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Method of healing, books 1–2. While in general this works well, at times the reader will be baffled by the complexity of a note which seems to concern a topic that develops out of the actual commentary far more than one that relates closely to what Galen himself says. Conversely, many of the *Realien* are passed over in silence: e.g. p. 82, just what sort of hat is a *pilleus/pilos*?

The weakest sections are to be found in the Introduction. The biography of Galen contains several tiny errors, e.g., p. 6, Galen did not study under Numisianus either in Corinth or Alexandria, and, p. 5, he did not acquire the Terra Sigillata for another thirty years. 'Industrial accidents', p. 4, is a curious term for gladiatorial wounds. The section on the manuscripts and the translator shows signs of incomplete revision. Much more is now known about Niccolò and about P since 1979: Db 93, which contains this tract, survives intact and legible in Dresden: only the first part of this manuscript, Db 92, is badly damaged. My comment, reported on p. 54, refers only to Db 92 or to the two volumes taken together, for they originally formed a single codex, not two as might be assumed from p. 240. The stemma on p. 55, recently confirmed by Michael McVaugh in his article in the *Festschrift* for John Murdoch, 1997, records manuscripts that do not contain this tract. Nor is *De substantia facultatum* a cento of *De propriis placitis*, but the last three chapters of that work circulating under a new title.

A useful appendix lists the abbreviations commonly used for the Galenic Corpus. However, it omits *De theriaca ad Pamphilianum* (xiv 295–310), the synopsis of the *Timaeus* (ed. Walzer) and many fragmentary texts, like the commentary on *Airs, waters, and places*, casts unjustified doubt on the authenticity of *Paru. pil.*, *Syn. puls.*, *Ther.*, *Gloss.*, and *Praes.*, wrongly expands *Hipp. Off. Med.*, and fails to stigmatize *Qual. Incorp.* as non-Galenic.

But these weaknesses should not obscure the many strengths of this edition, which, it

is hoped, will reintroduce to a much wider audience an effectively unknown text by Galen. In particular, the clear and accurate English translation will facilitate its use by historians as well as classicists.

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Päivi Pahta, *Medieval embryology in the vernacular: the case of De spermate*, Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki, vol. 53, Helsinki, Société Néophilologique, 1998, pp. xii, 328, \$45.00 (951-45-8346-9). Orders to: Tiedekirja Bookshop, Kirkkokatu 14, FIN-00170 Helsinki, Finland. Fax: +358-9-635017; e-mail: tiedekirja@pp.kolumbus.fi

Embryology has a privileged place in early medical writings as an aspect of the human condition which generated interest from medicine, philosophy and theology. The Latin *De spermate*, edited here in English translation, takes its place within a range of separate treatises dealing with subjects such as coitus, the development of the foetus, and conception. Although much ink was spilt discussing the divergent opinions of Aristotle and Galen on the presence of female seed, the English text steadfastly refuses to enter that debate and maintains a strong belief in female seed. Indeed, to read the text in its entirety one could easily be lulled into believing that the hidden process from conception to birth was well-known and understood, with the sole exception of the relations between body/foetus and soul on which the text dwells, guided in the matter by Porphyry.

A proportionately large section of the work covers heredity. The inheritance of physical characteristics, dependent on such things as the hour of conception and the strength, quantity and quality of the parents' sperm, is laid out in detail.

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Attention is also paid to the inheritance of humoral complexion and, to a lesser extent, of acquired characteristics, such as eloquence. Planetary influence too is given its due to account for exceptions and congenital defects. Any doubts about the influence of the planets are dispelled by reference to Alexander, who inherited his father's appearance and temperament following careful planning.

For a guide to these fascinating areas the reader will look to the introduction, but risks disappointment for it promises more than it delivers, primarily because its thrust seems heavily determined by secondary sources. One wonders whether consilia or the Sphere of Pythagorus would otherwise be mentioned, had they not previously been written about. This all-inclusive approach makes for a reliable and cautious but ultimately unambitious survey which hides the wood from the trees. Nevertheless, the reader will gain a good grasp of the current issues in vernacular medicine, but would no doubt prefer more discussion. An exploration, with examples, of how medieval medical writers covered embryology would have been preferred to a list of authors whose works contain passages on the subject (p. 32). In this respect reference could have been usefully made to Joan Cadden, *Meanings of sex difference in the middle ages* (Cambridge, 1993) or to the discussion and listing of scholastic questions on reproduction and sex in Nancy Siraisi, *Taddeo Alderotti and his pupils* (New Jersey, 1981). The author's cautious approach at times leads to a reconciliation of issues which may not harmonize as smoothly as suggested. The idea that early translators of learned texts balanced the needs of their vernacular audiences with the traditions of Latin scientific writing in order to improve vernacular learned discourse closes down further possibilities and nuances. Was there room, for instance, for any intellectual ambition on the part of translators to create a body of vernacular writings, especially

since the author suggests that the translator translated another text in the same manuscript?

The edition is carefully edited and accompanied by copious notes on language and on the Latin text. The comparison with Latin manuscripts, of which there are many, is helpful as is the paraphrase into modern English. More detail on sources and citations in the text would have helped further, e.g. that from Hippocrates on page 169 surely derives from *Aphorisms* V.31. All in all this is a cautious and careful work.

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Joseph Ziegler, *Medicine and religion c. 1300: the case of Arnau de Vilanova*, Oxford Historical Monographs, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998, pp. x, 342, £45.00 (0-19-820726-3).

Until well into the 1970s the burden of historical positivism resulted in the intellectual history of European medicine and science being tacitly (if not explicitly) constructed in terms of a growing process of secularization and experimentalization of closely delimited disciplines according to the pattern of the disciplinary history tradition. The origins of this process were disputed between those who placed them in the Renaissance/Scientific Revolution, and those who found them in the late Middle Ages by denying any essential rupture between this period and the early modern times. During the two last decades, however, this "big picture" has been gradually replaced by another that, with different nuances, has postponed until well into the nineteenth century the effective unfastening of medicine and natural philosophy (a more suitable designation for science before then) from religious tutelage and, consequently, the rise of medicine and science in the modern sense of these terms.