

Book's Review; Anesthesia Essays On Its History In Arab World And Islamic Medicine And The Current Arab World

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Abstract

The author; Muhammad Taha al Jasir is known as distinguished professor of Anesthesia in Aleppo Syria. Basically he was trained in Medicine in Turkey and learns Anesthesia in Oxford in UK. He generated vast contributionsto Early Islamic and Medieval History in Medicine. He served as the president of Arab Board of Anesthesiology. This gentleman is well known around the anesthesia world in the Middle East. His book is a compilation and synopsis of majority of papers on history of anesthesia and surgery by pioneer and leaders of anesthesia un the Middle East. It was given the title is “ Anesthesia: Essays On Its History In Arab World And Islamic Medicine And The Current Arab World “ [photo 1], It fall in 350 pages with index and full references is printed in Arabic (Present) [1] and English (in-press publications).

Figure 1

Photo 1: The cover of Arabic version of Anesthesia Essays On Its History In Arab World And Islamic Medicine And The Current Arab World. Edited py professor Muhammad Taha al Jasir. ISBN:1-59239-730-1



The author of this review would draw the attention to inclusion of exof recently published review in this journal as reference [2] The story is a very interesting to follow it bring the issues to the origin of medicine in the Middle East

Historians agree that World civilization first started along the major rivers of the Middle East, namely the Nile valley and in between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris in the land of Mesopotamia 4000 years ago. The oldest medical writings were to be found in cuneiform tablets which is known as the oldest medical handbook and in Eber's papyrus. Both contain medical text describing the medical and herbal treatments [1, 2, 3, 4]. The Assyrians herbal contained: Belladonna, Cannabis and Mandragora. The Ancient Egyptians used opium poppy and influenced the Greek medicine. Both the Assyrian and Egyptian physicians obtained artificial sleep for their patients by quickly compressing the Carotid vessels of the neck, this practice was followed as well by the Greek physicians.[1, 3,4,5].

Greek and Roman Medicine was in a way a continuum the father of medicine Hippocrates, and the great physician Galen of the second century influenced medical thoughts over centuries. According to Galen's recommendations "great care" should be exercised, with the use of powerful narcotics such as opium, considering it a dangerous drug. It is to be used in colics and in other very violent pains

The Romans used decoction of mandrake in alcohol. Pliny (A.D. 23-79) says of the juice of mandrake: "Administered in doses proportional to the strength of the patient, this juice has a narcotic effect...it is given... for injuries inflicted by serpents, and before incisions of punctures are made in the body, in order to insure insensibility to the pain.". By the time of Paulus (7th century) opium and mandrake have fallen into neglect.

Arabic translation of the Greek medicine helped to make Islamic physicians supreme in the middle Ages.

Baghdad became the world's leading medical and drug center. With the skill of the Arab Alchemists, the art of drug making began to evolve into the science of Pharmacology. Western physicians emerging from the Middle Ages found the Arab pharmacopoeia, in which a list of medicinal plants composed the anesthetic armamentarium of our forefathers [1].

The Arabs were familiar with surgery and practiced several procedures. Surgeons administered sedative-analgesic mixtures before surgical operation. Anaesthetic sponge was an Arabic contribution, seemingly so, the radical (-O-) [1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8].

Avicenna indicated that a patient who wants to have an

amputation of one of his limbs must have a drink prepared from a mixture of mandragora and other sleeping drugs [1, 3,6,7,8].

Ibn Al Quff (1232-1286 AD) wrote a complete chapter on pain relief in his book "Al Omdah Fi Sinaat Al Jirahah".[9,10,11,12] He differentiated between true and non-true pain relief considering non-true pain relief the "Anesthetic" which the surgeon may use for treatment of pain or to be able to institute the surgical treatment [3, 9].

This state of medical practice and doctrines continue to dominate over many centuries [11]. The major books which were followed were: Avicenna's Al Canon, and Ali Ibn Al Abbas's Al Kamel. The Arabic political power terminated in the East by the fall of Baghdad. But the medical heritage stood the events and so was during Salajic and early Ottomanic periods. "Between 1481-1520" traditional medical education in Ottomanic schools was comparable to those of other famous European medical centers. Physicians and scientists from Arabic, Persian and Mid-West Asia regions were taught in the Ottomanic medical schools. By the year 1520 the medical schools deteriorated, as the state was going in rough times. This situation changed when the Sultan Mohammed II (1808-1839) opened modern medical schools in Istanbul One for medicine Toubanah, and one for surgery Jirahanah which in 1911 became the Faculty of Medicine.[11].

The issue of Anesthetic sponge still basically depending on account of Orientalists writings [13]. Fuad Salim Haddad is the only active member of Pan Arab Anesthesia history committee and editor of history section of Middle East Journal of anesthesiology who tackled the issue in this book, Although Ibn Al Quff included in his book mention that "Anesthetics may be given by inhalation: "shaman". North African Arabic Countries were not included in except Egypt -probably because of lack of materials-, Neither Palestine, Yemen, Emirate, Qatar. Obviously the modern times was limited to mention current head of departments of anesthesia, but is not inclusive to all. Also documentation of photo of some included names either was not related to described person or there s no legend at all, obviously this may be the omission of book producers. The story of Arab board is sketchy and not systematic.

The book is easily read and would put the readers in the mood of historian who only presented only what was researched. It should be included in most hospitals library as

good quick reference to the subject. The Major contributors were as follow: Muhammad Taha Al Jasir, Fuad Salim Haddad, Anis S. Baraka, Burhan Al Abed, Mohamd Said Manni Takrouri, Abdul Karim Shihada, Abdul Nasser Kaadan, Adnan Al Mazrou, Rabie Abdel Halim, Mohammed Ishac al Khawashki, Mohammed Abdulla Seraj, Asger Bendslev, Abdelamir Al Azri., Bassam Abdelwahab Barazanji, Abdelwahab Zarouk Madan Madali, Abdelrahim Mansour Kattan., Sanaa Abdel Karim Hilmi, Bernard Brandstater, Mahmoud Z Keilani., Moufed al Joukhadar,

This work would be followed by completing the picture more researches to elicit the role and development of this important geographical and ethnic culture.

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