

Book Reviews

papers by Gourevitch and Hanson), and with Hippocratic notions of diet. Smith and Thivel both try in different ways to identify the contribution to therapeutics of the historical Hippocrates, but reach very different conclusions, although both suggest that we should look to some aspect of dietetics and their arguments contain much that is of value beyond the Corpus. Surgery as such is hardly mentioned, and the absence of any paper on drugs and drug therapy in the Corpus is a serious gap. Two more general papers look at the relationship between homoeopathy and allopathy in the Hippocratic writings (a somewhat confused piece) and at possible reasons for the success of the Hippocratic physician in the face of strong competition. This paper (by Demand) offers a variety of insights from anthropology to explain this success, but does not become involved with practical questions.

None the less, this is a very useful volume, simply through bringing together so many insights into this general theme, and, after all, a volume of conference papers can only contain what was offered to the conference. It is interesting to see how relatively seldom the authors stray from the more familiar treatises of the Corpus, which now include the gynaecological ones. *Coan Prognoses*, *Prorrhetic II*, *Affections*, and the surgical treatises are rarely quoted except by those authors who are talking more about reception and transformation than about the validity of the contents of the treatises. The valuable index of passages cited offers much food for thought, as does the very detailed bibliography. This conference also marks the substantial arrival of Spanish Hippocratic scholarship with no fewer than ten papers by Spanish scholars, mostly of a lexicographical content. This contrasts with the four speakers from Britain and the mere three from the USA. Much of this Spanish work is extremely technical, and can sometimes amount to little more than listing, but there are signs in several papers that a careful reading of Hippocratic Greek

can reveal a good deal about some of the suppositions behind the method of composition. This may not be quite what is meant by the history of therapeutics, but it offers at times new insights into the formative period of Greek medicine.

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Juhani Norri, *Names of body parts in English, 1400–1550*, *Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, Humaniora*, 291, The Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 1998, pp. 470 (951-41-0832-9).

This is a piece of lexical research, and not part of anatomical history. Indeed, the core of the book is a lexicon of nearly 1,200 names, the product of a database constructed from thirty-three English-language texts. The lexicon is preceded and introduced by an elaborate apparatus relating to lexical fields and anatomy in particular. The more general introduction to medieval anatomy relies too much, perhaps, on the historiography of Charles Singer, but no damage is done to the lexical programme. This programme, although technical to the outsider, is broadly accessible and not too jargonized. Historians of medicine will recognize and locate this programme in relation to that of students of the vernacular, and especially of Linda Voigts. This book covers a late period, when English had a new renaissance, and seems to be part of a new language-based historical understanding.

Norri categorizes his source material into three groups: academic treatises, surgical texts, and books of remedies (the book as a whole forms a pair with Norri's earlier work on diseases). While the principle of classification of names is straightforward, the practice is very complex, requiring an elaborate justificatory lexical theory. What

is a “part” of the body? is the simplest of the questions involved.

The semantic problems generated by the different origins of many terms invited a number of strategies. Medical men involved in the identification of simple medicines invented “synonyms” as a genre of Latin literature within *materia medica* as early as the fourteenth century. Expositors of medical texts, like those of law in Anglo-Norman England, used couplets of explanatory terms, in order that either one of a pair would be intelligible to a major cultural group of the community. The corresponding danger in anatomy was that “involuntary” couplets from two different textual traditions often forced the anatomists to describe two different *structures* in the body when one only was physically there.

The historian of anatomy will also recognize some of the principles that are the concern of this related field. *Names* have a certain durability because they are lexical items of some authority marked on the vellum or paper studied by the anatomist. *Parts of the body* seem also to offer some constancy, because we think that the body has not changed (but we have to remember that important figures like Vesalius’ teacher Sylvius thought otherwise). But these two are not tightly linked in a cultural sense. Parts need names, which are generally supplied from the vernacular. But any specialized knowledge needs a technical language, which is met in a number of ways: appropriation of vernacular terms, or adaptation, translation or transliteration of foreign terms. By the time covered by this book any technical terms could be derived directly or indirectly from the ambient vernacular or the ancient Greek or Latin, French or Arabic. Appendices cover a specimen database entry, foreign terms, terms unique to each group of sources and explicatory devices in the texts.

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Rudolph M Bell, *How to do it: guides to good living for Renaissance Italians*, University of Chicago Press, 1999, pp. xiii, 375, illus., £19.95, \$25.00 (0-226-04210-3).

Leonardo Fioravanti, the Bolognese physician-charlatan whose peregrinations and publications were so vividly recounted by the late Piero Camporesi, was a great enthusiast for the democratizing possibilities of the print medium. Before print, “the Doctors dazzled the illiterate masses” with their marvels; now, he wrote in 1567, “the majority of people, both men and women, know how to read . . . maybe the day will come when we shall all be Doctors of some sort”. Fioravanti was just one of many of the authors consulted by Rudolph Bell in the preparation of his study of sixteenth-century Italian “popular advice manuals”. Together, these books, published cheaply in the vernacular, offered practical advice on a wide range of topics: lovemaking, pregnancy, child-rearing, infant care, physical health, education, adolescence, choosing a spouse. They were even successful enough to be the butt of satire, such as the tongue-in-cheek advice on the advantages of a plain or barren wife. Treatises by the likes of Michele Savonarola, Laurence Joubert (known to Italian readers as Lorenzo Gioberti), Giovanni Marinello and Scipione Mercurio—physicians all—are well known to cultural historians of early modern Italy, but they have not received systematic study, until now. We are fortunate, then, that the author is someone so well-versed in different aspects of Italian history as is Bell.

Bell does not limit himself to famous works and their authors; indeed, he is only too happy to bring lesser authors into the limelight, writers largely ignored by historians and literary critics because of their obscurity and lack of originality. His notion of the advice manual is likewise all-inclusive: “popular errors” books, pharmacological treatises, exorcists’ manuals, confessors’ guides, *memorie* and