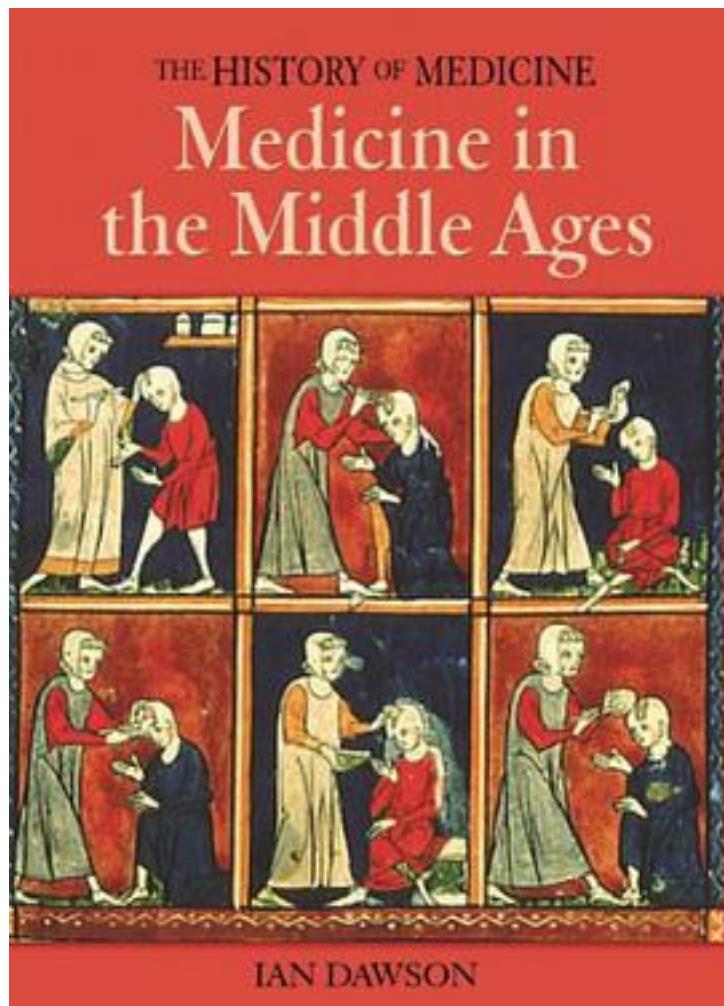


Medicine in the Middle Ages



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What is as fundamental to a society and just as revealing as its habits of food

preparation, work, dress, religious belief, and artistic production? Just as essential are its ideas about the body, health and illness. Offering insights, both broad and deep, into the cultures it explores, The History of Medicine series describes medical knowledge, practices, instruments and discoveries from prehistoric times to the present. Each of its 6 volumes presents the social and economic characteristics of the period under discussion, the prevailing state of medical knowledge, and the key figures in medicine. The books are divided into chapters focusing on questions, such as: what caused people to be healthy or unhealthy? What ideas did people have about the causes of illnesses and their treatments? Who provided medical care? How efficacious were the treatments used? Allowing the facts to speak for themselves, these volumes present a lively and informative account of medical beliefs and practices and the many causes behind their change over time. Photographs and illustrations, as well as biography panels, quotation panels and "interesting fact" panels appear throughout each book, further engaging the young reader. Why did Medieval doctors bleed their patients? Were Medieval towns really so unhealthy? Was Medieval surgery ever successful? What was an "herbal" and how was it used? Taking up these questions and many more, Medicine in the Middle Ages explores medical ideas, health and illness after the fall of Rome. While the focus of the book is Western Europe, comparisons and contrasts are made throughout with other contemporary civilizations, including the Arab world. The legacy of the Ancient world is discussed and major developments in Medieval Europe are summarized. We learn why Galen's ideas survived, and about the importance of prayer, the use of zodiac charts and illness both as a natural phenomenon and a divine punishment, particularly through an extended case-study of the Black Death. Moreover, we learn about the training of doctors, their knowledge of anatomy and the Church's restrictions on dissection, as well as about the role of women in village and family medicine. Medicine in the Middle Ages is both richly informative and engaging.

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