

## Book Reviews

documentary, artistic, and ethnographic material, and the range of topics considered is as wide as the scope of the *Maqāmāt* itself; urban, rural and nomadic life, women, religious practices and beliefs, politics and law, trade, education and literary life, medicine, music, slavery, and customs of hospitality. Of particular interest to medical historians is the account of cupping (pp. 108–13), based on Maqāma 47, where al-Ḥārith, travelling in western Arabia, feels the need for this procedure and summons a cupper to his lodgings. Also valuable is the assessment of Maqāma 39 (pp. 156–64), where al-Ḥārith and Abū Zayd land on an island in the Persian Gulf and encounter a ruler whose wife is about to give birth. But numerous other discussions, such as those on libraries, education, and women and the law, are also relevant to the concerns of medical history, if not medical in and of themselves.

At times Guthrie's analysis seems to go too far. For example, the tendency for medieval artists to engage in idealized or stereotypical depiction makes it precarious to offer, as the author often does, judgements based on the implications of facial expressions, or the fact that people do not look "travel-strained or weary". It is also regrettable that she has chosen to omit many of the references (the reader is referred to the original thesis for these), as this means that important statements now very often remain unsubstantiated. As it is well known that there is a prominent autobiographical aspect to the *Maqāmāt*, it would have been useful to include more biographical information on al-Ḥārith himself in the Introduction for the benefit of the general reader. And a book as rich in important and useful information as this one certainly deserves a detailed index, as opposed to a cursory register almost entirely limited to personal and place names.

What emerges from the book is a series of very lively and informative vignettes on a wide range of topics in medieval Islamic history, rather similar in style, if more limited in scope, to Mez's *Die Renaissance des Islams* (Heidelberg, 1922). This is of course

something very different from a study of Arab social life in the Middle Ages, and the primary importance of Guthrie's work, apart from its contribution to the study of the *Maqāmāt*, may thus be regarded as lying in its usefulness as a means for illustrating various specific topics of interest to the individual reader. This is achieved in great detail, but in a style eminently accessible to students and non-specialists, and the book is certainly one that merits close attention.

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**J N Adams**, *Pelagonius and Latin veterinary terminology in the Roman empire*, Studies in Ancient Medicine 11, Leiden, E J Brill, 1995, pp. viii, 695, Nlg. 342.00, \$195.00 (90–04–10281–7).

This is one of the most important books to have been published on ancient medicine for some time, and it would be unfortunate if its title, its size, and its organization were to deny it the readership it deserves. Although primarily a philological enterprise aimed at Latin philologists, it has wider implications for students of Greek and for historians of medicine.

In the first part, chapters I to III, the focus is on the practice of veterinary medicine, carried on by a range of persons, from farmers and the owners of race-horses to a small number of elite specialists. Other healers frequently combined treating humans with treating animals, and as in human medicine, the boundary between the interested layman and the vet was small indeed. Adams provides a useful discussion of the epigraphic and papyrological references to vets, although I miss the very strange Greek vet, a *mulophysikos*, published by R P Wright, *Britannia*, 1977, 8: 279 (cf. also *Zeitschr. f. Papyrologie u. Epigraphik*, 1976, 22: 93, for a more doubtful example).

Chapters IV to V study Pelagonius and his *Ars veterinaria*, written in the late fourth

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century AD, and its relationships with two other tracts, the *Mulomedicina Chironis*, perhaps written about the same time, and the *Mulomedicina* of Vegetius, written in the first half of the fifth century. But there are also illuminating comments on earlier veterinary authors, including Celsus, and a long section on Greek influence on Pelagonius. Adams suggests that he himself translated one major Greek vet, Apsyrtus, and incorporated passages from him into his book. There are also here important notes on the consequences of the recent (re)discovery of a very early manuscript of Pelagonius for the reconstruction of the text and, in general, for an understanding of the ways in which medical texts were transmitted in Antiquity. At least one long section of the *Ars* is shown to come from a different source.

From an individual's life and times we pass in chapters VI and VII to a survey of Pelagonius' (and others') names for disease and for anatomy. Adams ranges widely, especially in Latin, to show how gradually a technical vocabulary was being created and transmitted. He notes apparent changes over time in certain key words; e.g., *morbus* and *passio*, or *causa* taking on the meaning of "medical case". What is striking is not just the development of technical terms, but the wide range of influences that bear on this development, from popular words to more specific Greek-based formulations. Adams' methodology here can with profit be extended to all aspects of Greek medicine, not just that confined to animals.

The final section, over 200 pages long, deals with the language of Pelagonius, syntax, word order, word formation, and vocabulary. Adams concentrates largely on two questions; the extent to which Pelagonius' Latin can be classed as "vulgar", or, alternatively, as "technical". His conclusion, based on a substantial revision of Fischer's Teubner edition, is that Pelagonius, far from writing vulgar Latin, carefully employs a variety of stylistic tricks, although inevitably using at times some popular terms that could be understood by his potential audience of healers

and horse-lovers. Adams has some sound words about the use of metaphor in the creation of new technical terms, as well as about their fluidity.

A short epilogue (perhaps too short) brings together many of the more general points argued in the rest of this long book. Adams believes that Pelagonius was, like Celsus, on the borderline between professional and layman, familiar with some technical writing and with some experience of dealing with sickness. But he had substantial limitations. His use of Apsyrtus suggests that he had little interest in anatomical technicalities, and in his copying from earlier writers he often sacrificed accuracy for brevity. There was a growing technical veterinary vocabulary, although little that suggests a veterinary profession in any meaningful modern sense, and even those technical terms would have been widely accessible to laymen keen on horses.

This is a big book (almost a series of books, for even Adams admits to two) in every sense of the word. It is thus a pity that its index, of Latin words, Greek words, and subjects, is slight, and that its list of chapters, save for that to chapter VIII, is confined solely to the initial chapter headings, and gives little indication of the riches to be found within them. A list of subheadings would have served as a more useful guide to what is a major piece of scholarship on ancient medicine in general, and on veterinary medicine in particular.

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**R W Sharples**, *Theophrastus of Eresus: sources for his life, writings, thought and influence. Commentary volume 5: sources on biology (human physiology, living creatures, botany: texts 328–435)*, Philosophia Antiqua, vol. 64, Leiden and New York, E J Brill, 1995, pp. xvi, 273, Nlg. 135.00, \$77.25 (90–04–10174–8).

It is a pleasant duty to welcome the publication of the above work which inaugurates the