

and Carl David Carlsson (1875–1965). The compiler, Ove Hagelin, has written that he hopes that this illustrated and annotated catalogue will help to popularize the history of pharmacy, a hope which is echoed by this reviewer for it is sadly in need of such a stimulus.

This is a beautifully produced book which any pharmaceutical historian would be proud to have on his shelves. Well written, with touches of humour and few infelicities in the English, it has no less than 94 full-page illustrations, 16 of them in excellent colour. Printer's errors are few but the reference to Cowen and Helfand's book *Pharmacy: an illustrated history* (p. 18) concerning Mesue the younger, should be to page 52 and not page 68. The index is largely confined to personal names, which is unfortunate, but there is an excellent list of the reference books used and cited in the catalogue.

The annotations, almost short essays, are full, informative and accurate. Such errors as have been detected are of a minor nature, Pena and Lobel did not botanize throughout the British Isles but only in a limited portion of England. Willem Piso, a Dutch physician who after some years in Brazil became a pioneer in tropical medicine was not quite the first to bring Ipecachuana root (*Cephaelis ipecachuana*) to the attention of Europe as Purchas's *Pilgrims* (1625) had already noted that it was useful in the "bloody flux", probably amoebic dysentery. Nevertheless, Piso not only depicted it in his 1658 edition of his *Medicina Brasiliensi* but noticed that there were two varieties of it. One wonders if these were the ones which came to be known as Rio and Cartagena Ipecachuana, the latter being the sturdier of the two, and some regard as distinct species.

Having just celebrated the 400th centenary of John Gerarde's *Herball*, it was of particular interest to note the first edition of the first illustrated herbal in Scandinavia, *Dansk Urtebog*, by Simon Paulli published in 1648. All the woodcuts except two had come from other works printed by Plantin of Antwerp as the Danish printers were not then sufficiently

experienced. It is noticeable that only one of the books is of English origin: Christopher Jacob Trew's extended edition of Elizabeth Blackwell's *Curious Herbal* (1737–39) and that was published in Nuremberg.

Most touching of all is the manuscript of Johann Martin Scheele (1734–1754), the eldest brother of Carl Wilhelm, with its round childish handwriting which recorded what he was learning as an apothecary's apprentice at the Unicorn pharmacy in Gothenburg.

It should be pointed out that the difference in price between "outside EU" and "EU" of 125 Swedish crowns (about £10) is due to the fact that the European Union has the uncivilized habit of charging VAT on books—except in Britain.

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Giovanna Ferrari, *L'Esperienza del passato. Alessandro Benedetti, filologo e medico umanista*, Biblioteca di Nuncius, studi e testi XXII, Florence, Leo S Olschki, 1996, pp. 357, no price given (88-222-4465-6).

Carrying out anatomies during the Renaissance was never a straightforward business, even though it now seems it was not the Church which prevented them. A casket of bones prepared during a dissection in Padua was sequestered from a student on his way to Venice by greedy treasury officials. When they opened the casket the next day, and saw the whitened bones amidst sweet-smelling herbs, they mistook them for saintly relics and went down on their knees to venerate them. When the casket was brought to the Venetian counsellor Francesco Sanudo (uncle of the famous chronicler Marino), he forced the officials to return the bones to the student. This incident is recounted in Alessandro Benedetti's 1502 study of anatomy, the *Historia corporis humani sive anatomice*. Benedetti, a Veronese, is remembered as the inventor of a "portable" anatomy theatre and rather dismissively ranked amongst the pre-Vesalians. In this elegant and

detailed study, Ferrari re-evaluates Benedetti's contribution.

Benedetti was at once a physician and a dedicated humanist, describing himself as "physicus et orator clarissimus", and author of several other non-medical works. His project for the refounding of anatomy, according to Ferrari, can be broken down into four elements: a literary strategy (his use of language and style), a physical space (his anatomy theatre), a target audience (the medical-surgical community and notables) and an ideology (moral anatomy). And yet it is a study in failure. Benedetti stressed the importance of observation but, in seeking to reconcile Aristotle and Galen, he was quite willing to deny what he saw with his own eyes if it proved inconsistent with Aristotelian physiology. He put his faith in Pliny, producing an edition of the *Natural history* in 1507, at a time when others were just beginning to advocate a move away from the regressive humanist restoration of texts to the progressive ascertaining of "truth". Benedetti's *Anatomice* failed to displace Mondino dei Liuzzi's older text (the *Anothomia*) for study at the Venetian College and was ridiculed by contemporary physicians like Nicolò Leonicensino, a crucial figure in the sixteenth-century revival of Galenism.

Ferrari convincingly argues that the exploration of "failure" can tell us much about an important moment in the history of science. The debate between Benedetti and Leonicensino was, at its heart, a debate between two different ways of evaluating the past and how it should be used to advantage in the present. The two physicians had much in common, above all their humanist preparation and outlook, combined with a desire to return to the purified medicine of the ancients. But here they parted company. Leonicensino's approach stressed the didactic and theoretical uses of the classical texts, favouring the qualities of simplicity, logic and consistency. Benedetti the practising physician, with experience as both community and military practitioner, adopted a more eclectic approach to them, tempered by his practical concern with treatment over disease.

Ferrari clearly favours her protagonist and goes to some length to rehabilitate Benedetti's historical position. She has a good eye for both relevant detail and anecdote. At times they become overwhelming. Her in-depth study of the *Anatomice* (chapter two, nicely titled 'Anatomy of a book') will no doubt prove useful to historians, but it reads like a list of approaches and features, somewhat jumbled in the way they are presented. These are minor quibbles, however. Ferrari's study is an important work of scholarship, complete with detailed notes and bibliography. It sheds much-needed light on the period when authors sought a reconciliation of humanism and anatomical observation, before the latter gained the upper hand and the anatomy theatre itself became, in Ferrari's words, a sort of tribunal.

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Hellmut Flashar, et al., *Médecine et morale dans l'antiquité. Dix exposés suivis de discussions*, Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique, vol. 43, Geneva, Fondation Hardt, 1997, pp. viii, 415, SFr 70.00.

Any collection of papers provides no guarantee of consistent quality. Happily, the ten essays (in English, French and German) by leading figures in the history of medicine, together with wide-ranging discussions (after all but the final essay), provide more than worthwhile contributions to the ever-expanding debate on medical ethics, past and present. This is a well-presented volume with good indexes of ancient and modern authors (but no subject index). The question of Hippocrates and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Oath form the focus of this collection. Hippocrates, the totemic figure in Western medicine, has, in medical hands at least, often been treated in an ahistorical fashion. Jackie Pigeaud is right to remind us that part of the problem of analysing Hippocrates lies in determining whether the Hippocratic Corpus should be considered part of the history of its own time, and judged accordingly, or whether the writings yield