operatien, zijnde een nieuw ligt voor vroed-meesters en vroed-vrouwen'; (Manual Operations which are a New Light for Male and Female Midwives), which appeared in 1701, was hailed as the first work in the Dutch language to have considerable influence on the practice of obstetrics in the eighteenth century. It was translated by contemporaries into Latin, German, French and English. In 2001, it was reprinted with an introduction as volume 20 of the Dutch Classics in History of Science.

Now Marius Jan van Lieburg, an expert in Dutch medical history, sheds "new light" on the author of this famous gynaecological treatise. Deliberately leaving aside Van Deventer's significance for the development of early eighteenth-century obstetrics—already extensively treated in the historiography—Van Lieburg's thorough archive research has led him to the discovery of important, hitherto unknown, sources. Among these finds were a thesis by Van Deventer long believed lost, a chemiatric treatise, probably published in 1680, and nine manuscripts, including his remarkable treatise *Eerste beginselen der ware natuurkunde* (First Principles on true Physics) on physics and chemistry.

Van Lieburg, who also gives a genealogical overview and a bibliography of Van Deventer's works, places Van Deventer in the cultural and scientific contexts of the Dutch Golden Age. He emphasizes the importance of Van Deventer's religious views in the context of previously unknown facts of his biography. According to Van Lieburg, Van Deventer joined the Labadist sect in 1670 and lived with them until the 1690s before he started to practise medicine in The Hague. Van Deventer is presented not only as a surgeon, orthopaedist and obstetrician who was capable of improving his personal expertise, but also as a physician who developed a flourishing trade in spagyric remedies, and as a chemist belonging to a fascinating group of Dutch researchers inspired by the English Paracelsist George Starkey (1628–65). Analysing the treatise on physics and chemistry, Van Lieburg shows that Van Deventer was a Christian philosopher intent on devising a strictly biblical cosmogony on the basis of revised physical science, and employing to this end a theory of five elements and an amended pneumatic theory.

The book is worth reading by all scholars interested in early modern Dutch medicine. It is one of several recent publications which point out that science and religion were not separate realms with their own questions and solutions and that historians have neglected the importance of theories and ideas which modern science has conveniently forgotten. Unlike Rina Knoeff's doctoral thesis, *Herman Boerhaave (1668–1738): Calvinist chemist and physician*, also published in 2002, Van Lieburg's *Nieuw licht* so far shares the same fate as many other Dutch scholarly works. Because of the language barrier, it is not widely accessible to the international community of scholars—an English translation would be very welcome.

Christoph Schweikardt,
Ruhr University Bochum

Françoise Gaide and **Frédérique Biville** (eds), *Manus medica. Actions et gestes de l'officiant dans les textes médicaux latins. Questions de thérapeutique et de lexique*, Collection Textes et Documents de la Méditerranée Antique et Médievale, Aix-en-Provence, Université de Provence, 2003, pp. 272, €24.00 (paperback 2-85399-549-6).

This volume contains the papers of a conference held in 2001 that brought together linguists and historians of medicine to consider the ancient evidence for the actual activities and gestures involved in the life of a Roman doctor. Veterinary medicine is also included, as well as magic, alongside more familiar medical authors such as Celsus and Pliny. The range of activities discussed here is substantial, from touching and bandaging to cauterization and the preparation of a variety of drugs in a variety of forms. The best papers are those that go outside the strictly philological to introduce epigraphic, artistic or archaeological information to explain or to develop accounts

in purely literary sources. Even jokes about the gladiator-turned-doctors can be interpreted to show the cruelty of ancient surgery. Prayers and chants show the ever-changing relationship of medicine to the divine, which is far from being a simple dichotomy.

Students of ancient medicine will find much to ponder here, but they will also have to work hard to find discussions of specific texts, save for what is specified in the list of chapters, for there is no index of any kind, and the brief introduction does little more than hint at the contents of each chapter. It is also disappointing that in a book specifically devoted to actions and their description there are no illustrations in the body of the book. The cover shows a relief from Ravenna that may indicate a medical scene, although both subject and the individual components of the image are far from agreed. An opportunity has been lost to make these valuable papers still more useful to the wider community of scholars.

Vivian Nutton,
The Wellcome Trust Centre for the
History of Medicine at UCL

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025727300008243 Published online by Cambridge University Press