ŞERAFEDDİN SABUNCUOĞLU: THE AUTHOR OF THE COLOURFUL SURGICAL TEXTBOOK AND THE FIRST PEDIATRIC SURGEON OF ANATOLIA FROM XVTH CENTURY

Introduction

Sabuncuoğlu Şerafeddin was a surgeon from Amasya in the XVth century (Fig.1). In 1465 he wrote a book called Cerrahiyetü'l Haniye. Three copies were made and the first presented to the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II. This manuscript included almost all branches of surgery. However, it has many important aspects as far as history of pediatric surgery is concerned: a) it is the first known document with illustrations on pediatric surgical procedures b) it is the first known pediatric surgical atlas c) and it has contributions regarding details of surgical techniques and types of surgical instruments.

Figure 1: Sabuncuoğlu Şerafeddin (15th century, Amasya, in Anatolia)

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The aim of this study is to present the details of the chapters concerning pediatric surgery and investigate the contributions of Sabuncuoğlu's work in respect to his predecessors.

There are three copies of Cerrahiyetü'l Haniye. Two of them are in Istanbul and one in Paris. The second part of the book includes general, plastic and pediatric surgery. The pediatric surgery sections of all three copies were studied, and analysis of the texts carried out by a medical historian and a pediatric surgeon.

**Chapters on Pediatric Surgery**

**Chapter-2 Cure of hydrocephalus**

- He advised the use of a wider scalpel with a sharp-pointed end;
- Used a reverse "T" incision instead of a cross-shaped one;
- Mentioned the importance of bleeding and mixture of CSF and blood during neurosurgical procedures (Fig-2).

![Figure 2: Treatment of hydrocephalus by using a T incision](image_url)

**Chapter-34 The treatment of short frenulum**

- Short frenulum (ribat) was incised by a lenticular cautery called "adesi daglagu". (Fig.3)
- He mentioned the prevention of postoperative hematoma.
Chapter-55 Treatment of hypospadias

- He created a neomeatus and urethra by using a fine scalpel called mibza; (Figs.4a, b)
- Used a tin sound with intact lumen for the patient to urinate through;
- Used solid dilators to prevent meatal stenosis;
- Gave a detailed description of hypospadias.

The postoperative usage of a urinary tin catheter with intact lumen was an important contribution for the 15th century.

Figure 4a: Treatment of hypospadias. Note the female surgeon assisting Şerafeddin Sabuncuoğlu.
Chapter-57 Circumcision and treatment of its complications

- He designed a pair of curved scissors; (Fig 5a, b)
- Advised a "single-cut technique" after securing the glans penis (he ligated the preputium above the glans penis and then cut it using curved scissors);
- Gave advice about some special surgical techniques for the correction of complicated cases and described rescue operations for the complications of circumcision;
- Mentioned the importance of qualification and surgical skill to prevent complications.

Chapter-65 Treatment of inguinal hernia

- He commented that inguinal hernias could be bilateral;
- Gave a descriptive classification and detailed clinical types;
- Prescribed special drainage techniques to prevent scrotal hematoma, occurring in early postoperative period.
Chapter-70  Treatment of hermaphroditism

- He gave a detailed description and classification of hermaphroditism;
- Surgical technique for cliterectomy was given in detail. In the picture of the procedure female surgeon, tabibe, was doing the operation. A female surgeon was an important phenomenon for the 15th century.

Chapter-72  Treatment of adherent labia minora

- He described the classical position for gynecological examination; (Fig.6)
- Advised using a special gauze during division;
- Used an oiled vaginal tampon to prevent re-adhesions;
- Female physicians (tabibe) performed the procedure. This surgical technique is almost the same technique which is widely used at the present time.

Figure 6: Treatment of adherent labia minora by a female surgeon.

Chapter-79  Imperforate anus

- Mentioned the high risk of anomalies and need for experienced surgeons to prevent damage to muscle complex. He declared: "Surgeon instead of a midwife, should do it"

Discussion

The pediatric surgery part of this textbook can be regarded as the earliest known pediatric surgical atlas. Its pictures give us an idea about medical practice in 15th century Anatolia. There is a picture of a female surgeon, "tabibe". New surgical instruments such as curved scissors, fine scalpel, mibza - for distal hypospadias procedures and the adhesi daglagu for the treatment of short frenulum are described. The postoperative usage of a tin urinary catheter after hypospadias surgery was a contribution. These may be considered as minor contributions in the 21st century; but they were important modifications six centuries ago and should be considered as important steps in the development of pediatric surgery.
# Table of Contents

**Medical Books in Private and Public Ottoman Libraries**  
*Orlin Sabev* .................................................................................................................................................. 615

**Turkish (Ottoman) Medical Manuscripts Preserved in the Archives in Georgia**  
*Ramaz Shengelia, Tsisana Abuladze, Nato Asatiani* ........................................................................... 629

**Turkish Medical Terms in Georgian Medical Manuscripts**  
*Nana Khelaya, Ramaz Shengelia, Maia Gurgenidze, Nino Chikhladze* .................................................. 633

**14th Century A.D. A Medicinal Plant Used in a Baytarname and Its Current Uses**  
*Abdullah Özen, Sevgi Şar* .......................................................................................................................... 637

**Şerafeddin Sabuncuoğlu: The Author of the Colourful Surgical Textbook and the First Pediatric Surgeon of Anatolia from XVth Century**  
*S.N. Cenk Büyükalp, Nil Sari* ................................................................................................................... 645

**Şair ve Hekim Ahmed'in Duygu Dünyasında Tip Terimleri**  
*Melike Günyüz* ........................................................................................................................................ 651

**Divan Şirin'in İyileşmek Bilmeyen Hastaları Aşiklar**  
*Vildan Serdaroğlu Şişman* ...................................................................................................................... 671

**Şair Dostu Sultan II. Bayezit ve Şifahanesinde İki Şair Tabib**  
*Süreyya Beyzadeoğlu* ................................................................................................................................ 683

**Klasik Türk Şiirinde Bazı Tedavi Yöntemleri**  
*Hanife Koncu* ........................................................................................................................................... 687

**Saglık Konularında Dinî Hükmün Belirlenmesinde Fakih - Hekim Dayanışması: Kahve Örneği**  
*Şükru Özen* ............................................................................................................................................. 699

**İslâm Hukukuna Göre Yanlış Tedaviye Sorumluluk**  
*Şükru Özen* ............................................................................................................................................. 737

**Osmanlı Esnaf Tabibinin Ahlak Eğitimi ve Değerleri**  
*Ayten Altıntaş, Hanzade Doğan* ................................................................................................................ 753

**Le Voyage En 1547 A Stamboul Du Médecin Naturaliste Pierre Belon Du Mans**  
*Jean-Pierre Tricot* ....................................................................................................................................... 775

**"Viaje de Turquía" Adlı Eserdeki Hekimlik (1557)**  
*Ertuğrul Önalp* ......................................................................................................................................... 781

**Western Medicine in the East: Amato Lusitano's Scientific and Clinical Experience**  
*Amelia Ricon-Ferraz* ................................................................................................................................. 789
38. Uluslararası Tıp Tarihi Kongresi Bildiri Kitabı

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