

A. G. González presents the *Agriocanna* glossary as an addition to the *Hermeneumata medicobotanica uetustiora*.

The third section, Words, Meanings and Lexical Fields, contains eight papers that focus on certain aspects of the medical and non-medical terminology utilised in medical texts, from the names of specific diseases and conditions (digestion, *haemorrhoids*) to the concepts of love (*amo* and *amor*) and childhood (*puer/puella* and *infans*), to the physical processes by which medicinal remedies were prepared (pounding, pulping and grinding). M. Pardon-Labonnelie incorporates both Latin medical texts and the words inscribed upon collyrium stamps in her discussion of the names of eye diseases, while P. Gaillard-Seux examines the possible contextual reasons for Pliny the Elder's apparent preoccupation with bites and poisonous substances.

Befitting an international colloquium, contributions are written in English, French, Italian, German and Spanish. There are some inconsistencies in the way that they are presented. Some papers include detailed abstracts, others single sentences; some provide abstracts in both English and another language; in the majority of cases the abstracts are in a different language to the paper itself, and the choice of the language of the abstract in relation to the language of the paper is not standardised. Several variations on the Harvard System are utilised for referencing, and quotations from ancient sources are offered in Latin, Greek, English and other languages, or not at all, depending on the paper in question. There is only one illustration (a colour reproduction of MS. Bodley 130, an image that is also reproduced on the cover of the volume), but there are tables throughout. The volume does offer extensive indices (of ancient sources, and Greek and Latin words, forms and phrases) and an exhaustive general bibliography, collated from the bibliographies included in all twenty-six papers and divided into sections: catalogues of manuscripts; editions of ancient and medieval texts (since AD 1700 and before AD 1700); dictionaries, grammars and concordances; and studies for ease of use.

Ultimately, *Body, Disease and Treatment in a Changing World* is a valuable resource for scholars of ancient and medieval medicine.

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Alison Nuttall and **Rosemary Mander**, *James Young Simpson: Lad o Pairs* (Renfrewshire: Scottish History Press, 2011), pp. 224, £19.95, paperback, ISBN: 978-0-9564-4771-5.

'Lad o Pairs' is the traditional Scottish term used to describe a clever young Scotsman who rises from humble beginnings to be an accomplished all-rounder. It represents a heroic ideal that was encouraged in part by the Scottish educational system of the nineteenth century, which allowed youths of more lowly origins to achieve free public education and attend a Scottish university. The application of this term to James Young Simpson (1811–1870) is certainly appropriate and a well-chosen title for this new multi-authored biography. He was the son of a baker from Bathgate near Edinburgh and at the young age of twenty-eight became professor of midwifery at the University of Edinburgh, a post that he held for over thirty years.

It is now over one hundred and sixty years since the Scottish obstetrician James Young Simpson administered the first general anaesthetic to a woman in childbirth. The initial use of ether has long been ascribed to William Morton following his public demonstration

in the ether dome at Boston, Massachusetts on 16 October 1846. Within four months Simpson employed ether in obstetric anaesthesia in a case that attracted widespread publicity. Although ether was widely employed it had many side effects and Simpson and his assistants popularised the use of chloroform in obstetric practice. Simpson made many other important contributions to obstetrics and also supported the concept of hand washing to prevent puerperal sepsis, as advocated by Semmelweis. Simpson also exemplified the idea of an all-rounder with broad interests in the arts, classics and archaeology. He was also well versed in theology.

Simpson's life and career are well known and have been the subject of several biographies, the first written by his friend and minister, Reverend John Duns, within three years of Simpson's death. This new book takes a different approach to biography in which the editors have assembled a range of specialist authors from different disciplines to build a picture of Simpson in the context of mid-nineteenth-century medicine and society. James Young Simpson was also the subject of a bicentenary symposium held at the University of Edinburgh in June this year, at which time this book was launched. The authors have succeeded admirably in their presentation of the multiple facets of Simpson's life in a way that gives due credit to his accomplishments, but without slipping into hagiography. The chapter on Simpson and the development of physical diagnosis paints him as an innovator in obstetrics and gynaecology who was grounded in the pathology of disease and in the scientific method of practice. His first academic appointment was as an assistant to a professor of pathology, and Simpson maintained a personal pathological museum. He promoted methods of physical examination of the pregnant woman and the use of uterine sounds, which he had earlier practised upon cadavers. The chapter on Simpson and Semmelweis is a valuable contribution analysing the correspondence between these two nineteenth-century figures and their understanding of the nature of puerperal sepsis. The author argues that Simpson was limited in his understanding of puerperal sepsis and considered it to be contagious, but failed to observe its crucial infectious quality.

Simpson's championing of the use of chloroform in childbirth met with religious as well as medical opposition. His biblical and theological training in the Free Church of Scotland and his religious views generally are canvassed in the chapter entitled, 'A Genuinely Religious Man? An Analysis of the Role of Religion in Simpson's Life'. It presents a picture of Simpson's religion as being somewhat complicated, but interconnected with all aspects of his life. It suggests that he was genuine in his faith rather than someone who had only an intellectual interest in religion. Other chapters touch on controversies over homeopathy in Edinburgh, the role of wet nurses and his expertise as an antiquary. The various chapters are well edited and despite multiple authorship the text maintains a consistent style throughout. This volume can be warmly recommended as a valuable addition to the biographical resources on James Young Simpson.

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Sara Dubow, *Ourselves Unborn: A History of the Fetus in Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. viii + 308, £18.99/\$29.95, hardback, ISBN: 978-0-1953-2343-6.

Historian Sara Dubow may have borrowed the title of this book from a collection of lectures on embryology published in 1944 by the anatomist George Washington Corner