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Arabic manuscripts (almost a third of McGill's Arabic holdings) comprising copies of 62 different works. The manuscripts collected by Osler were acquired mainly from a professional colleague in Hamadhān in western Iran; others were obtained later and originated in the collections of two well-known Islamists: the Russian scholar V. Ivanow, and the German physician and Arab medical historian Max Meyerhof.

The manuscripts range in date from 611/1215 (no. 141) to the early twentieth century, and include many of the leading works of medieval Arabic medicine: e.g. partial copies of such massive compendia as the *Al-Ḥawī ft l-ṭibb* by al-Rāzī (no. 65) and the *Kāmil al-ṣinā'a al-ṭibbiya* by al-Majūsī (no. 96), and exemplars of the *Al-Mughnī ft l-ṭibb* by Ibn al-Bayṭār (no. 143) and the *Al-'Umda ft ṣinā'at al-jirāḥa* by Ibn al-Quff (no. 256). The most important manuscripts would seem to be a complete Indian copy of Ibn Sīnā's *Al-Qānūn ft l-ṭibb* (no. 161/3), dated 975/1567 but with an attested line of transmission from the author's autograph, and the first volume a fine Iraqi copy of al-Ghāfiqī's *Jamī' al-adwiya al-mufrada* (no. 102), copied in 654/1256 and containing 367 coloured drawings.² There are also numerous manuscripts (nos. 32, 33, 36, 69, 103, 117, 160, 178, 203, 228, 251), usually dating from the eighteenth century and later, which are works by anonymous or unknown authors on various medical subjects. Such manuals are typical of later Ottoman times and offer important insights into medical education and practice in this era.

Gacek offers accurate and detailed descriptions of the manuscripts, although for the more obscure works it would be useful to have fuller incipits and excipits (these latter are often omitted) and somewhat more information on the contents of the text. Special notice should be taken of the fact that his well-known expertise in Arabic palaeography allows Gacek to assign many manuscripts to specific parts of the Islamic world based on distinctive features of the scripts. There are also 71 black and white and 8 colour plates, and 47 pages of detailed indices and concordances (essential since the manuscript entries are arranged alphabetically, rather than by subject).

This catalogue is a welcome addition to the reference literature on Arabic manuscript collections, and does full justice to one such collection which can now begin to receive the attention it deserves. At a time when North American publishers are offering some truly awful examples of shoddy production where the Arabic script is concerned, the McGill University Library merits special notice for the superb job it has done in producing this handsome and clearly edited volume.

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FRANCES AUSTIN (ed.), *The Clift family correspondence 1792–1846*, CECTAL Occasional Publications No. 5, Sheffield, Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language, University of Sheffield, 1991, pp. xxi, 265, illus., £25.00 (hardback, 0–907426–04–2), £8.50 (paperback, 0–907426–03–4).

These are the letters of a Cornish family of two sisters and four brothers. All the children eventually left their Bodmin home and scattered to various parts of southern England; these letters were their attempt to exchange information about their respective lives. There is much here of interest to the social historian. Some of the letters, for instance, describe a textbook early-modern food riot designed to halt the export of corn (p. 55). We also learn of the strong disapprobation that acts of bestiality might provoke during this period (p. 187). The mentality of the era is further illuminated by the supposition that the timely collapse of a roof on witnesses in a criminal matter could cast doubt on the veracity of their testimony.

The chief interest of these letters to the medical historian derives, however, from the fact that the youngest of these siblings was William Clift (1775–1849), John Hunter's last apprentice and the first Conservator of the Hunterian Museum. Clift entered the Hunter household because of

² On this latter work, see Gacek's fuller description in his 'Arabic Calligraphy and the "Herbal" of al-Ghāfirī: a survey of Arabic manuscripts at McGill University', *Fontanus*, 1989 2: 37–53.

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his skills as an artist: Hunter had need of facile draughtsmen to produce representations of specimens in his collections. In return for Clift's services, Hunter was to bring the young man up as a surgeon. Although Clift lived in the extensive establishment in Leicester Square and regularly acted as Hunter's amanuensis, there is tantalizing little about his master in these letters. In a rare reference, Clift described Hunter as "a verry curious man, and plain as well for he has hair white as snow and has never got it dressed, I believe there is not a bit of Pride in him . . ." (p. 30).

There was no opportunity for Clift to deepen his acquaintance with Hunter, who died on 16 October 1793. Clift's true master in the ensuing years was the museum that Hunter had constructed at such pain and expense during his life. Clift did not tax his relations with details of the collection although they were aware of its importance in their brother's life. When in 1801 one sister finally laid eyes on the thing itself she was astonished to find "Thousands of Large Bottles with both Fleash fish and fowls perservd [*sic*] in spirits its sertonly verry Courious with a quantity of Scelletons great and small. . ." (pp. 196–7).

On the whole the letters are more diverting than revealing to those interested in John Hunter and his legacy. As in any extended correspondence of this period, references to illness and injury do, however, abound. The medical historian will find passing reference to trephines, bleeding, and electrification for gout. Perhaps most intriguing is the evidence contained in one letter of a keen interest among artisans of the period in the mysteries of human anatomy.

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F. DAVID HOENIGER, *Medicine and Shakespeare in the English Renaissance*, London and Toronto, Associated University Presses, 1992, pp. 404, £39.95 (0–87413–425–0).

Any book that reduces the gap between the "two cultures" is to be welcomed, and this one particularly. The subject has glamour on both sides; the author is well placed to do both of them justice, having edited Shakespeare and written on Renaissance biology; and the publishers have been generous, producing a well-bound volume with clear print, full notes, bibliography, general index, and a list of Shakespeare passages discussed, almost four hundred of them.

Nor do the contents disappoint. Hoeniger covers both medicine and the organization of the medical profession, Paracelsus as well as the Galenic tradition, illustrating them with copious references to Shakespeare and adding three essays on topics that should interest historians of medicine and students of literature in equal measure, Lear's madness, the "miraculous" cure in *All's Well*, and the allusions to scrofula or the King's Evil in *Macbeth*.

The book, though generally based on primary sources, is a work of exposition, not of problem solving. As such its main need is common sense, and Hoeniger supplies this unwaveringly. But he is liable to lapse into platitude. For example, "He humanises the two scenes and thereby contributes to the power of the play's tragedy" may be true but is undeniably flat as the climax of a study of Lady Macbeth's doctor. More seriously, when a book on Shakespeare's medicine quotes (*re* Falstaff's death) "his nose was as sharp as a pen and 'a babbled of green fields", it should at least mention that "'a babbled" is pure conjecture, and that the Folio's reading "a table" has been defended as giving a medically more apt sense (see Fogel *Shakespeare Quarterly* 1958, 9: 485–92). There is a similar failure with Menenius Agrippa's fable of the belly. Hoeniger prints a text of *Coriolanus* 1.1.134 that makes Shakespeare describe the heart as the seat of the brain, a thing that no Elizabethan writer could have done. Whatever the functions assigned to them, the organs were universally recognized as distinct. That Hoeniger of all people should gloss over the contradiction is disappointing. A scholar of his experience might have been expected to verify the text. Had he done so he would have seen that in the Folio the problem does not exist. It is entirely due to punctuation inserted by later editors.

Occasional mistakes in such matters as transcribing quotations suggest that Hoeniger has "small Latin and less Greek". If so, it makes his personal achievement in understanding ancient