


This work was part of an MD thesis (G.G.F.-P.) at the Faculty of Human Medicine, Universidad Nacional de Piura, Piura, Peru, March 2006.

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Clinical Infectious Diseases 2008;47:144–6
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Comment on the Cover

To the Editor—We are pleased to see an illustration by Serefeddin Sabuncuoglu as the cover art of the 15 May 2007 issue of Clinical Infectious Diseases and deeply appreciate the editorial decision to highlight it as an important piece of work in the history of the struggle against infectious diseases. However, some corrections are required to improve the text that aims to explain the illustration.

First, there is a high degree of agreement among the experts that the correct name of the author of the manuscript from which the image was taken, and presumably the physician in the illustration, is Serefeddin Sabuncuoglu, who lived and practiced medicine in northern Anatolia during the 15th century [1]. His birth and death dates are almost accurately documented as 1385 and 1470, respectively, which is another point that needs clarification in the text describing the cover.

Secondly, Serefeddin Sabuncuoglu was a member of a Turkish family with no known Arabic connection. It seems that the Arab surgeon Albucasis’s book at-Tasrif, which served as a main resource to Serefeddin Sabuncuoglu’s book Cerrahiyetu’l Haniyye, and the Arabic script of the text led to a false impression that the author was an Arab physician. In addition, the text of Sabuncuoglu’s book, which is housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale, is written in Turkish. Several articles derived from this handwritten manuscript can be searched for in the Medline database.

Finally, because of the unique illustrations, all of which are lacking in Albucasis’s book, and because of numerous original additions embedded in the text, Serefeddin Sabuncuoglu’s book is clearly more than a translation. The idea that medical procedures may be depicted for teaching purposes regardless of religious prohibitions is revolutionary in nature and has survived and developed over centuries, as is shown in the cover illustration.

Acknowledgments

Potential conflicts of interest. O.S. and O.E.: no conflicts.

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Clinical Infectious Diseases 2008;47:146
© 2008 by the Infectious Diseases Society of America. All rights reserved. 1058-4838/2008/4701-0028$15.00 DOI: 10.1086/588848

Viral Infections and Acute Otitis Media in Young Children

To the Editor—We read with interest the article by Chonmaitree et al. [1], which highlights the association between viral respiratory tract infections and acute otitis media (AOM) complication in young children.

Figure 1. Clinical rate of otitis media and the common cold diagnosed in young children, aged 0–4 years, during 4 sample years. Winter weeks appear at the midpoints of the horizontal axes.

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