

Ibn Al-Baitar Encyclopedia Article

Ibn Al-Baitar

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Ibn Al-Baitar

d. 1248

Arab botanist and pharmacist whose works included botanical and pharmaceutical encyclopedias. Ibn al-Baitar spent his early career in Spain before embarking in 1219 on an expedition across the North African coast, where he collected a number of herbs and medicinal plants. In 1224 he became chief herbalist for al-Kamil, governor of Egypt, whose conquest of Syria three years later made it possible for Ibn al-Baitar to collect plant specimens there as well. His *Kitab al-jami fi al-adwiya al-mufrada*, which remained in wide use until the late eighteenth century, discusses some 1,400 medicinal plants, more than 200 of which had not been previously identified. *Kitab al-mlughni fi al-adwiya almufrada*, his other major work, discusses a variety of drugs and their specific application to a variety of ailments.