GUY DE CHAULIAC.

Cyrurgia parva Guidonis.
Cyrurgia Albucasis cu[m] cauter-[riis & aliis instrumentis.
Tractatus de oculis Jesu hali.
Tractatus de oculis Canamusali.

Venetiis [Venice:] per Bonetum Locatellum... Octaviani Scoti, 1500. 32.000 £

Folio, 68 leaves. Text in double columns, 65 lines, gothic letter, with approx. 193 woodcuts in the text of the Albucasis, large and small woodcut initials, Scot’s woodcut device on the last page. Later vellum. Minor worming in the lower inner corner, but a fine and very clean copy.

FIRST EDITION of this important collection, containing the first edition in Latin of the Chirurgia parva of Guy de Chauliac, the first edition of the surgery of Albucasis, and two treatises on the eye by other Arabic authors, the De oculis of Jesu Haly Abbas and the Tractatus de Oculis of Canamusali, both in second edition having appeared the previous year with the second Latin edition of Guy de Chauliace’s Chirurgia magna.

The Chirurgia parva is a brief compendium of Guy’s Grande Chirurgie, written in about 1363 and the greatest surgical text of the time. It remained authoritative well into the sixteenth century; see G&M 5556 (surgery) and 3666.83 (dentistry).

The surgery of Albucasis (Abul Qasim, 936-1013) was the first rational, complete and illustrated treatise on surgery and surgical instruments. It comprises three books: the first largely concerns cauterisation and other methods of arresting haemorrhage, including ligature; the second book deals exhaustively with the greater portion of surgery, with especially valuable sections on obstetrics, otology, and dentistry, and the third book is on fractures and dislocations. The text is especially valuable for including a large number of illustrations of surgical instruments, including the obstetric forceps and dental instruments. In fact this edition is the most extensively illustrated medical or surgical book of the fifteenth century. Some confusion has arisen over the printing of Albucasis’ surgery, probably resulting from Choulant (Handbuch, p. 374) who says that it was printed with Guy de Chauliac’s surgery in 1497. That has now been shown to be an error, and Stillwell (426) says that it “has not been found in the present survey.”

The De Oculis of Jesu Haly Abbas is the oldest textbook on ophthalmology which has been preserved in its entirety and in its original language, and was the standard in the Middle East until modern times. Canamusali (Abu-l-Qasim Ammar) is considered the most original Moslem oculist, eclipsed only by the more comprehensive Jesu Haly Abbas. The early printed editions of his work on the eye, however, have only a tenuous connection to his actual text, which was not properly translated until the early twentieth century. Canamusali discusses the nature of the eye, as well as diseases of the eye and their remedies.