

Turning to the spiritual environment, James Brodman examines the disciplinary measures increasingly employed in thirteenth-century French hospitals. He provides a workmanlike account of the documentary evidence, but does not explore the wider context of the *regimen sanitatis* and its preoccupation with moral as well as physical contagion. Monastic customs on bloodletting and the care of the sick receive similar treatment from M K K Yearl, who draws some interesting conclusions about differences in practice, but ignores the close connection between venesection and the need for celibacy in the cloister.

Once regarded as a sterile amalgam of “ignorance” and “superstition”, Anglo-Saxon medicine emerges from these pages as inventive, pragmatic and effective. Both Anne Van Arsdall and John Riddle argue persuasively for a re-assessment of the botanical knowledge of early medieval herbalists, while Maria D’Aronco provides further support for the argument that the celebrated St Gall map, with its impressive infirmary complex, may well have been designed for English use. The surviving manuals compiled by Byzantine hospital physicians present historians with another valuable source for this process of re-evaluation, which Alain Touwaide describes in a meticulously researched paper. Approaches to the study of leprosy in medieval Europe have already been transformed, in part through the adoption of a new interdisciplinary research agenda, comprehensively described by Bruno Tabuteau, whose only serious omission from an otherwise exemplary survey is the important work on medical texts by Luke Demaitre. Archival studies have certainly played their part in advancing our knowledge of the disease, as Rafaël Hyacinthe reveals in a perceptive chapter on the Order of St Lazarus.

With a number of excellent essays to recommend it, and two useful contributions on sources from the archaeologists, William White and Geoff Egan, this collection constitutes a welcome addition to the growing body of publications on medieval medical history. Such a chronologically and thematically wide selection of papers could, however, have

made a greater impact as a showcase for new research and methodologies had it been accompanied by an introduction outlining major developments in the field and providing a general overview of the volume’s structure and purpose. There is also a general lack of consistency and cross referencing between papers which tighter editing would have addressed. Even so, Barbara Bowers deserves our thanks for bringing these papers together.

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Carmen Caballero-Navas (ed.), *The book of women’s love and Jewish medieval medical literature on women: Sefer Ahavat Nashim*, The Kegan Paul Library of Jewish Studies, London and New York, Kegan Paul, 2004, pp. 314, £85.00 (hardback 0-7103-0758-6).

The Hebrew *Book of women’s love* (*Sefer Ahavat Nashim*), here edited and translated for the first time, is known to exist in only one late fifteenth-century copy, made probably in the area of Catalonia or Provence. Caballero-Navas postulates that the text was composed in the thirteenth century, but a more precise dating may never be possible. It gathers together different kinds of knowledge, juxtaposing magic with detailed remedies based on the traditional pharmacopoeia of simple and compound medicines widely used in medieval Europe. After introductory sections on love magic and aphrodisiacs, it organizes the remaining cosmetic, gynaecological, and obstetrical remedies in head-to-toe order. The combination of medicine and cosmetics, topics we would now consider quite distinct, is not at all unusual in the Middle Ages, being found in Latin and vernacular texts on women’s medicine throughout Europe. More unusual is the incorporation of mechanisms to improve the sexual success of men, which are rarely found so closely allied to women’s medicine in other linguistic traditions until the late Middle Ages.

The *Book* is first and foremost a remedy book, with virtually no theory of causation. As such, it is probably of most interest as evidence for the sociology of the body and will rightly attract a broad audience of historians of women's medicine and sexuality. Such readers will no doubt find this edition and its accompanying commentary a bit obscure not simply because of the unusual nature of the text but also because of certain editorial decisions. Instead of merely stating that the works of the Arabic authorities al-Rāzī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Zahrāwī, all of whom are cited in the text, were translated into Hebrew at such and such a date, Caballero-Navas might have confirmed whether the references can be traced or if the author was simply name-dropping. Greater engagement with Latin medical traditions might have also shown that this Hebrew tradition is not as directly derivative of Arabic medicine as it seems. Caballero assumes (pp. 28–9) direct use of the North African Arabic writer Ibn al-Jazzār, ignoring the more obvious parallels with the Latin *Liber de sinthomatibus mulierum*, a twelfth-century Salernitan treatise that drew heavily upon Ibn al-Jazzār and was available in Hebrew translation. And most readers are likely to miss the passing clarification on p. 81 that the Catalan cosmetic and gynaecological treatise, which has already been referred to over a dozen times as the *Trotula*, has no direct relation to the Latin treatise that circulated under that name; they will find no explanation at all that this is actually a rendering of a Latin treatise on cosmetics usually attributed to Arnau of Vilanova.

Caballero-Navas is least persuasive in her arguments about the book's intended audience. As the original author himself declares, this book is about "what women like and need for themselves; for this reason it has been called *Book of women's love*, for you will find in this book what women, and those who are able to have intercourse with them, ask from the art of medicine" (p. 116). Caballero-Navas fails to engage with the significance of that penultimate phrase and with items such as "A love formula . . . that is so strong that she will run after you" or a concoction which the reader is to make from his own semen (p. 108). Male use of cosmetic and

gynaecological texts, whether to treat female patients, to inform themselves about sexuality and generation, or to woo women through knowledge of cosmetics, has now been well documented for other medieval gynaecological and cosmetic literature. The one extant manuscript copy of the *Book* situates it alongside works of Kabbalah, medicine, and natural philosophy; despite Caballero-Navas's citation of evidence for Jewish women's book ownership, the character of this codex suggests interests more typical of learned males. The present study does not supersede Barkai's 1998 survey of a larger body of Hebrew gynaecological literature, which addressed important questions of the motives for translation and the relation of Jewish learning to that of the majority Christian culture (Ron Barkai, *A history of Jewish gynaecological texts in the Middle Ages*, Leiden, 1998). Nevertheless, this handsomely produced edition contributes significantly to the recovery of medieval Hebrew learning and, one hopes, will serve as the basis for future analyses of how knowledge of sexuality and medicine was shared or contested between men and women, and who was actually reading books such as this.

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Marguerite Hirt Raj, *Médecins et malades de l'Égypte romaine. Étude socio-légale de la profession médicale et de ses praticiens du I^{er} au IV^e siècle ap. J.-C.*, Studies in Ancient Medicine, vol. 32, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2006, pp. xx, 386, €139.00, \$181.00 (hardback 978-90-04-14846-8).

This thirty-second volume in the series Studies in Ancient Medicine (Brill) presents the revised and updated version of a PhD thesis defended at the University of Geneva in 1996 by Marguerite Hirt Raj. A classicist, Raj's objective in this book is to propound "une étude approfondie de la position sociale et du statut des médecins et de leur profession en Égypte romaine" (p. 5). The study is divided into six chapters: the introduction and the conclusion aside, chapters 2 to 4 encompass the definition of