



## SABUNCUOĞLU ŞEREFEDDİN'S SURGICAL TREATISE CERRAHİYETÜ'L-HANIYYE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN THE HISTORY OF TURKISH MEDICINE

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### Abstract

Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye is a work that has an important place in the history of Turkish medicine. The work which has been written by Şerefeddin Sabuncuoğlu (1385-1468?), a physician and surgeon from Amasya, gives us peerless information about the medical practices from 15<sup>th</sup> century Anatolia. The work is actually a surgical treatise and consists of three chapters: cauterization treatments, surgical procedures, and fractures and dislocations. Information related with almost every medical specialty of modern-day medicine appears in Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye. Medical treatment options (creams, pomades, ointments, lotions) were also discussed in detail in the work.

**Keywords:** Medicine; History of Medicine; Illustration, Medical

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### 1. Introduction

Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye is one of three known works of Şerefeddin Sabuncuoğlu (1385-1468?), a 15th century Ottoman Turkish surgeon and physician (Uzel, 1992). Currently three extant copies of the work are preserved: two are in Istanbul, one is in Bibliotheque Nationale-Paris. All copies are written in Turkish and in Arabic script. Prof. Dr. Ilter Uzel, a medical historian examined all three copies and prepared a text in Latin script (Uzel, 1992).

Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye is one of the most important books of the history of Turkish medicine. Three main characteristics of the book are; the illustrations of surgical tools and devices, the colored illustrations of therapeutic procedures and Turkish-written. Preparing a surgical treatise in Turkish language is seen rarely in 15th century Turkish Anatolia since Persian and Arabic languages were used widely at that time. Sabuncuoğlu explained it in this way: "Here is why I wrote this book in Turkish. All Roman people (in Anatolia) spoke Turkish at that time. Besides that, the majority of surgeons of our age were illiterate. They all read the books in Turkish even if they were literate. If they use this Turkish book as a source, they can understand things in detail and can solve their problems easily. Thus, they can protect themselves from malpractice and can protect their patients from complications" (Uzel, 1992). Colored illustrations of patients and surgeons which described the procedures in detail is a first in Turkish and Islamic medicine. In this respect, Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye can be seen as the first surgical textbook illustrated in color.

Studies showed that four surgical treatises (Cerrahname) in Turkish language were written in 15th-century Turkish Anatolia (Yıldırım, 2011). These are Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye, Cerrahnâme, Alâ'im-i cerrâhîn and Hulâsa Tercümesi. When compared with the other surgical treatises, Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye has a separate place among them. The two prominent features of the work is to contain the colored illustrations of surgical instruments, surgical procedures, and surgical teams as well as defining anesthetic mixture which we don't see in the other treatises (Yıldırım, 2011).

The work consisted of three chapters; cauterization treatments, surgical procedures and, fractures and dislocations. It is well known that the primary source of the Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye is Al-Tasrif (Textbook of Surgery) by Albucasis (Abu al-Qasim al-Zahrawi; 936–1013 AD) (Uzel, 1992). Albucasis is considered by the scientific community to be the father of modern surgery (Spink, 73). Although many chapters and content are translated from Al-Tasrif, it should not be seen that Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye is only a simple translation. A careful analysis shows that the work has numerous original contributions. As it is seen, Sabuncuoğlu translated Al-Tasrif first, and added his private professional experiences and the information he read from the other sources on this translation. Uzel states that Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye has 137 different clinical observations and recommendations which were not mentioned Al-tasrif (Uzel, 1992). In most places of the work one can see this phrase: Şerefeddin, the writer of this book says that ... (Uzel, 1992).

### **1.1. Life and Career**

The only source for life and career of Şerefeddin Sabuncuoğlu is his works. We know that he practised medicine and surgery for nearly 70 years: "... my practices from 17 years-old to 83 years-old" (Uzel, 1992). We also know that he was 85 years old when he finished his book Mücerrebname (The Book of Experiences) (Uzel, 1992).

He also informed us that he has worked for 14 years in the Amasya Hospital (Darüşşifa) which has been constructed by Ilkhans (Mongols of Iran) at the beginning of the 14th century (1308-1309) (Çantay, 1991). It is well known that the Amasya Hospital also served as a prominent medical training center at that age. Sabuncuoğlu is a distinguished figure among these physicians and surgeons (Unat, 2017).

## **2. Materials and Methods**

In this article, we studied the medical content of the Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye and the publications about its content. This paper is a literature review. For our goal, we searched the medical literature related with Şerefeddin Sabuncuoğlu and Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

A significant feature of the Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye is its refined illustrations of surgical instruments. These illustrations make the work a valuable reference for the readers (Turgut, 2008a; Kurt, 2011; Kadioglu, 2011). Although most of these were taken from Al-Tasrif, one can realise that Sabuncuoğlu's drawings of some instruments are more refined and artistic than that of Albucasis.

The most outstanding feature that makes the Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye a cornerstone for the Turkish and Islamic history of medicine is its colored illustrations. This colored and illustrated surgical atlas shows the patients, physicians, and midwives during treatment. Detailed illustrations help the reader to learn the anatomy and position of the patients

during surgical procedures and holding approaches of the instruments and tools. For that reason, Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye should be seen as an invaluable book in medical education from that time.

### **1.2. Studies about Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye**

Many Turkish writers and scholars i.e. Adnan Adıvar (Adıvar, 1982), Süheyl Ünver (Süheyl, 1931; Ünver, 1938; Ünver, 1966) and Vecihe Kılıçoğlu (Kılıçoğlu, 1956), prepared books and articles about Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye from the early years of the 20th century that made it known by the scientific and medical community.

Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye is a popular work among a wide variety of scientists including physicians, historians, linguists, medical historians and science historians. A lot of Turkish physicians published tens of articles studying medical issues discussed in the Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye (Acar, 2015a). These articles tried to uncover the medical terminology, treatment options, and similarities to up-to-date methods of the content of the Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye and to reveal the importance of the work for the history of Turkish medicine.

### **1.3. Medical Specialities Covered by Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye**

While Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye is a surgical treatise, the content covers almost all areas of medical specialities. These include algology, neurosurgery, pediatric surgery, vascular surgery, physical therapy, general surgery, thorax surgery, ophthalmology, gynecology and obstetrics, ear-nose and throat diseases, neurology, plastic surgery, psychiatry and urological surgery.

The work suggested the treatment methods for hundreds of diseases and disorders. Some of the examples are epilepsy, melancholy, cataract, hare lip, tumor, cough, pleuresy, ascites, diarrhea, anal fistula, hip dislocation, gout, leprosy, tremor, boils, nasal polip, goitre, inguinal hernia, fractures and dislocations of the bones and joints.

The content of the Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye classified by the medical specialities is as below.

Anesthesia is one of the most important areas to support the development of surgery. Due to innovations in analgesia and general/regional anesthesia patients may have an opportunity to get any kind of surgery without any pain. Almost all procedures described in the chapters of the Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye needs an effective analgesia. Sabuncuoğlu states that he used mandragora and almond oil for surgical anesthesia (Uzel, 1992; Ganidagli et al., 2004; Basagaoglu et al., 2006; Sungur and Pembeci, 2009).

Pain therapy methods in a wide range of symptoms are widely covered in Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye. These include headache, toothache, throatache, pain of the eye, pain from sinusitis as well as low back pain and sciatica. Although the work is a surgical treatise, a number of medicines including creams, pomades, plasters, ointments, and lotions are suggested to use by patients to treat pain (Ganidagli et al., 2004).

Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye lists a vairyety of general surgical which includes inguinal hernia, hemorrhoides, anal fistula, perianal abscess (Bekraki et al., 2000).

Orthopedic surgery is one of main sections of the Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye while it covers one-third of the book. Sabuncuoğlu describes the treatment methods for fractures and dislocations of upper and lower extremities in this section (Sarban et al., 2005; Kesgin, 2017).

Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye contains a lot of information on pediatric surgery. These incude circumcision, meatal stenosis, imperforated anus, hypospadias, epispadias, perineal fistula, and urethral atresia (Numanoglu, 1973; Büyükunal and Sari, 1991; Verit et al., 2003; Senayli et al., 2014).

Urinary surgery has a significant place in the book since surgical techniques for urinary retention, bladder irrigation and urolithiasis are described widely (Elcioglu et al., 2000; Verit et al., 2003). Surgical procedures in the genital region just like varicocele, hydrocele, and orchiectomy-penectomy were also described in the Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye (Verit et al., 2003; Kendirci et al., 2005).

Ophthalmic surgeons showed that Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye is a good sample of work describing various disease of eye. It has a number of illustrations about ophthalmic surgical procedures and surgical apparatus. The eye diseases mentioned in the work include symblepharon, lymphangiectasia, pannus, proptosis, chalazion and treatment of hypopyon (Oguz et al., 2004; Oguz, 2006; Oğuz, 2009; Keskinbora 2013).

Plastic surgery techniques like gynecomastia, hermaphroditism, maxillofacial surgery and eyelid surgery are also mentioned in the text (Doğan et al., 1997; Dinc and Yildirim, 2007).

Another area suggesting treatment options in Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye is arrow injuries (Kaynaroğlu and Kılıç, 2012). Symptoms of injuries to various organs are described well and therapeutic procedures are written in detail in a separate chapter. Sabuncuoğlu tells about his personal experiences in arrow injuries in the work.

A large number of subchapters related with neurosurgery are mentioned in Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye (Elmacı, 2000; Naderi et al., 2002; Bademci et al., 2005; Sarban et al. 2005; Hiçdönmez and Özek 2006; Turgut, 2007; Turgut, 2008b; Aygen et al., 2009; Er and Pamir, 2013; Ladino et al., 2013; Sari et al., 2014). These include sciatica, spinal deformities, head trauma, epilepsy surgery, hemiplegia, low back pain, hydrocephalus, and kyphosis. Additionally, the book contains valuable information on pediatric neurosurgical procedures including skull fracture. It has been suggested that all these illustrations and chapters of neurosurgery has significant contributions to the development of neurosurgery in Turkey (Er and Pamir, 2013; Solaroglu et al., 2013).

Obstetrical manipulations and instrumentations are another area having place in the Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye (Kafali et al., 2002; Kadioğlu et al., 2011). Normal and abnormal labor, handling of abnormal presentation, delivery of dead fetus and retained placenta are discussed in this subchapter. In these pages of the work, drawings of various instruments are used to help to the readers for better practice. In addition to surgical techniques, Sabuncuoğlu lists also medical options just like positioning, massage and drugs. One can see that women patients are illustrated in gynecological and obstetrical positions in the related chapters. Some of the procedures he offered were still in use until recent times. Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye describes endoscopic procedures in various indications. Uroendoscopic procedures and removal of a foreign body from the upper pharynx and upper oesophagus are among them (Keskil and Sabuncuoğlu, 2002).

Thoracal surgery issues sternal fracture, rib fracture and treatment of empyema by thoracic drainage are discussed in several subchapters in the work (Batirel and Yüksel, 1997).

A careful evaluation reveals that Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye has the information related with acupuncture (Acar, 2015b). Sabuncuoğlu suggested to use cauterization on acupuncture points for four different indications. Since Turkish people have found states and empires in Central Asia before they migrated to Anatolia 1000 years ago, this can be seen an evidence to Turkic people's knowledge on Central Asian medicine (Chinese medicine).

Other medical subspecialities that are also mentioned in Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye are psychiatry (Sabuncuoğlu, 2006), pediatric neurosurgery (Turgut, 2008c), dermatology (Uzel et al., 1998; Gürsoy, 2013), dentistry (Uzel, 1975; Uzel, 1997; Uzel, 2000), oncologic surgery (Verit and Kafali, 2005), pneumothorax (Kaya et al., 2009), vascular surgery (Darçın and Andaç, 2003), and otolaryngology (ear, nose and throat diseases) (Koç et al. 2004; San et al., 2005).

Another significant characteristic of the Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye is that it illustrates female health care providers (i.e. female physicians and midwives). Colored illustrations clearly show that female physicians are providing surgical treatments in a variety of disease conditions (Bademci, 2006).

The book is also a good source of 15th century Turkish medical terminology since it has numerous words of diseases, organs, surgical procedures and instruments (Önler, 2017).

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, Cerrahiyetü'l-Haniyye is one of the most important medical treatises of the Turkish and Islamic medicine. We hope that further studies will contribute to reveal the value of this work.

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