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Celse, *De la Médecine, Tome I, livres I–II*, trans. Guy Serbat, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1995, pp. lxxvi, 179, FFr 350.00 (2–251–01384–9).

The new Budé edition of the Roman encyclopaedist Celsus begins promisingly. It marks an improvement over the standard, 1915, edition of F Marx, from which W G Spencer made his Loeb translation, not only by removing many of its idiosyncratic spellings but also by being able to take account of a new manuscript, Toledo 97.12. While in general agreeing with MS. J., the new manuscript alone has the complete text of Book 4, and its readings help to decide between those of the three main witnesses, the Carolingian manuscripts, V, F and P. However, Serbat makes no mention in his preface of the important survey of the manuscript tradition by Michael Reeve, in L D Reynolds *et al.*, *Texts and transmission*, Oxford, 1983, pp. 46–7, or of the illuminating study of Celsus' Latin by H D Jocelyn, *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar 5*, 1986, pp. 299–336. It is unfortunate, too, that Serbat could not take advantage of the essays in P Mudry (ed.), *La Médecine de Celse*, St Etienne, 1994, but doubtless the benefits from these conference proceedings will appear in future volumes.

The format of the series presents its usual difficulties, with notes being split inconsistently between footnotes and endnotes. While references and quotations are generally accurate, the notes focus excessively on Celsus' use of Hippocrates, and on linguistic parallels elsewhere in Latin. Few, though, will be convinced of the influence of Ovid from the evidence put forward on p. ix. This is a philologist's edition for philologists, and medical historians and others wishing to read Celsus for the information he provides may need rather more help than is here given.

In his preface, as well as describing the contents of the first two books of *On medicine*, Serbat sets out his views on Celsus and his relation to the medicine of his time. He rightly affirms that Celsus is no mere compiler or translator from the Greek, but has his own axe to grind, and has had a certain amount of

experience in treating the sick as a landowner on his own estate. His famous preface, although historically orientated, is not designed as history as such, but as a contribution to the understanding of contemporary debates on medicine. Celsus tries to steer his own path through the arguments going on in Rome and the Greek world between the various medical sects, and he should not be seen as a committed follower of Asclepiades or the Methodists. He is a rationalist, although one should be careful about what that word means, and his rationalism need not correspond in every detail to that of the Hippocratics or of any other famous doctor of Antiquity.

This assertion of the independence of Celsus is to be welcomed, especially against those who still stick to the view of him as a mere compiler. But wider questions are rarely asked by Serbat, or are glossed over. If, as is most likely, Celsus was writing in the 20s or 30s, his silence on the Pneumatists requires some comment, especially since many modern scholars would date the beginnings of that influential sect to the last decades of the first century BC, a generation or so before Celsus. Equally, Serbat's vague comment that Asclepiades lived in the early first century BC, and was heard by Themison hardly allows the unwitting reader to know of the vigorous debate between Pigeaud and Gourevitch over precisely this question of dating, or of the important consequences for the development of Methodism that follow from adopting one view or the other. One misses too any sense of the wider context of Celsus' work as an encyclopaedist. Comparison with his fellow writers of encyclopaedias, Varro and Pliny, would point up the significant features in what is perhaps the single most important treatise on medicine written in Latin.

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William Turner, *A new herball*, Part I, eds George T L Chapman and Marilyn N Tweddle, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 362, illus., £65.00, \$100.00 (0–521–44548–5).

Part I of William Turner's *New herball*, originally published in 1551, was republished for the first time in 1989 by the Mid Northumberland Arts Group and Carcanet Press, edited by George Chapman and Marilyn Tweddle, and reissued by Cambridge University Press in 1995. Volume 2, also published by CUP in 1995 (edited by Chapman, McCombie and Wesencraft), reproduces parts II (1562) and III (1568) of Turner's *Herball*, and is to be reviewed in a later issue.

Both recent editions of Part I have a facsimile of the black-letter text complete with Fuchs' illustrations, followed by a useful transcription in a modern typeface, each individual plant headed with Turner's name and, where known, its modern scientific name; there are also marginal references to the pages where each may be found in the facsimile. The CUP edition has additional reference indices by Frank McCombie. Turner's English spelling has been standardized but his style retained and a glossary provided for archaic terms.

Although it is perhaps a pity that the whole *Herball* has not been reissued in one volume as in Turner's revised edition of 1568, Chapman justifies, in his preface, republication of the first edition of Part I separately, saying that he believes it to have been an important "step forward in the history of botany . . . It was the first genuine attempt to identify scientifically, in English, the plants which were of medical benefit to all" (p. 7).

There is a brief biography of Turner by Chapman, reproduced from *The Scottish Naturalist*; perhaps for the CUP reissue this could have been revised to take account of recent studies on Turner, such as the biography by R D Whitney Jones published in 1988 (*William Turner*, London, Routledge). The present work emphasizes Turner's botanical abilities but makes little mention of his position in medical botany, despite the fact that he follows each plant's description by its "virtues" or medical uses.

Useful reference indices are included (pp. 327–62) although for ease of reference, since the work was written in English, it would have

been better to re-order the indices and to place Index IV with Turner's English Names at the very end as an index to the whole of the present edition; it would also have been helpful to have in this index page references to the facsimile text printed earlier. To avoid repetition, indices IV, V and VI, each of which gives a combination of Turner's English, Latin and modern names, could have been collated into one comprehensive table; to such a table could have been added the medical virtue of each plant. This would have been a useful cross-reference for medical historians to Index VII 'Of virtues', although I would have preferred all Turner's "virtues" to have been included so that one could make up one's own mind about their validity. For example, because Turner had doubts about Antirrhinum as an antidote to poisoned drinks (pp. 66 and 237–8), McCombie does not list this usage.

Although the present volume does contain notes (pp. 321–5) perhaps a more critical approach would have been useful, such as comments on Turner's quotations from his sources; note 16 referring to 'Of wormwode' (pp. 29 and 217) remarks on Turner's word order in his translation but does not explain that Turner includes words not in the Latin as he quotes it (cf. Pliny XXXII, xxxi: 100). A note to the modern reader might be helpful that on occasions Turner is quoting Greek, albeit in transliterated roman lettering: e.g., 'Of Bryon thalassion' (pp. 104 and 256) and 'Of borage' (pp. 105 and 257).

The republication of this and parts II and III of the *Herball* is to be particularly commended as Turner has long been ignored in works on botanical history such as those by Sachs, Greene and Morton (except in brief footnotes). In the sixteenth century, when most medical literature was still written in Latin, Turner wrote his *Herball* in English, as he explains in his Prologue, to put botanical and pharmaceutical knowledge before a wider audience and to avoid mistakes by those practising medicine who did not have the benefit of a classical education. There is no doubt a market in our own times for such a work among those interested in alternative

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medicine, but it must be remembered that in its day herbal medicine was conventional medicine. Of more importance, to those having no knowledge of scientific Latin, this new edition will be of great value as primary source material in the medical history of the sixteenth century.

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Joel D Howell, *Technology in the hospital: transforming patient care in the early twentieth century*, Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, pp. xv, 341, illus., £39.50 (0-8018-5020-7).

This book was a good idea. Writing a history of patient care in the early twentieth century from the perspective of technology makes a refreshing read. Howell has combed through the records of the New York and Pennsylvania hospitals for the first quarter of this century and shows convincingly how technology was increasingly, almost insidiously, built into the management of patients' lives. Management is the right word here. Taking his cue from historians who have, rightly, interpreted technology very broadly, Howell devotes a great deal of his initial space to demonstrating how patients were increasingly managed by off-stage technologies. Punched cards and calculating machines transformed the care of the sick just as much as (maybe more than) the use of the electrocardiograph. Howell does not attempt any comprehensive history but confines himself to a number of case studies: the X-ray machine, urinalysis, blood counts.

Howell also takes in surgery, and in one of the most revealing chapters he addresses the staggering rise in the rate of tonsillectomies early in the century, a rise which he catalogues in impressive detail. In 1900 just over 2 per cent of patients discharged from the Pennsylvania Hospital had been diagnosed as having tonsillar disease. By 1925 the figure had risen to over 25 per cent. Howell's picture of surgery as the apotheosis of streamlined,

high-tech, quick-fix medicine dovetails neatly with more general images of North American self-perceptions in the twenties. It would have been helpful if Howell had provided more information on the day-to-day running of the technologies described here. It is never quite clear who is doing the tests, where the clinical laboratory was, who was in control of it and so on. Nevertheless, this is a most valuable study, although the press must obviously bear responsibility for some of the less than comprehensible tables (p. 24 for example).

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Derek A Dow, *Safeguarding the public health: a history of the New Zealand Department of Health*, Wellington, Victoria University Press, 1995, pp. 302, illus., NZ \$39.95 (0-86473-285-6).

The writing of institutional or departmental histories, especially of commissioned histories, is a delicate art, fraught, as recent historical debate has emphasized, with dangers to objective interpretation. Even where the historian is given a free hand, there remain pressures from interested individuals who have been involved in the institution's past. It is impossible to read—let alone write—such histories without a continuing awareness of the existence of such pressures, and their tactful handling is a measure of a historian's skill. Happily such pressures do not obtrude in Donald Dow's history of New Zealand's Health Department, which steers a deft course between such shoals.

The subject of this book being the work of a health department from 1900 to the present, much of the material inevitably relates to such subjects as child health, maternity services, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases, and health education. Questions of historical objectivity apart, therefore, Dow has also had to confront a second major obstacle for institutional historians—how to organize a century's multi-focused administrative effort into a coherent narrative. There are two