

Book Reviews

Le Premier Manuscrit Chirurgical Turc. P. HUARD and M. D. GRMEK. Paris, Les Editions Roger Dacosta, 1960; pp. 140. Limited edition. Coloured plates.

This beautifully produced book is the result of a particularly happy collaboration between two brilliant scholars with certain interests in common, the opportunity to work together and the desire to tackle problems presented by the history of oriental medicine.

It is the third volume in a series of comparative studies of the world's major cultures and civilization explained in the light of the history of medicine by Professors P. Huard, Former Dean of the University of Hanoi, Member of the Academy of Surgery and Medicine (Paris), Head of the Centre of History of Comparative Medicine (Rennes), and M. D. Grmek, Director of the Institute of History of Sciences, Professor of History of Medicine (Zagreb). The authors are of the opinion that the history of medicine forms an integral part of the scientific and cultural history of mankind. According to Wang Ming-ts'ing of the Sung dynasty, to spread medical knowledge by way of books is considered the performance of a good deed for all humanity. And readers, historians and physicians, will certainly appreciate this new version of the surgery of Serefeddin (Serefeddin Sabundjuoglu: *Kitabül Cerrahiye ilhaniye*) written in 1465.

This work, of which one of the best manuscripts is preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, is remarkable for its text and its iconography. A literary work can obviously only really be appreciated in the original text, but here Abulcasis's surgery is enhanced by full-page illustrations. This iconography gives the book its striking originality: 140 miniatures, published here for the first time, show unmistakable Iranian influence. The authors have placed text and miniatures in their historic framework. The commentary, at once artistic and technical, is aimed at the many readers interested in Persian miniatures or in the cultural Ottoman environment of the fifteenth century at the time of the fall of Constantinople.

Publication has been limited to 2,000 copies, printed on vellum, and the original edition is already a rare book for bibliophiles. Finally we have to congratulate The Editions Roger Dacosta for which 'quality matters more than quantity'.

M. WONG

Kurze Übersichtstabellen zur Geschichte der Medizin. PAUL DIEPGEN and HEINZ GOERKE. Mainz u. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1960; pp. 85.

This is the seventh edition of a handy little work of reference by two well-known historians of medicine, and it is sure to prove of value as a guide to the chronology of the advances and discoveries in medicine from the earliest times to the present day. The first twenty pages deal with Primitive Medicine and with Early Civilizations, a period during which dates can only be approximate. Nevertheless the survey is clear and compact.

From the year 1500 A.D. to 1951 A.D. (the latest date here recorded) the obvious difficulties of classification have been cleverly surmounted, resulting in a reliable chronological list, with many interesting notes and remarks.

The index of names (*Personen-Verzeichnis*) contains more than a thousand entries, while the index of subjects covers a wide field. The authors have shown no partiality for one nation more than another, and have produced a work which can be recommended as an indispensable guide to 'what happened when'.

DOUGLAS GUTHRIE