



The Osler Library is pleased to announce the publication of

*The Herbal of al-Ghāfiqī*

A Facsimile Edition of MS 7508 in the Osler Library of the History of Medicine, McGill University with Critical Essays, Ed. F. Jamil Ragep and Faith Wallis with Pamela Miller and Adam Gacek (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014).

The Osler Library houses one of the most remarkable medieval Arabic manuscripts on simple drugs, popularly known as the “Herbal of al-Ghāfiqī”.

"Herbals" - collections describing plants used for medicinal purposes - were among the ancient and medieval world's most valued scientific texts, synthesizing a vast treasury of medical learning to facilitate scientific edification for scholar, bibliophiles, or practical consultation by physicians. Abū Ja'far al-Ghāfiqī (d. ca. 1165 CE) lived in the Arab-Islamic zone of the southern Iberian peninsula called al-Andalus, a land of many cultures, religions, and languages. His *Herbal* reflects the diverse milieu in which he lived, drawing from ancient Greek sources like Dioscorides and Galen as well as over thirty other works from India as well as the Hellenistic and Islamic worlds.

The manuscript reproduced in this edition was purchased in 1912 by Sir William Osler and has entries for herbal, mineral, and animal-derived drugs. It is lavishly illustrated by almost 400 coloured, hand-drawn images of plants and animals. A glossary of over 2,000 secondary entries provides synonyms in Greek, Sanskrit, Syriac, Persian, Berber, Old Spanish, Latin, Coptic, and Armenian, reflecting the international character of medicine and pharmacy at the time.

Essays by eminent scholars discuss the physical features and history of the manuscript, the philological complexity of the text, al-Ghāfiqī's sources, the Andalusian and larger global contexts of the *Herbal*, and the illustrations accompanying the text. The accompanying essays aim to present a framework that will set the stage for future editorial and interpretive work on the *Herbal*. A remarkable document, *The Herbal of al-Ghāfiqī* will be a cherished addition to the library of anyone interested in the history of pharmacological science or in the history of the Islamic world.