

known female writer at Salerno. The prolific works of the enigmatic “dame de Salerne” and of her students attest to the far-reaching impact of Salernitan teachings. Indeed, the wide dissemination of Trota’s writings documents the existence of a “market” for Salernitan medicine, which by the twelfth century had already reached English and Norman consumers.

This valuable book is intended for the expert scholar, not for the novice medievalist or medical historian. Elaborate appendices, indices, and text excerpts supplement the collection. A more detailed introductory synopsis would make the material more accessible to students. None the less, scholars wishing to delve into the medical culture of Salerno and its labyrinth of manuscripts, now have—in addition to the classic studies of Salvatore de Renzi and Paul Oskar Kristeller—a new beacon to help them “navigate this immense sea made up by the Salernitan texts” (p. viii).

We join in the editors’ hope that these studies may inaugurate a renaissance of the history of Salernitan medicine; and that they may, “under the scalpel of philological and codicological analysis” (p. xiv), shed renewed light on a fascinating intellectual milieu, which combined the empiric traditions of local lay practitioners with the basic elements of Greco-Roman, Arabic, and Judeo-Christian scientific cultures, to give birth to the fundamentals of modern western medical thought.

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Peter Dendle and Alain Touwaide (eds), *Health and healing from the medieval garden*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2008, pp. xiii, 256, illus., £50.00, \$95.00 (hardback 978-1-84383-363-5).

The connection between medieval gardens and the medicine of the period is firmly fixed in the popular imagination (see especially the works of Ellis Peters), but has received considerably less attention from the scholarly

community. This collection is thus extremely welcome, not only in that it fills what might seem to be a rather obvious gap in the literature, but also for bringing to the task some of the biggest names in medieval medicine, as well as some less usual suspects. As one might expect in such a collection, the contributions vary in how closely they focus on the connection made in the title: some deal with plants in medicine without exploring explicitly how the *materia medica* was supplied, while others are more concerned with gardens than with the specific uses of their products, and some deal with plants which may well have been grown in gardens and used in medicine, but focus on other aspects, such as their names.

The collection opens with a substantial contribution by one of the editors, Alain Touwaide, on the classical background, which will be particularly valuable for non-specialist readers, who may not realize how much medieval medicine (or horticulture) owed to the ancient world, and which sets the scene for the following papers. As an Anglo-Saxonist, I am particularly pleased to see how many of them deal with early medieval England: Peter Dendle (the other editor) on ‘Plants in the early medieval cosmos’, then, narrowing the focus a little, Maria Amalia D’Aronco on ‘Plants and herbs in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts’, Philip G Rusche on ‘The sources for plant names in Anglo-Saxon England’, and Marijane Osborn on ‘Women’s reproductive medicine in *Leechbook III*’. Later medieval England is not neglected either, with Linda Voigts on ‘Linking the vegetable with the celestial in late medieval texts’, Peter Jones on ‘Herbs and the medieval surgeon’ (i.e. John of Arderne), and George R Keiser on the introduction (or perhaps reintroduction—the Anglo-Saxons did at least have a word for it) of rosemary, not to mention Terence Scully on ‘A cook’s therapeutic use of garden herbs’, including England, though mainly focused on France. But the geographical range is as wide as the time-frame, confined neither to western Europe (Touwaide’s second contribution is on ‘The jujube tree in the eastern Mediterranean’)

or to Christendom (Expiración García Sánchez on the gardens of al-Andalus). The contributions also range from ferociously scholarly text-based work to broader brush-strokes, and to the interestingly practical, with Deirdre Larkin's closing paper on recreating medieval gardens (an unfortunate proof-reading error has given her the running head *Horus* (for *Hortus*) *redivivus*, but there are no Egyptian deities in her piece—the range is not quite that wide).

It would be invidious in such a short review to pick out individual papers for praise or criticism, but I recommend the collection as a whole not only to medievalists (both early and late), but to anyone who may believe that the classical legacy was neglected or unknown until the humanists rediscovered it, and to all those interested in plant-based medicine, *materia medica*, or the history of horticulture. The editors deserve our gratitude for bringing these scholars together (the collection stems from a conference held at Penn State in 2003) and for sharing their findings with a wider audience.

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Efraim Lev and **Zohar Amar**, *Practical materia medica of the medieval eastern Mediterranean according to the Cairo Genizah*, Sir Henry Wellcome Asian Series, vol. 7, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2008, pp. x, 619, €169.00, \$237.00 (hardback 978-90-04-16120-7).

The term Cairo Genizah refers to a room in the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Fustat (Old Cairo), into which, in accordance with Jewish practice, unwanted documents were deposited in order to avoid destroying the written divine name. For about 1000 years, between the ninth and nineteenth centuries, around a quarter of a million items, ranging from large manuscripts to small fragments, were placed in this room, making it the most important documentary archive for both Mediterranean and medieval studies across many fields, including

medicine. The largest and most important collection of Genizah fragments is housed in the Cambridge University Library, which also hosts the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit. The research presented in this book is based on this particular archive.

Research into the medical treasures of the Cairo Genizah was greatly enhanced by an Iraqi Jewish doctor, Haskell Isaacs, who settled and practised medicine in Manchester. The combination of his knowledge of Arabic (including Judaeo-Arabic), Aramaic and Hebrew, and his medical training, coupled with his intense interest in, and recognition of the significance of, the Genizah manuscripts, enabled him to break new ground in the field of Genizah medical research. This culminated in the production of a descriptive catalogue of medical manuscripts, which remains the most important reference work to this day (H D Isaacs, *Medical and para-medical manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah collections*, Cambridge University Press, 1994). Since its publication, at least another 180 new medical manuscripts from the Genizah have come to light. It is obvious, therefore, that research into the Genizah medical manuscripts is very much in its infancy. The range of medical texts found thus far is astounding, and includes fragments of Arabic translations of classical medical texts (e.g. Hippocrates and Galen), works on anatomy, pathology, pharmacology and therapeutics, prescriptions, and letters containing medical advice as well as lists of *materia medica*.

Lev is a botanist by training, so he brings an important array of skills to the analysis of medicinal plants. Amar is a historian with a strong research profile in the history of science and technology in the Middle East. Between them, they have over 100 publications in Hebrew, so this book represents a much needed step in the dissemination of their work to a wider audience.

The bulk of this book consists of two detailed lists of *materia medica*, arranged in alphabetical order according to their English names (Agaric to Zinc, Acacia to Yew) followed by their Latin and Arabic names.