

the same three categories. Bibliographies of manuscripts cited, edited original sources, and secondary literature complete the volume.

The clinical material recorded in Abū al-‘Alā’ Zuhīr’s treatise is deplorably short of the type of detail we should like to have. Details of name, background, and occupation are never given, and only occasionally is age or general physical condition stated. The formulation of the entries usually takes the form “he prescribed for someone whose eyelids became swollen when he shouted and his vision grew dark from vapours rising to this head . . . (no. 16)”, or “for a man in his 70s with a humid body [phlegmatic temperament?] suffering a cold in his head with a headache, phlegm in his stomach, and debilitated, he prescribed . . . (no. 314)”.

Some important questions arise when considering this and similar collections of therapeutic and clinical experiences which were straightforward records of cases and procedures with no discourses on medical theory. Why were they collected (in the case of both Abū al-‘Alā’ Zuhīr and al-Rāzī after the death of the author)? What purpose did they serve and who was the intended user of the volume? What subsequent influence did they have on medical practice? Are they to be viewed as precursors of the European *Consilia*, the collections of anecdotal cases and opinions of famous physicians?

Clearly on the basis of the text presented here, historians need to rethink the designation of *Kutub al-Mujarrabāt*. It would seem that medieval medical writers, as well as modern historians, used the term for different types of therapeutic manuals. Perhaps the *Kutub al-Khawāṣṣ* (‘Books of occult properties’) and the *Kutub al-Mujarrabāt* (‘Books of experiences’) could be viewed as the two ends of a continuum between which there were a range of therapeutic manuals, incorporating to differing degrees therapeutic magic and clinical case histories. This well-documented and carefully prepared translation and edition is a major contribution to our knowledge of the practical aspects of medieval Islamic medical care and should

serve as an impetus to examine other preserved medieval *Kutub al-Mujarrabāt* or ‘Books of [medical] experiences’.

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**Shirley Guthrie, *Arab social life in the Middle Ages: an illustrated study*, London, Saqi Books, 1995, pp. 229, £40.00 (0-86356-043-1).**

The *Maqāmāt* of the renowned Iraqi litterateur al-Ḥārīrī (d. 1122) is a classic of medieval Arabic literature, and after the Qur’ān, arguably the greatest masterpiece of the field. It consists of fifty tales that al-Ḥārīrī relates through a narrator named al-Ḥārīth, who in describing his travels and adventures in various parts of the Middle East keeps encountering a perfectly delightful rogue named Abū Zayd. The tales cover a wide range of themes, and the work as a whole quickly became very popular among the educated literate sector of Arab-Islamic society. In addition to being a much copied book in later times, the *Maqāmāt* attracted the attention of various artists, with the result that there survive today manuscripts of the work containing a total of some hundreds of illustrations, including many of spectacular quality.

These illustrations have been much studied from an artistic point of view, but Guthrie’s work, an abridged version of her 1991 PhD thesis at Edinburgh University, marks the first effort to assess them systematically as a reflection of Islamic society in Syria and Iraq in the thirteenth century, the era when the illustrators lived. Selecting thirty-eight pictures from six manuscripts currently held in libraries in Paris (especially the Bibliothèque Nationale’s renowned Ms. 5847), London, St Petersburg, and Istanbul, she uses each as the starting point for a detailed discussion of the subjects, motifs, details, and customs raised in the picture. Context is provided by other medieval Islamic literary works and

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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-Ḥārī 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