

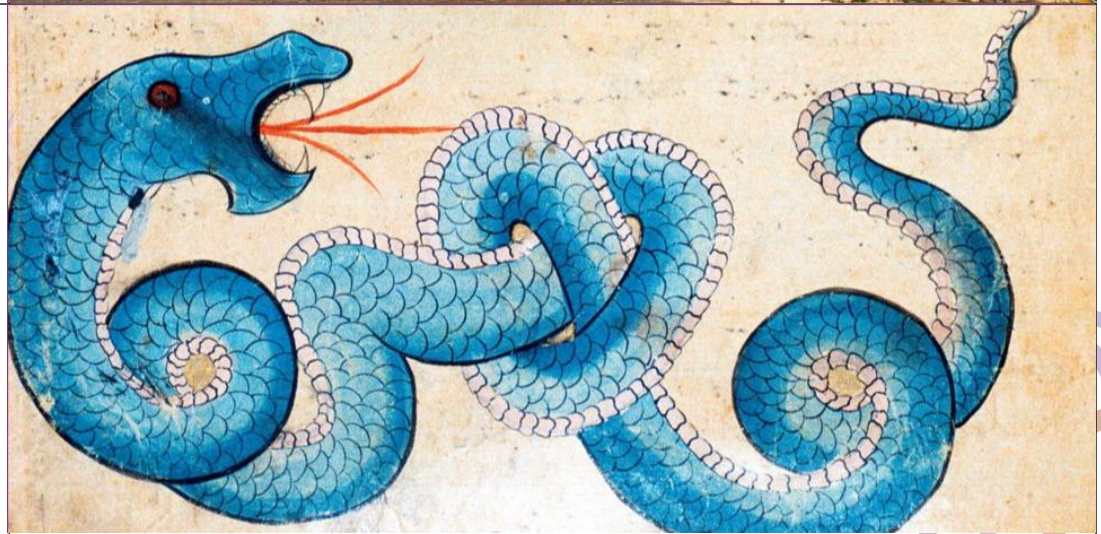
Unit 3: History

The Golden Age and its impact on medicine: 2

This is one of the first known hospitals in the world. Located in modern-day Turkey, the 13th-century Divrigi Hospital



Some of the early remedies relied on animals. One medical book talks of using birds wings, pigeon's blood and donkeys' liver as cures for certain ailments. Snakes were often used for dealing with several ills.

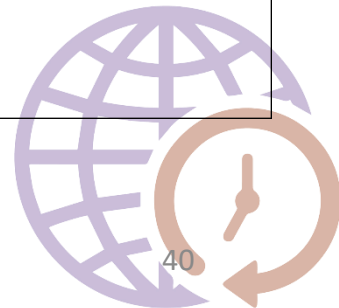


Unit 3: History

The Golden Age and its impact on medicine: 3

Muslim schools of medicine were created. In this illustration, a doctor is visiting a patient surrounded by others who are learning from the doctor about the treatment of many diseases.

The most important institution for imparting knowledge about medicine and other disciplines was the **madrassa**, a school built in, or alongside, a mosque. Many madrassas became highly specialised academies, often with close links to hospitals. Notable hospitals were in Cairo, Harran (in modern-day Turkey) and Baghdad. Students would often visit patients to observe their treatment at the hands of qualified doctors, in much the same way as medical interns and residents do today.



Unit 3: History

The Golden Age and its impact on medicine: 4

- Before the 12th century in Europe, medical practice was almost at a stand-still. There were few new discoveries and, as the Church considered disease a punishment from God, doctors could do little for their patients.
- However, when new translations, books, observations and methods from the Islamic world gradually became known in the 12th century, Western medicine finally moved forward.
- Ideas, insights and methods from Islamic doctors brought many new advances to European medicine, essentially forming the basis of modern medicine as we know it today.



Europeans learned a great deal from the Muslim doctors who in turn learned a great deal from translating books in the House of Wisdom.

Unit 3: History

The Golden Age and its impact on medicine: 5

- Rather than viewing disease as a punishment from God as the Christians thought, Islam looked at disease as just another problem for mankind to solve.
- The Prophet decreed that the sick and injured should be cared for, not shunned. The first medical centre was established in Persia (Iran) in the 6th century. In the 9th century, the great Islamic doctor Al Razi oversaw Baghdad's Audidi Hospital, with its two dozen doctors on staff.
- By 1000, Baghdad had five public hospitals. Hospitals were also founded in Cairo, Aleppo, Damascus and Al-Andalus.

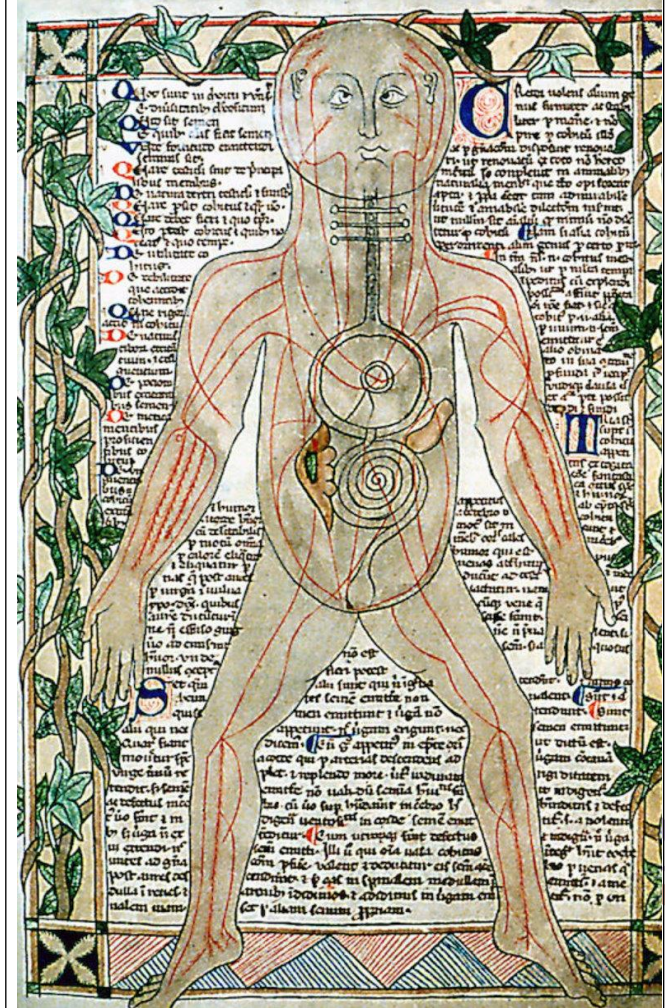


These early Islamic medical centres would be recognisable as hospitals today. They had wards for different diseases, outpatient clinics, surgery recovery wards and pharmacies. They also functioned as medical education centres for doctor training.

Unit 3: History

The Golden Age and its impact on medicine: 6

- Although many credited William Harvey for discovering blood circulation in 1616, pulmonary circulation had already been described by the Arabic doctor Ibn Al-Nafis 300 years before. His knowledge, however, was incomplete,
- Al-Nafis knew that the heart had two halves and that blood passed through the lungs when traveling from one side of the heart to the other.
- He also realised that the heart is nourished by capillaries.
- Besides his description of the circulatory system and the heart, Al-Nafis advocated dissection as a means of truly learning anatomy and physiology, although he also writes that he didn't perform dissections because of his strict Muslim beliefs.
- He described his observations on the brain, nervous system, bone structure and gall bladder and more in his great medical encyclopaedia Al-Shamil.
- Unfortunately, not many of Al-Nafis' writings were translated into Latin, leaving Christian doctors befuddled regarding basic anatomy until much later.



Unit 3: History

The Golden Age and its impact on medicine:

- Use the information on the previous pages to summarise what you have learned about the importance of the Golden Age in relation to improving the treatment of people with illnesses.
- Work as a group of four and carry out additional research.
- Put together a power point presentation about the importance of this period of history to advancing our understanding about medicines and treating people.
- Use photographs alongside your presentation.
- Your presentation should be no more than 10 minutes long.

