

The Twentieth & Twenty-First Centuries The 20th century of the Common Era saw more scientific and technological progress than any period of recorded history. It also put an end to the crafting of surgical instruments out of wood or decorative materials, which did not hold up to the heat of steam sterilization. In this climate of change, surgical instruments completed the millennia-long journey from stone to stainless steel. The corrosion of steel instruments was also a challenge.