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play an important role here, as in many other aspects of everyday life. In medicine, amulets were used to gain longevity, cure certain problems (e.g., madness, alcoholism, leprosy, headache, and bedwetting), ward off epidemics, guarantee fertility or sterility, and bring pregnancy to a safe conclusion; in other areas, they served to protect against weapons, cancel the effects of other amulets, defend against demons, secure success or prosperity, harm enemies, and gain protection in general.

Asante was heavily influenced by the popular talismanic tradition of Islamic North Africa. The incantations in the amulets are full of Qur'anic quotations and paraphrases, and bear excerpts from the Islamic biographical tradition on Muhammad, names of Islamic religious figures (e.g., angels), and Arabic terminology (such as references to the *jinn*). Owusu-Ansah demonstrates that these charms were produced and sold in Asante by a Muslim trading community. Though the local folk were pagans and prevented Muslim proselytization, they esteemed the Qur'an for its magical power. There was a brisk market for Islamic talismans generally, and a six-line amulet could be sold for half an ounce of gold.

Owusu-Ansah stresses—again quite rightly—that his corpus is not a collection of amulets, but rather consists of instructions for making these charms. Amulets usually do not indicate, in and of themselves, how they are to be made and used, and Owusu-Ansah provides this type of information from the material in the Copenhagen corpus, research in western accounts of practices and beliefs in Asante in the early nineteenth century, and numerous interviews and other field work. The belief system revolving around these amulets proves to be very complex. Individual incantations were deemed effective only against specific problems, and not everyone could make them. Those bearing (or thought to bear) verses from the Qur'an were considered effective only by the permission of the God of Islam, and so were not expected to work immediately, while others were regarded as having instantaneous effect irrespective of the influences of other spiritual powers. Some amulets were worn;

others were buried in the corners of a house; others were washed or soaked in water, thus producing a liquid (for drinking or washing) to which the power of the charm was transferred.

Owusu-Ansah's work is an important contribution to the history of a body of magical lore in which medicine and medical concerns loomed very large indeed, and is relevant to the history of popular medicine in the numerous other cultures where such charms were used. There is a tendency in modern medical-historical scholarship to dismiss such material as superstitious nonsense, but this book shows how much of value can be learned by those willing to take it seriously, as, indeed, Sir Henry Wellcome—collector of over 17,000 such amulets—had already done half a century ago.

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Haskell D Isaacs, *Medical and paramedical manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. xx, 144, illus., £70.00, \$110.00 (0-521-47050-1).

Just before writing this review I was informed of the passing away of Haskell Isaacs, a physician and scholar, who had devoted the last years of his life to cataloguing the Genizah medical material now in Cambridge. Though I met him only twice, he made a strong and lasting impression upon me. I still recall his friendliness, openness and personal warmth. When I received the message of his death my first thought was, if I may say so, what a blessed man, to die at a good age and to have seen the fulfilment of the dream of his life, namely, the publication of his catalogue on the Genizah medical fragments. For his was a truly Herculean task involving the description of more than 1,600 fragments which are often hard to decipher, and sometimes anonymous as well. But he acquitted himself of this undertaking with unabated enthusiasm and energy. Enjoying the assistance of Colin Baker, he erected himself

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an everlasting monument, a true Yad Vashem, through which we will always remember him.

Thanks to generous grants from the Wellcome Trust, this major catalogue has now been published and made available to the scholarly world. Because of this fundamental work, the tedious and forbidding preliminary stages of Genizah research have been greatly simplified. Historians will now find easy access to material which is of primary importance for our knowledge of the popular culture, religion and science of the Jews living in North Africa and the Middle East during the Middle Ages. So far only Goitein has consulted this material extensively for his monumental *A Mediterranean society*.

In the introduction Isaacs deals extensively with various aspects of the Genizah medical and quasi-medical texts, such as the languages of these fragments, prominent diseases (eye diseases and fevers), materia medica, magic, and astrological predictions.

Another important subject addressed by the author is the social aspect of medicine: the relationship between doctor and doctor, and doctor and patient; hostile criticism of the medical profession; fees demanded by the physician; patients seeking financial help; the training of doctors. Next to the great medical encyclopaedias which covered every aspect of medicine, the need arose for simple practical handbooks which could be easily consulted. These sometimes assumed the form of catechisms giving questions and answers. An even simpler genre called "folkloric medicine" by the author, was intended for the layman for self-medication. But the medical material of the Genizah deals not only with popular medicine; many fragments belong to the genre of the classical medical textbooks and are marked, as Isaacs remarks, "by scholastic subtlety and rigid adherence to dogma". A major text preserved is an anonymous treatise on fevers, consisting of forty-six folios, drawing mainly on Arabic sources and possibly composed in the fourteenth century.

A basic bibliography is followed by descriptions of the medical and quasi-medical fragments themselves, which consist of : 1.

classmark; 2. main heading (subject or title); 3. main linguistic description; 4. physical description; 5. complementary description, giving fuller details of the main heading. In this way the author covers a total of 1,616 fragments. The edition is complemented by extensive indices of names, titles, technical terms, materia medica, and subjects. For a visual impression twenty photographic plates of various fragments complete this beautiful catalogue.

But like every human achievement, this work is not free from faults, which betray themselves above all in the introduction. It seems that it was written in a rather hasty, impressionistic, not very systematic way. Subjects are addressed, abandoned, and then addressed again. Moreover, by not drawing on past and more recent research in his description of the major subjects of the fragments the author has neither helped himself nor the reader. A fundamental work that should have been consulted throughout the catalogue is Manfred Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam*, Leiden/Cologne, 1970. Examples of omissions in particular areas are: sexual hygiene (pp. X–XI): see B F Musallam, *Sex and society in Islam*, Cambridge, 1983; materia medica (p. XII): see, for instance, Maimonides, *Be'ur Shemot ha-Rephu'ot*, Jerusalem, 1969, W Schmucker, *Die pflanzliche und mineralische Materia Medica . . .*, Bonn, 1969, and A Dietrich, *Dioscurides Triumphans*, Göttingen, 1988 (more informative and complete than the glossary in Maimonides' *Regimen sanitatis*); astrology and medicine (p. XIII): see Felix Klein-Franke, *Iatromathematics in Islam*, Hildesheim, 1984; dental hygiene (pp. XIV–XV): see Eilhard Wiedemann, 'Zahnärztliches bei den Muslimen', repr. in *Aufsätze zur arabischen Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, 2 vols, Hildesheim, 1970, and 'Über Zahnpflege bei den muslimischen Völkern', repr. in *Gesammelte Schriften zur arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, 3 vols, Frankfurt a. M., 1984; medical profession (pp. XIII–XV): see M Dols, 'The medical profession', *Medieval Islamic medicine*, Berkeley, 1984, pp. 24–42. Isaacs states that it "is still difficult to distinguish between the Jewish and Muslim contributions to

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what is known as ‘Arabian Medicine’” (p. VII). Recent research, however, shows more and more that one cannot speak of a medieval Jewish medicine proper. Jewish physicians studied the Arabic medical works which are based on the Galenic medical tradition. A good example is Maimonides, who according to Jewish scholars, made such a great contribution to medieval medicine. But it is now clear that he was totally dependent upon the medieval Islamic medical tradition. The term “‘ushnah” (lichen, p. X) should have been explained to the reader. Maimonides’ “own collection of Aphorisms” (p. XI): this collection can hardly be called his “own”, since most of them are based on Galen. The computation (p. XIV, n. 52) “19 Av 1515 (=A.D. 1204)” is unclear; is it according to the Seleucid calendar?

As for the fragments, the following bibliographic references can be supplied: al-Rāzī, *K. al-Hāwī*, edition Hyderabad, 23 vols, 1952–1974 (fragment no. 106); al-Kindī, *K. Kimiyā al-‘itr wat-taṣ’idāt*, ed. K Garbers, Leipzig, 1948 (no. 358); Nicolaus Damascenus, *De plantis, five translations*, edited by H J Drossaart Lulofs and E L J Poortman, Amsterdam, 1989 (no. 364); M Dols, op. cit., pp. 69–72 (no. 571); GAS III, pp. 94–5 (no. 908); GAS III, pp. 66, 128 (nrs. 943–944); Ibn Zuhr, *K. al-taysir*, ed. M al-Khourī, Damascus 1983 (no. 1122).

There are a number of typographical errors and errors in transcription; some of these are: no. 365 (index, p. 123) “fanāfis asqālīnūs” = “fanāqīs asqībiyūs” (Gr: *πανάκες Ἀσκληπιέου*), Asclepian Panakes; *idem* “fanāfis hamrūniyūn” = “fanāqīs khīrūniyūn (*πανάκες Χειρώνου*), Cheironic Panakes (see Dietrich, *Dioscurides Triumphans* III, 48); no. 1068 “jalap” = “julāb”, cf. nrs. 1222, 1419, 1578 “juleb” (rose-water syrup).

I would like to conclude by noting that some of the fragments catalogued by Isaacs have been published recently; for nrs. 584, 621, and 1596 see J Naveh—Sh. Shaked, *Magic spells and formulae*, Jerusalem, 1993, pp. 220–6, 238–42.

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Mehdi Mohaghegh (ed.), *Kitāb al-shukūk ‘alā Jālīnūs li-l-ṭabīb al-faylasūf Muḥammad ibn Zakarīyā al-Rāzī*, Tehran, Institute of Islamic Studies; Kuala Lumpur, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1993, pp. 18 (English), 280 (Arabic and Persian), Rs. 3000.

The great Muslim philosopher and physician al-Rāzī (d. 313/925) was the author of numerous outspoken tracts criticizing the ideas of others or refuting doctrines he considered to be methodologically flawed. Most of these are now lost, but one that has survived is also one that certainly must rank among the most important: *Doubts concerning Galen*. In this work he criticizes twenty-six books by Galen on a variety of grounds: inconsistency within the Galenic corpus, contradiction with al-Rāzī’s own thought or clinical experience, and possible copyists’ errors. In the main, his comments appear to reflect an impatience with shortcomings in intellectual rigour—wherever they may appear, but especially in works likely to be accepted on authority—rather than commitment to a specific intellectual school. There is much of importance in this book, but particular attention may be drawn to al-Rāzī’s long first chapter (Arabic text, pp. 3–24) on Galen’s *De demonstratione*, now lost in both the Greek original and the Arabic translation.

The editor provides introductions to the text in English, Arabic, and Persian. The first two reproduce identical articles previously published on the book,¹ and so do not really introduce this edition. The Persian introduction updates and extends these articles, and so is more useful. It emerges that all three extant MSS have been used to establish the text, with MS 4573.22 from the Kitābkhāna-i Malik in Tehran serving as a base text. All three MSS are dated by their colophons to the eleventh century AH/seventeenth century AD,² and from the frequency with which they err together the editor concludes that they must come from a single older MS (Persian introduction, p. 67). The textual tradition is not only late, but also corrupt.

An edition based on such a manuscript tradition is clearly a task requiring, first, great