he started writing his commentary just after receiving them. Indeed, Quṭb al-Dīn quoted in his book most frequently these three, and above all Ibn Quff’s.

Of the three commentators, Ibn Nafīs, a medical scholar in Cairo, is well known by his commentary on the anatomy in the Qūn (Pormann and Savage smith, pp. 46-48). The second, al-Sāmirī, was a medical scholar in Damascus (Hamarneh, p. 68), and the third, Ibn Quff, was a Melkite Christian in Syria, who studied medicine with several scholars including Ibn Nafīs and al-Sāmirī. Noteworthy is that Ibn Quff is known to have written a massive commentary on the Kulliyāt in six volumes; however, as far as we know, there exists only one partial manuscript of it, namely Damascus, Zāhirīya MS 7802, which contains a fifth of his commentary (Idem, pp. 110-115). The above mentioned characteristics of Quṭb al-Dīn’s reliance on the three commentaries indicate that when composing his commentary, he depended on the most detailed and updated commentary by his contemporary Ibn Quff, and he supplemented it with the commentaries by Ibn Quff’s teachers, that is, Ibn Nafīs’s and al-Sāmirī’s.

We can also detect Quṭb al-Dīn’s heavy dependence on Ibn Quff’s commentary in cases when he appends a separate treatise. For example, in his comment on the sentence “the diseases of temperament are well known, which are sixteen [in number]” (the Kulliyāt, part2, lesson1, chapter2; ed. p. 132; tr. p. 120f), he summarizes (vol. 3, f. 111b) what Ibn Sīnā says in the Qūn vol. 3 and vol. 4, and he writes as follows:

Know that al-Masīḥī [i.e. Ibn al-Quff] said: “here I decided to add a treatise on fever to this book”. … At the beginning of this book [i.e. the Al-Tuḥfa al-Sā’diya], I [i.e. Quṭb al-Dīn] stated that
I would include all that the commentators presented in their commentaries, so I will add a treatise on fever here.

Then he starts a treatise in fifteen chapters, 30 folios (ff. 114b-146a). Here he gives his views quoting many passages not only from Ibn Quff’s commentary, but also from works by other scholars such as Hippocrates, Galen, Isaac Israeli¹ (Abū Ya’qūb Ishāq ibn Sulaimān al-Isrā’īlī, f. 137b and f. 142a), and ‘Alī ibn al-‘Abbās al-Majūsī² (f. 137b).

Next, in vol. 5, ff. 90b-116b, he appends a treatise on signs in fourteen chapters, 25 folios, before commenting on the chapter of signs and symptoms (the Kulliyāt, lesson 3); at the beginning of it, again, he states that he follows Ibn Quff’s commentary, and he composes this treatise mostly in his own words, except for a few quotations. In vol. 7, ff. 188a-229b, he gives a treatise on symptoms in three chapters (ff. 188a-194b), a treatise on crises in five chapters (ff. 194b-213a) as well as its supplemental treatise in three chapters (ff. 213a-225b), and a treatise on the aim of medicine in three chapters (ff. 225b-229a); when starting each of them, he also notes that he adopts Ibn Quff’s way.

Although we are unable to examine Ibn Quff’s extra treatises themselves due to the lack of manuscript evidence, Quṭb al-Dīn’s frequent remarks suggest that he borrows the table of contents from Ibn Quff’s work to compose his additional treatises. However, he offers in them his analyses with quotations from works of several scholars including Ibn Quff, so they can be fairly regarded as his original works.

We notice that the al-Tuhfa al-Sa’dīya contains a good amount of astronomical subjects. For example, in the comment of the Kulliyāt, part 2, lesson 2, clause 1, chapter 3: “characteristics of seasons” (ed. pp. 141-144; tr. pp. 132-136), he (vol. 4, ff. 5a-38b) explains astronomical phenomena concerning seasons with a few quotations from the commentaries of Ibn Quff and Ibn Nafis as well as from the Almagest. Notable is that in f. 18b (fig. 1), he uses the same diagram which we can find in his Nihāyat al-‘idrāk fi al-dirayāt al-aflāk (fig. 2: Berlin,

---

1. Isaac Israeli (d. ca. 932) was a court physician of the Fatimide dynasty. On his life and his philosophical works, see Altman, A. and Stern, S.M., Isaac Israeli, a Neoplatonic Philosopher of the Early Tenth Century, London, Oxford University Press, 1958.
2. Al-Majūṣī (fl. 983)’s Kālib Kāmil al-Sūdā al-Tibbīyya is one of the most comprehensive medical encyclopedia in Arabic. On his life and works, see Burnett, Charles and Jacquart, Danielle eds., Constantine the African and ‘Alī ibn al-‘Abbās al-Magūsī, the Pantegni and Related Texts, Leiden, New York, Brill, 1994.
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Petermann I MS 674, f. 10b) and in *al-Tuḥfa al-Shāhīya* (fig. 3: Istanbul, Turhan V Sultan MS 220, f. 7a).
These examples show that Quṭb al-Dīn does not intend to compose the al-Tuḥfat al-Sādiya only to explain difficult words of the Kullīyāt; he writes quite a few of his thoughts, and to justify them he quotes works of medical scholars as well as those of other scholars in various fields. The works and scholars that he mentions to or quotes include the following:

al-Bīrūnī’s al-Āthār al-Bāqiya¹ (vol. 1, f. 210b); al-Kindī’s On Degrees (Tahrīr al-Daraja)² (vol. 4, 175b); Aristotle’s works; Galen’s works; Hippocrates’ Aphorisms; Ibn Abī Sādiq’s commentary on Questions of Medicine (Masā’il fi al-Ṭibb) of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (vol. 5, f. 95b); Ibn Muṭrān’s Physicians’ Garden (Bustān al-ʿṬibb)³ (vol. 5, f. 88b; vol. 6, 160b); Ibn Sīnā’s Shīfā, and his Ishārāt; IsaacIsraeli’s On Fevers (Fi al-Hummīyyāt) (vol. 3, f. 137a); Najm al-Dīn ‘Alī Dābirān-i al-Kātibī al-Qazwīnī⁴ (d. 675AH/1277) (vol. 2, f. 195a; vol. 4, 175b); Pseudo-Thābit ibn Qurra’s Kitāb al-Dhakhīra⁵ (vol. 6, f. 47a); Quṣṭā ibn Lūqā⁶ (vol. 5, f. 88b). In addition to the above scholars, we find that he quotes Ibn Rushd’s Kitāb al-Kullīyāt fi al-Ṭibb several times.

Quṭb al-Dīn and Ibn Rushd

Ibn Rushd (d. 1198), the commentator of Aristotle, wrote several medical works. Most of them are epitomes of Galen’s works, but he also wrote some original works on medicine. One of them is Kitāb al-Kulliyāt fi ʿAlīb (Book on General Principles on Medicine). The General Principles is a summary of medical theories, consisting of the following seven chapters:

Chapter 1: on anatomy of the parts of the body;
Chapter 2: on health;
Chapter 3: on diseases;
Chapter 4: on signs;
Chapter 5: on simple drugs;
Chapter 6: on preservation of health;
Chapter 7: on removing diseases.

In this work, Ibn Rushd quotes Abū Bakr al-Rāzī’s Al-Mansūrī repeatedly, and he uses works of Greek scholars such as Galen, Aristotle, and Hippocrates; however he seldom mentions the Qānūn. Like Ibn Rushd’s other works, the General Principles was translated into Hebrew and Latin, and became popular in the West; in general, this work is thought not to have had a significant impact in the East. Thus, it is crucial that Quṭb al-Dīn, one of the central scholarly figures in the East, quoted or mentioned the General Principles.

For example, the additional treatise on fever (in vol. 3) has three quotations from the General Principles. In chapter 1: “on a general statement on fever”, Quṭb al-Dīn (f. 116a) gives a review about fever, and he quotes Ibn Rushd’s definition of fever in over a half folio with the remark “Ibn Rushd said in his General Principles”; in fact, this long quotation is found exactly in the same wording in the General Principles, chapter 3 (ed. p. 96; tr. p. 119). Then he criticizes Ibn Rushd’s definition in seven points in three folios. Most of his arguments

4. On the citations in the General Principles see the index of the Cairo edition.
concern the ambiguity of Ibn Rushd’s terminology such as “natural fever (al-harāra al-ţabī‘īya)”. In chapter 4: “on putrid fever” (f. 125a), Quṭb al-Dīn first defines putrid fever, and he says, “Among the modern scholars, Ibn Rushd has the opinion about this [fever], as he says in his book entitled General Principles”, and he quotes Ibn Rushd’s definition of this fever in over half a folio; this is also found word by word in the General Principles, chapter 4: “on putrid fever” (ed. p. 185; tr. p. 213). After his quotation, he criticizes this definition in two points.¹

In chapter 9: “on hectic fever” (f. 137a), Quṭb al-Dīn quotes Ibn Rushd’s definition of hectic fever in half a folio with the remark “Ibn Rushd said in his book entitled General Principles”; this definition is a literal quotation from the General Principles, chapter 5: “on hectic fever” (ed. p. 187; tr. p. 215). Next he quotes the definitions of hectic fever given by other scholars including Ibn Quff, and he confirms the similarity between Ibn Rushd’s definition and that of the others.

Besides these three examples, the Al-Tuhfa al-Sa’diya mentions Ibn Rushd at least in two places. In vol. 4, f. 175a, where Quṭb al-Dīn explains relative strength of compound drugs, he quotes al-Kindi’s theory on it with the remark “al-Kindi said in his On Degrees (Tahrīr al-Daraja)”, and then mentions Ibn Rushd’s explanation of it without giving the title of the book he refers to. Finally, he quotes Ibn al-Quff’s evaluation, that is, “the theory of Ibn Rushd is more exact than that of al-Kindi”, and continues to cite Ibn Quff’s comment in two folios. As Langermann elucidates, Ibn Rushd severely criticized al-Kindi’s theory of compound drugs in the General Principles;² what is remarkable is that this theory of al-Kindi attracted a lot of attention from Andalusian scholars such as Ibn Rushd, while it was never mentioned in medical works in the East including the Qūmūn. As for these two quotations by Quṭb al-Dīn, we notice that they cannot be located in either the On Degrees or the General Principles, so they are most likely paraphrases of Ibn Rushd’s texts, not literal quotations. Given that al-Kindi’s theory was not known in the East, and that Quṭb al-Dīn quoted them with Ibn

¹ A detailed analysis of the contents of his criticism on Ibn Rushd is beyond the scope of this paper. This will be one of my future topics about the al-Tuhfa al-Sa’diya.
Quṭb’s comment, it is clear that Ibn Quff’s commentary stimulated Quṭb al-Dīn’s interest in al-Kindī’s theory of compound drugs as well as Ibn Rushd’s; furthermore, he possibly quoted them from Ibn Quff’s commentary.

The last example of Quṭb al-Dīn’s reference to Ibn Rushd is in vol. 5, f. 60a, where he explains the cause of pain. Here he quotes the following evaluation of Ibn al-Quff:

[Ibn al-Quff said:] Know that when I considered the whole of these opinions about the cause of pain, only what Imām Abū Wafīd ibn Rushd considered about it was correct for me, that is, it [i.e. the pain] is a bad temperament suffered from its essence.

Indeed, Ibn Rushd explains the cause of pain in the General Principles (ed. p. 131; tr. 93), but we do not find the same wording in it; since Ibn al-Quff does not give us the title of the book to which he refers, this quoted text of Ibn Rushd is likely a paraphrase by Ibn Quff.

The last two examples show that Quṭb al-Dīn discovered Ibn Rushd in Ibn Quff’s commentary; supposedly he also quotes all the passages of Ibn Rushd’s General Principles from Ibn Quff’s commentary, not from the General Principles itself. As I already mentioned, however, when he notes the title “General Principles” with a quotation, it is a literal quotation; when he mentions Ibn Rushd’s opinion without the title of the referred book, together with Ibn al-Quff’s comment, the text is most likely from Ibn al-Quff. This fact suggests that he consciously distinguishes the quotation of the General Principles itself from that of Ibn Quff’s commentary, so he more than likely refers to the General Principles itself. Several quotations from the General Principles in the Al-Tuhfa al-Sādiya illustrate that when Quṭb al-Dīn read Ibn Quff’s commentary, he was most impressed by Ibn Rushd’s work and he probably obtained the General Principles. That is to say, Ibn Rushd was not an unknown figure in the East even in the time of Quṭb al-Dīn.

Conclusions
The above analysis of the Al-Tuhfa al-Sādiya makes it clear that in this commentary Quṭb al-Dīn gave quite a few of his opinions with the aid of quotations of, and references to, various works including Ibn Rushd’s

---

1. This point was evoked by Professor Robert Wisnovsky (McGill). I am grateful for his precious comment.
General Principles. Thus his rich medical library was definitely essential when composing his commentary. What we must recall here is that a number of his books was collected by using his connection with Qalawûn, a chief political figure in his day. This indicates that he could obtain his valuable collection of books thanks to his political importance and he discovered important scholars unknown in his region such as Ibn Rushd. As a result, he expanded the scholarly boundaries around him, and the next generation could take a new step in medicine and its allied disciplines.

References