

**From East to Barts: The Origins of the First General Hospital in England, The Infirmary of the Priory of St Bartholomew**  
*by Harvey White*

E-book, 78 pages

Available free via [harveywhitefrcs@gmail.com](mailto:harveywhitefrcs@gmail.com), donations to Barts welcomed

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The period between the withdrawal of Roman rule, the advent of the Danes and the Norman Invasion of Britain constitutes a dark age, filled partly by the advent of Islam. It is this period that is described by the author, a surgeon, who was Chairman of the Royal Society of Medicine Press and also a founder of the Journal of Medical Biography and the author of many medical biographical and other works.

The author traces the evolution of medicine from the origins of Islam through to the founding of the Hospital in Smithfield in 1123 by the monk Rahere (c1143). He also provides information that is somewhat disparate and hence difficult to find easily elsewhere. The Yellow Emperor, Hammurrabi, the Asclepion at Kos, Nestorius, Maimonides, the Bimaristans and much more are set out here. The colour images are of very good quality, many generated by the author.

The ninth centenary in 2023 of the founding of Barts Hospital is a highly significant landmark and this scholarly work provides a good basis for understanding the journey that led to the foundation. There will be many celebrations, including a lecture on Barts Notables and also a visit planned by the History of Medicine Society at the Royal Society of Medicine with an address by the author of this work. The regrouping of London hospitals into multiple trusts risked anonymising these old institutions and thereby reducing the fondness of their supporters but fortunately this does not seem to have happened. Iconoclasts and authors of revisionist history have not quelled the enthusiasm for the promotion of the study of the history of medicine by its enthusiasts, one of which is the author of this work. The text is downloadable but the author has made provision for those who wish to do so to contribute to the funds of this great institution which has stood the passage of time and continues to care for the sick – long may that last.

**Christopher Gardner-Thorpe**  
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