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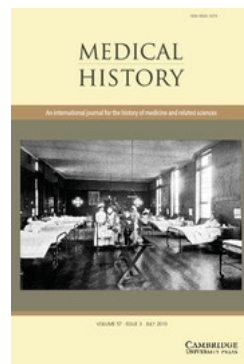
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Minta Collins, *Medieval herbals: the illustrative traditions*, The British Library Studies in Medieval Culture, London, British Library and University of Toronto Press, 2000, pp. 334, illus., £45.00 (hardback 0-71234638-4), £19.95 (paperback 0-7123-46414).

Vivian Nutton

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Book Reviews

it is surprising that Hobby talks in slightly anachronistic terms of the “gender politics of midwifery manuals”. This is however a minor criticism of the erudite and informative introduction to the text.

Hobby’s carefully annotated edition has surely succeeded in making Jane Sharp’s funny, original and intelligent text available to a wider, modern audience.

Cathy McClive,
Warwick University

Minta Collins, *Medieval herbals: the illustrative traditions*, The British Library Studies in Medieval Culture, London, British Library and University of Toronto Press, 2000, pp. 334, illus., £45.00 (hardback 0-7123-4638-4), £19.95 (paperback 0-7123-4641-4).

This nicely produced volume offers both more and less than its title promises. Begun as a dissertation on a group of late medieval herbals in Latin and French, including Wellcome 626, it studies the iconography of plants in a wide variety of manuscripts, from the Johnson papyrus, Wellcome 5753, written in Greek around AD 400, via Arabic manuscripts to Latin manuscripts of the fifteenth century such as BL Sloane 2020, the Carrara Herbal. This allows the author to trace links across cultures, and to compare plant drawings for the same text produced in northern Iraq, Constantinople, or Burgundy. Her major aim is to track the possible survival of a classical tradition of botanical illustration, insisted upon by Charles Singer, over the centuries from Crateuas, fl. 90 BC, and Dioscorides, fl. AD 60, to medieval France and Italy. This she does extremely well, showing how artists modified earlier drawings or inserted figures, and warns against any easy schematism or romantic idealization of the Greeks. She demonstrates the complexity of the herbal tradition, both

in its text and illustrations, and future editors of Dioscorides or the Apuleius herbal, or indeed classical philologists interested in transmission, will neglect her findings at their peril.

They are backed up by precise personal observation of most of the manuscripts here recorded, often challenging accepted views. Her inspection of Bodley 130 leads her to conclude that many of its most lifelike depictions were made at a date much later than the original illustrations. But she does not commit herself to a date, and the famous blackberry (fig. 51), one of those suspected of being retouched, does not seem to show the same signs of later reworking as does the spurge (pl. xviii). But so well based appear most of Dr Collins’ observations that only further autopsy is going to disprove others that might seem more controversial.

But those who are looking for a history of herbals and herbal texts will be disappointed by the intensity of the focus on plant illustrations. Non-illustrated texts are deliberately excluded unless they show affinities with others that are or were. One might regret, too, a failure to compare the tradition of zoological or of anatomical illustration, e.g. in the Niketas codex and its offspring, which can also contribute to the discussion about the development of realism and drawing from life that underlies much of Dr Collins’ argument. She raises questions about patronage and the individual abilities of artists, but her conclusion is too brief to do them full justice.

The great merit of this book is its willingness to go outside the traditional linguistic categories of editors to look at visual representations of the same plants in culturally linked, and then divided, areas. Dr Collins encourages her readers to think big, even if at times her eye and her notes are fixed firmly on minutiae. I have learned a great deal from her, and I shall constantly return to the beautiful illustrations and to

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her trenchant comments to check my own speculations.

Since Dr Collins' methodology encourages precision and an exchange of information, I append a few corrections and suggestions. In general, her Latin is weak, and her quotations and, since her acquaintance with medieval Latin abbreviations appears limited, her transcriptions need checking. Often the plant name as given in the caption does not correspond to that on the plate. The author of the first major study of the Juliana Anicia codex in Vienna was not, as the unwise might suppose from her misunderstanding of the Latin, a Frenchman called De Premierstein, but a Germanic Anton Von Premierstein. A S Atiya also becomes Aiya. I missed a discussion of another papyrus herbal, already noticed by Johnson in 1913, that seems to predate by a generation Wellcome 5753. Details of this herbal, from Tebtunis, are most accessible in M H Marganne, *Inventaire analytique des papyrus grecs*, 1981, nos 176, 178–81. The Kansas City Museum also had on display in the early 1980s a few leaves from an illustrated Arabic herbal of Dioscorides (if my memory is right), from a private collection. The odd shaped palliasses in Laurenziana 73, 41 (fig. 44) have parallels in the Bologna Apollonius, and also in religious paintings of the death of the Virgin. Finally, a set of photographs of the Herten ms of Apuleius, destroyed in the last war, p. 191, still exists in the Welch Library at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

Vivian Nutton,

The Wellcome Trust Centre for the History
of Medicine at UCL

Bartholomaeus Eustachius, *A little treatise on the teeth. The first authoritative book on dentistry (1563)*, edited and introduced by David A Chernin and Gerald Shklar and

published in facsimile with a translation from the Latin by Joan H Thomas, Canton, Science History Publications/USA for Dental Classics in Perspective, 1999, pp. x, 180, \$59.95 (hardback 0-88135-259-4).

Bartholomaeus Eustachius is best known for his eponymous discovery of the tube connecting the ear and the throat. A professor at the Collegio della Sapienza in Rome, he made a number of close observations of human anatomy, especially of the throat and head, resulting in a series of drawings executed in 1552 that clearly established him as one of the foremost investigators of his day. Unfortunately for his posthumous reputation, however, his drawings were held in the Papal Library until 1714, when they were published together with notes by Clement XI's physician, Giovanni Maria Lancisi. The only contemporary publication by this superb anatomist was his little treatise on the teeth, *De dentibus*, printed in Venice in 1563. A modern translation is therefore to be welcomed. The resulting English is readable and conveys the main points clearly, although it is not aimed at a rendition that fully conveys the nuances of Eustachius' views.

Eustachius himself presents his findings forthrightly, and according to an arrangement in which he can discuss previous views about the teeth. He begins with arguments about the nature of teeth, and goes on to give a general description of their appearance, before turning to (among other topics) their size and number, location, articulation and arrangement, their roots, their material causes, their generation, the nature of the inner concavities of the teeth, their sensation, utility, unnatural formations, and decay. His knowledge is based on observations of the skeletons of "apes" (including at least one true ape), work with dogs, sheep and goats, and human dissection. His human dissections included ones on aborted and stillborn fetuses