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corticis, aliud medullæ” becomes “one, of course, is that which forms the shell (‘cortex’), the other the marrow (‘medulla’)” (p. 9). The names of other people and texts mentioned briefly by Wharton, and other details, are identified fully in endnotes. This is a careful and accessible edition.

Wharton’s book was of capital importance, building on some of the latest anatomical discoveries of his time. With great excitement, the structure of the nervous and lymphatic systems were being revealed by English and Continental investigators; Wharton sought to bring an understanding of the anatomy and function of the glands into congruence with both these systems. The nerves as well as the lymphatics were thought to be vascular in nature. Wharton argued time and again that the glands served the purpose of both extracting needed fluids from the lymph and conveying them to the nerves and providing a means of evacuating waste products from the nervous system into the channels of the lymphatic system. By the end of the seventeenth century, as an appreciation of vascular physiology became commonplace, many authors cited Wharton’s work with applause. He himself gave special thanks to the Dane Thomas Bartholin, the French Jean Pecquet, and the Dutch Johannes van Horne. After defining glands in general, Wharton explained by reasoning and the presentation of anatomical details why the tongue, brain, and spleen were not glands; he then dealt thoroughly with the various glands themselves, including lengthy descriptions of the reproductive glands such as the testicles and ovaries. He gives an up-to-date explanation, for instance, of how glands produce the male sperm from a fluid of the nerves (echoing Hippocratic views), and the milk in the female breasts from a similar nervous fluid. Given Freer’s fine translation, Wharton’s views are easy to follow.

Wharton’s book gives clear evidence not only of an incisive author of much reading, but also of an energetic and careful anatomical (and vivisectional) investigator of human and animal bodies. While his book takes the form of a presentation of reasoned conclusions

rather than detailed descriptions of anatomical experiments *per se*, he offers both sharp criticisms of others and statements of new findings based on close personal inspection. While Wharton is (like almost all his contemporaries) teleological and functionalistic in his reasoning, he carefully avoids the Galenic language of faculties and powers. Wharton did not yet have the ability to make use of the microscope in his studies, as Robert Hooke, Jan Swammerdam, Antoni Leeuwenhoek, and Marcello Malpighi would a decade later; he also does not discuss his views on matter theory. Unfortunately, this leads Cunningham, in his otherwise fine introduction, to argue that these are failings which place Wharton’s work in the old-fashioned “scholastic” camp rather than among the followers of the new and “mechanistic” philosophy. Cunningham’s introduction may also make too much of the significance of Descartes in stimulating Wharton, although he is persuasive about the significance of Francis Glisson. It would be a shame, however, if the introduction convinced readers that this excellent new version of Wharton’s work should be set on the “old” side of a mid-seventeenth-century divide. At the time it was produced, it was at the forefront of anatomical studies. It helped to usher in a new era of physiological reasoning about bodily structures and fluids. Now that it has appeared in English, Wharton’s book deserves to be well recognized.

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**John M Riddle**, *Eve’s herbs: a history of contraception and abortion in the West*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1997, pp. vii, 341, £26.50 (0-674-27024-X).

In *Contraception and abortion from the ancient world to the Renaissance* (Harvard University Press, 1992), Riddle proposed that effective contraception began in the ancient world: “the ancients discovered what we only

recently rediscovered". In *Eve's herbs* he concentrates on the period from the Middle Ages to the present day, arguing that contraceptive knowledge gradually became less easily available to women because the witch-hunts killed the wise women. He again makes extensive use both of comparative studies of world-wide plant folklore and of laboratory work on the chemical efficacy of the materials used.

Part of his argument is that, where conception was seen as a gradual process of mixing and setting occurring over several months, what we see as early abortions would have been understood as contraception. This sensible point is, however, completely undermined by his decision to set the book within the context provided by the evidence given to the Inquisition by Béatrice of Montailhou. Her seducer assured her that she would not conceive because he had "a certain herb"; in the records of human communication, this chat-up line should surely go down with such other gems as "trust me, I'm a doctor" and "the cheque's in the post". But Riddle takes it entirely seriously, as "information unprecedented in recorded history" (p. 12). So, what is this herb? We do not know, although we learn that it is wrapped in linen, suspended between Béatrice's breasts, and placed by Pierre in *orificio stomachi ipsius*. Riddle makes much of being the only person to have come to this reading of the manuscript, Vat. Lat. 4030, but in fact it is given by Jean Duvernoy in his 1972 list of corrections to his 1965 transcription of the text (*Le registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier*, Toulouse, 1965). Riddle translates the phrase as "in the opening of the abdomen", takes this as a Latin euphemism for "vagina", and creates a vaginal pessary but, as the Latin could instead mean *on* the "opening of the abdomen" the phrase could simply mean the navel, making this an amulet. Whether pessary or amulet, however, Riddle insists that it is intended as a contraceptive in the *modern* sense.

When using modern pharmacology, Riddle accumulates materials which do not always say what he claims. For example, on the efficacy

of pomegranate as a contraceptive (in our sense), he uses Gujral's research (*Indian Journal of Medical Research*, 1960, 48: 46–51). Of the guinea pigs tested, Riddle says, "none became pregnant"; in fact, this apparently impressive 100 per cent result was derived from only four pairs of guinea pigs. Furthermore, Riddle states that "forty days after drug withdrawal, the fertility of . . . guinea pigs was restored to normal" (1992: 25–6; cf. 1997: 42), which is simply not a fair summary of the laboratory results; after treatment 25 per cent (i.e. one) of the guinea-pig pairs remained infertile.

The tone of *Eve's herbs* is relentlessly cheerful—versions of the Trotula treatises "circulated on the medieval equivalent of interlibrary loan" (p. 32)—and there are many errors. Artemis was hardly "the goddess of love" (p. 32), and I do not think Riddle means to say that "the deeds described in the fifteenth century as the sevenfold traits of witchcraft are all creditable, according to modern medicine (with the exception of bestiality and homosexuality)" (p. 117). The argument has been refined since 1992; Riddle has picked up my own reference to Marcel Detienne's work on spices (*Medical History*, 1993, 37: 350) but has decided Detienne is a woman (p. 272 n. 63). The logic of the argument remains confused. Where there are very few references in classical literature to a plant being an anti-fertility agent, this is taken to mean that knowledge of its effects was transmitted orally (p. 51), yet on finding few references to aloe Riddle concludes that its anti-fertility use "was not widespread" (p. 56).

Riddle is highly reductionist, seeing abortion everywhere, insisting that provoking the menses and urine, expelling a dead foetus, and an abortion have always meant "the same thing" (p. 108), and that medical comments of "wonderful for the womb" must always mean an abortive (p. 140). This completely misses the role thought to be played by regular menstruation in maintaining female health within a humoral system, and—for medicine before 1750—Riddle fails to set his theme

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within the wider context of changing scientific ideas about the female body.

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**Ivan Garofalo** (ed.), *Anonymi medici: De morbis acutis et chroniis*, transl. Brian Fuchs, *Studies in Ancient Medicine* vol. 12, Leiden and New York, E J Brill, 1997, pp. xxx, 375, Nlg. 178.50, \$112.50 (90-04-10227-2).

Just over a hundred years ago Robert Fuchs published in a German periodical part of an unknown Greek tract on acute and chronic diseases he had found in a Paris manuscript, hence its common title of *Anonymus Parisinus*. Lacking both beginning and ending, it gives first the cause of each disease as suggested by earlier writers, then signs and symptoms, and finally treatments. Although its appearance created a stir at the time, it has since been rarely noticed, despite its potential importance for the study of pre-Galenic medicine. In making the first edition of this tract in book form, Ivan Garofalo includes new portions taken from manuscripts in Vienna and London, along with an English translation and introduction, and notes in the form of a second apparatus. All can be grateful that such a neglected text is now made more accessible, and those who know no Greek will be still more in Garofalo's debt.

When there is so much valuable material assembled here, it gives me no pleasure to say that this is a deeply flawed book. Garofalo has done the first part of the editor's task well; his collations, to judge from his work on the London MS, are accurate, and his choice of readings, his own emendations, and his listing of variants are generally competent, even if his use of brackets in the text to indicate both emendations and readings present in only one manuscript is confusing. But on almost every page, I have found discrepancies between text and translation, between text and notes, or between translation and notes; lines are omitted, or words included twice, without it being made clear whether these decisions

represent the views of Garofalo, the series editor (John Scarborough) or the translator, or are simply oversights. Variant spellings and translations appear on the same page, even on adjacent lines, p. 39, and the Greekless can have little inkling of the problems that lurk. The translator has difficulty with the technical terms of medicine and editorial technique (the preface is at times incomprehensible), and permits such nonsense as "dung of the aromas", p. 34 (which appears in the index of substances, p. 357, as "refuse of spices"). Misprints abound: there is one in each of the first two notes, and the bibliography, essential for understanding the notes, is filled with error and inconsistency. Dates and initials are given at will, and names and titles are mangled. The article referred to in note 73 does not appear in the bibliography; and those wishing to discover where Daremberg first signalled the importance of this text will not find it under Daremberg. The list of editions of ancient authors cited omits, p. 264, von Staden's *Herophilus* (despite the reference back on p. 266); puts the author cited throughout as An. Br. after Theophanes (because until 1991 he was usually called Vindicianus); and leaves the reader baffled as to the identity and, indeed, existence of Biz. Given that Biz appears at first alongside Paul in the notes, I surmised that this might be some Byzantine epitome, but the truth has to wait to p. 344, where Bizantium is revealed as an, as yet, unedited (Latin?) author of unrevealed date. By contrast, the index of Greek is relatively free from misprints.

The wider significance of this text for the study of ancient medicine is never brought out. In part, this is because the apparatus of notes (not always aligned with the text or translation) does not allow adequate exposition of parallel passages in other writers. Many of Garofalo's emendations depend on what they say, but he offers at best only the briefest of indications, and his method of citation inevitably will lead to confusion, especially in its near total avoidance of commas. Those wishing to follow up the references in the remarkable chapter 20 on religious enthusiasm as a disease should be warned that three of the authors do not appear