

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47564-8 - The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800

Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Written by members of the Academic Unit of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London, the world's leading centre for the history of medicine, this book surveys the Western medical tradition in all its aspects from the Greeks until 1800 AD, and in its transformations and transplantations into the world of Islam and the Americas. As well as describing the diseases, medical theories, and medical therapies of the past, it places them in a wide social context, and discusses religious and alternative healing as well as major advances in medicine, surgery, and pharmacology. It includes the accounts of patients as well as of their healers, the pains of childbirth and the preparations for death. Although major figures are covered in detail, this is not a history of great men and great moments in medicine, but an attempt to understand the limitations as well as the triumphs of medicine in pre-modern society. The very latest findings of medical historians are here presented in a lively form accessible to all who are interested in the formation of modern ideas on health and healing. The book provides essential reading as a new synthesis for all students of the history of medicine.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47564-8 - The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800

Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Western Medical Tradition

800 BC to AD 1800

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47564-8 - The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800

Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Western Medical Tradition

800 BC to AD 1800

LAWRENCE I. CONRAD, MICHAEL NEVE,

VIVIAN NUTTON,

ROY PORTER, ANDREW WEAR

*Members of the Academic Unit,
The Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London*



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47564-8 - The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800

Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain

Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Cambridge University Press 1995

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1995

Fifth printing 2003

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeset in 11/14 Photina

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

The Western medical tradition: 800 B.C.–1800 A.D. / by members of the
Academic Unit, the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.

London: Lawrence I. Conrad ... (et al.).

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-38135-5

1. Medicine – History. I. Conrad, Lawrence I., 1949–

II. Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.

R131.W47 1995

610'.94-dc20 94-34823 CIP

ISBN 0 521 38135 5 hardback

ISBN 0 521 47564 3 paperback

TAG

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47564-8 - The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800

Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>Introduction</i>	1
Chronological table for chapters 1–3	7
1 Medicine in the Greek world, 800–50 BC	11
VIVIAN NUTTON	
Introduction	11
The social and epidemiological background	12
Religion and argument in early Greek medicine	15
Healers, Hippocrates, and the Hippocratic Corpus	19
Hippocratic theories	23
Hippocratic practice	26
Plato, Aristotle, and their contemporaries	31
Hellenistic medicine	33
Medical sects and professionalisation	35
2 Roman medicine, 250 BC to AD 200	39
VIVIAN NUTTON	
First contacts with the Greeks	39
Asclepiades and the rise of Methodism	41
The variety of medical practice	44
The availability of medical assistance	47
Diseases and therapies	52
Galen of Pergamum	58
3 Medicine in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages	71
VIVIAN NUTTON	
Introduction	71
Christianity and medicine	73
Charity and the early hospital	77
From Galen to Galenism	79
Medicine in western Europe, 500–1000	83
Chronological table for chapters 4 and 5	89
4 The Arab-Islamic medical tradition	93
LAWRENCE I. CONRAD	
The traditional substrate of Arab-Islamic medicine	94
Early Islamic medical discussions	96

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47564-8 - The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800

Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

The background to the revival of humoral medicine	99
The era of the translators	104
The growth of the literary tradition	110
The dissemination of medical learning	122
Medicine in Arab-Islamic society	125
The medical practitioner	127
The Islamic hospital	135
Postscript	138
5 Medicine in Medieval Western Europe, 1000–1500	139
VIVIAN NUTTON	
Salerno and the impact of translation	139
Religion and medicine in the Later Middle Ages	146
University medicine	153
Apothecaries and surgeons	159
The professional pyramid	164
Women's problems, women's healers	168
The medieval body	175
Some medieval diseases	183
The missing century	198
Chronological table for chapter 6	207
6 Medicine in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1700	215
ANDREW WEAR	
Disease and society	215
Learned medicine	250
Anatomy	264
Andreas Vesalius (1514–64)	273
Anatomy after Vesalius	280
The anatomists' justification of anatomy	285
Surgery	292
Botany and medicine	298
Paracelsianism	310
The circulation of the blood	325
The new science	340
Chronological table for chapter 7	363
7 The Eighteenth Century	371
ROY PORTER	
The legacy of the Scientific Revolution in the age of Enlightenment	371
Rhetoric, reality, and historiography	379
Scientific medicine: anatomy and physiology	384
Clinical medicine and disease theory	401
Therapeutics	412
Surgery	434
Popular medicine	440
The medical profession and medical education	446
Quackery	459
Medicine and the state	463
Conclusion: disease, medicine, and society	472

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47564-8 - The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800

Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

8 Conclusion	477
MICHAEL NEVE	
Disease and the environment	484
Doctors, patients and medical history	487
The healing power of nature	491
Bibliography for chapters 1–7	495
General bibliography	511
Index	518

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47564-8 - The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800

Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Illustrations

1	Hippocrates curing the plague of Athens	14
2	Hippocrates reading, while two bystanders argue	20
3	The Hippocratic Oath	21
4	The Hippocratic humoral system	25
5	Resetting a dislocated shoulder	27
6	The shrine of Asclepius at Pergamum	37
7	M. Modius Asiaticus, 'champion of the Method'	43
8	Tombstone of Dr. Sosicrates	45
9	The legionary hospital at Novaesium	50
10	An illuminated herbal papyrus	56
11	Galen of Pergamum	59
12	SS. Cosmas and Damian	76
13	The eye, with connecting muscles and nerves	111
14	A physician treating a broken leg	116
15	A Baghdad pharmacist's shop in 1224	117
16	An illustration of a vaginal speculum	118
17	A vaginal speculum used in the delivery of a child	119
18	The human skeletal system, from the 'Five-Figure Set'	120
19	Examination of a patient by the physician and his assistants	134
20	Plan of the Mansuri Hospital, Cairo, 1284	137
21	Plan of the Sta Maria Nuova Hospital, Florence	151
22	A medieval university lecture room	156
23	A surgical clyster or enema	162
24	The diseases of women	173
25	'Wound Man'	180
26	'Bone Man' and 'Nerve Man'	182
27	A medieval blood-letting chart	201
28	Plague in the German village of Ruckerswalde, 1583	222
29	A Bill of Mortality, London, 1665	223
30	An attack on charitable women treating the sick	233
31	A birthroom in seventeenth-century Holland	235
32	St. Elizabeth visiting a hospital	247

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47564-8 - The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800

Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Illustrations

33	Medical knowledge methodically ordered	257
34	The mental faculties according to Leonardo da Vinci	267
35	The surface anatomy of the foot and leg by Leonardo da Vinci	268
36	Andreas Vesalius dissecting	276
37	The venous system according to Vesalius	277
38	A German anatomical fugitive sheet	278
39	The anatomy theatre at Leiden	288
40	A leg amputation	294
41	The Dandelion, from Gerald's <i>Herball</i>	299
42	Theriac being prepared in public	304
43	A Paracelsian anatomical furnace for the distillation of urine and the location of disease	314
44	Sanctorius' weighing chair	353
45	Borelli's demonstration of the leg and arm joints and of the foot and leg muscles	355
46	(a) Georg Ernst Stahl	372
	(b) Hermann Boerhaave	
	(c) F. Boissier de Sauvages	
	(d) Albrecht von Haller	
47	(a) William Hunter	373
	(b) John Hunter	
	(c) Giovanni Battista Morgagni	
	(d) Edward Jenner	
48	<i>The anatomy of the gravid uterus</i> , 1774	386
49	An eighteenth-century microscope	388
50	A satire on anatomy	390
51	The regeneration of the polyp	392
52	Galvani's preparation of a frog	400
53	The Hôtel Dieu, Paris	407
54	Kidney stones and kidney disease	411
55	Bleeding a vein	416
56	Bethlem Hospital, London	428
57	The York Retreat	429
58	Obstetric forceps	430
59	Edward Jenner among his patients	433
60	A leg amputation	435
61	The Allgemeines Krankenhaus, Vienna	469
Map 1.	The Greco-Roman world in the second century AD	18
Map 2.	Medieval European universities	154
Map 3.	The Black Death in Europe	190

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47564-8 - The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800

Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

Our first thanks must go to the Wellcome Trust, not only for their unrivalled support for the development of the history of medicine in general, but also because the Trust and its successive History Panels encouraged the members of the Academic Unit to accept Richard Ziemacki's invitation to write a survey of the whole history of medicine from the Greeks to the present day. But as the project advanced, and grew in size and complexity, it became both practically and intellectually desirable to make a division around the year 1800. By then the coherence of a tradition of medicine that went back to the Hippocratic Corpus had been severely challenged, both as theory and as therapeutics. The social and demographic changes of the nineteenth century, let alone the enormous range of medical developments in the twentieth, mark a new age in medicine, vastly different in scale and in possibilities from what had gone before. Furthermore, to do justice to the achievements of modern medicine and to the historians who have sought to interpret it in many new ways would have extended the size of this volume substantially, and delayed its production still further.

As writers of a textbook we are very aware of the debt we owe to other historians, not all of whom are recorded in the select bibliography at the end of the book. We would like to thank them here for the information and the intellectual stimulus they have given us over the years.

A large number of people have given their time, expertise and encouragement to the writing of the book, and we wish to thank all of the following:

Amal Abou-Aly, Maria Bergmann, Gerrit Bos, Bill Bynum, Elizabeth Craik, Jenni Crisp, Catherine Draycott, Eric Freeman, Faye Getz, Monica Green, Anne Hardy, John Henderson, Frieda Houser, Ralph Jackson, Peter Jones, Helen King, Chris Lawrence, James Longrigg, Michael McVaugh, Christine Nutton, Cornelius O'Boyle, Caroline Overy, Richard Palmer, Dorothy Porter, Andrea Rusnock, Emilie Savage-Smith, Nancy Siraisi, and Richard Smith.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47564-8 - The Western Medical Tradition: 800 BC to AD 1800

Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The index, the key to the whole volume, has been prepared by Jean Runciman with her incomparable skill and efficiency.

Finally, we must acknowledge the constant help we have received from the staff of the Wellcome Institute and Library, and from the Reprographics Department of the Wellcome Trust.