Şereffeddin Sabuncuoğlu (1385-1465) was a surgeon who lived in Amasya in Ottoman Era. He was a good calligrapher and illustrator also as we saw from his works he could speak Arabic, Persian and Greek. He wrote the first treatise with colored illustrations entitled “Cerrahiyet’ül-Haniyye” with his own drawings. Mistakenly considered to be a translation of al-Zahrawi’s book but a careful analysis shows that there are 137 different observations and suggestions. He made several contributions in proctology, cancer treatment and neurosurgery. This report aims to investigate his contributions anatomy.

Keywords: Şereffeddin Sabuncuoğlu, medical history, inguinal hernia, Cerrahiyet’ül-Haniyye

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Abstract

The Cerrahiyet’ül-Haniyye with his original classifications and illustrations of 134 surgical interventions, 156 surgical instruments, consists of three chapters: the first chapter on surgical cauterisations, the second chapter on surgical incisions and interventions and the third chapter on
fractures and dislocations. This treatise was mistakenly considered to be a translation of al-Zahrawi’s book, a careful analysis of these 2 books shows that there are 137 different observations and suggestions (2, 5, 6).

His Contributions to Surgery

Şerefeddin Sabuncuoğlu with a special interest in proctology described many conditions such as hemorrhoids, anal fissures, perianal abscesses and fistulas, and imperforated anus in newborns giving their surgical managements and developed several instruments for this purpose. Also he described the preoperative position of the patient today we know as the chest-knee position: “Both knees and hip joints should be flexed.” (1).

In his treatise, he recommended surgical management of several neurosurgical diseases such as craniospinal trauma, epilepsy, headache, facial palsy, low back pain, sciatica, hydrocephalus, spinal deformity, vertebral fracture and dislocations especially in children (2, 5). He also gave possible complications after surgery in details which we can’t see in the books of surgery at that age (6).

In this vignette we want show the contributions of Şerefeddin Sabuncuoğlu to the surgical anatomy of inguinal hernia. For this, we used the orthography of the 15th century written by Ilter Uzel in 1992.

In his treatise he discussed inguinal hernia anatomy in three different sections:

In Section 45 of 1st Chapter, he explained inguinal hernia as protrusion of intestines and fat.

In Sections 65 and 67 of 2nd Chapter, he described the differences between indirect and direct hernias. He suggested that indirect hernia is protrusion of caecum to the scrotum by tearing the membrane named as “Sıfak”. Although “Sıfak” means the fascia covering the muscle, we think that he used “Sıfak” for parietal peritoneum or transvers fascia covering deep inguinal ring. Also he added that in direct hernia swelling is over inguinal ligament and there is no intestine in scrotum.” (3)

Conclusion

Although he was not recognized in his time, in writing the first colored surgical treatise in Turkish with original contributions to various branches of surgery, Şerefeddin Sabuncuoğlu proved himself as great doctor and scholar who should be remembered 600 years after his death.

References