

Book Reviews

with over a hundred prescriptions. It is the earliest extant medical text in Hebrew of European origin, and the earliest Italian medical text. Donnolo is said to have been concerned with the founding of Salerno, and wrote extensively and most importantly on cosmology. The latter established Donnolo as a Byzantine Jewish scholar, and this study of him and his world illuminates the culture and relations of Byzantine Jewry. It also provides information on the most opaque part of medical history, the Byzantine period (pp. 94–110). In addition to a detailed and well-documented survey of his life, times, and writings, nine texts on cosmology are reproduced in Hebrew.

As tenth-century medicine was closely allied with astrology and cosmology, there are references to it throughout, and Donnolo's cosmology was compounded of mystical Judaism, Christian culture, and Arabic astronomy. Thus Sharf's excellent book will be greeted enthusiastically by a wide variety of scholars.

HELVY ALSTERMARK, *Das Arzneibuch des Johan van Segen*, (Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Stockholmer Germanistische Forschungen, 22), Stockholm, Almqvist and Wiksell, 1977, 8vo, pp. 177, illus. (1 facsim.), Sw.kr.53.00.

Reviewed by Marianne Winder, M.A., A.L.A., Assistant Librarian, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BP.

This is a pharmacopoeia of 1487 printed from MS medic. XII 114 at the Royal Library, Stockholm, written in Low German, with some Central German admixtures. It contains 547 prescriptions, generally divided according to the medium in which the medicines were to be administered, such as plasters and ointments. Occasionally a head to foot arrangement seems to start but soon peters out again. There are also a few paragraphs on bloodletting and urinoscopy and pieces of advice on how to protect oneself against the plague. From the arrangement, the introduction, and the commentary it is clear that this is a compilation from earlier sources. Apart from the Introduction on the manuscript and its sources (6 pp.), there is a study of Johan van Segen's language and the forms used by the scribe against the background of the dialects of the time (14 pp.). There is a Commentary comparing each prescription with versions by other authors or compilers (20 pp.). The text itself comprises 90 pp. Finally, there is a glossary translating fifteenth-century Low German and Latin words into modern German (30 pp.), and a useful bibliography (6 pp.). The manuscript must have been referred to by practitioners when in doubt, but as the glossary is a modern addition by the editor it must have taken the doctor a long time to find the right remedy unless he became very familiar with the text.

HENRY K. BEECHER and MARK D. ALTSCHULE, *Medicine at Harvard. The first three hundred years*, Hanover, New Hampshire, University Press of New England, 1977, 8vo, pp. xv, 587, illus., [no price stated].

The aim of this book is to present an assessment of the contribution of Harvard Medical School to medicine from its establishment to 1782 up to 1965. Thus it is concerned more with the sequence of outstanding individuals working in it rather than with the institution itself. Using the criteria of innovation, leadership, the