

The Abbasids | Managing Prosperity

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The Abbasids supported and patronised medical research and medical practitioners. Great developments in medicine were achieved: books on a variety of medical subjects were written and translated; medical experiments were conducted and documented and a number of medical instruments were designed to deal with a variety of procedures.



Name:

Fragment of a medical prescription

Dynasty:

Hegira beginning of the 2nd century / AD 8th century Abbasid

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

Physicians knew of the medicinal benefits of certain plants. The Aloe Vera plant is prescribed in this document, combined with other substances, to treat a number of different conditions.



Name:

Glass vessel possibly for chemistry

Dynasty:

Around hegira 3rd–4th century / AD 9th–10th century Abbasid

Details:

National Museum of Damascus
Damascus, Syria

Justification:

Medical compounds were made by pharmacists, but dispensed by physicians as well as pharmacies. These medicines included elixirs, ointments, pills and tablets.



Name:

Spoon

Dynasty:

Hegira 3rd century / AD 9th century Abbasid

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

Medical examination of the mouth and throat was carried out with the aid of a spoon-shaped instrument like this one, used to press down the tongue. It was also used in surgery to remove the tonsils.



Name:

Surgical scalpel

Dynasty:

Hegira 3rd century / AD 9th century Abbasid

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

Abbasid surgeons knew the importance of hygiene when conducting surgical operations. Hospitals (bimaristans) were established to provide treatment and medical training.



Name:

Implement to remove teeth

Dynasty:

Hegira 3rd century / AD 9th century Abbasid

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

Fustat, where this instrument was found, was a well-known centre of the medical sciences; it was here that Ahmad Ibn Tulun ordered the construction of Bimaristan al-'Alaa in 254 / 868.
