

Book Reviews

tions of medical plants (124.1–6). It would have been clearer if these illustrative references had been separated from the testimonia proper and collected under the translation on the facing page.

In the apparatus criticus the testimonia receive inconsistent and at times misleading treatment. Often an emendation is recorded as made “after Aetius and [Galen]”; yet without their actual words, it is impossible to tell where they offer a direct quotation or a paraphrase reintegrated by the editor. Elsewhere the evidence of later citations is omitted (e.g. 112.1; 122.5, where the reading of Aetius and [Galen] is preferable to that adopted in the text and, at worst, provided the inspiration for Sideras’ emendation). Daremberg’s transposition of the title to “kidneys and bladder” may be further supported by the fact that the Arabs referred to it similarly and not, as the Greek Mss. have it, to “bladder and kidneys”, yet of this the apparatus gives not a word and the introduction, p. 69f., is misleading. As a result, this edition, which is likely to remain standard for at least as long as Daremberg’s, is less comprehensive than it at first appears, and can only be properly used with other texts open at hand and with Sideras’ 1971 Mainz *Abhandlung* available as a constant defence of emendations and disputed readings.

[FIRMICUS MATERNUS], *Ancient astrology, theory and practice. The Mathesis of Firmicus Maternus*, translated by Jean Rhys Bram, Park Ridge, N.J., Noyes Press, 1975, pp. xi, 336, illus., \$10.00.

The hopes and fears of the average man in classical antiquity are better studied from the predictions of an astrologer than from the chronicles of a historian. “What career shall I choose?” “Shall I recover from my illness?” “Whom should I marry?” The answers to such questions were found in the stars, not the archives. Even Galen believed in the influence of astral periodicities, if suitably rationalized (I.54; IX.911 K.; CMG V.10.2.2.244, 485) and Firmicus Maternus’ handbook, written c. A.D. 334, contains plenty of advice for the star-dominated invalid: Mars in Scorpio, Capricorn, Pisces or Cancer, if in opposition to the Moon, brings on impetigo, leprosy and jaundice (7.20.10).

Professor Bram has performed a useful service by making this fascinating work available in English, although the translation is not always fluent. ‘Malefic’ and ‘benefic’ are ugly and unnecessary alternatives to ‘male-’ and ‘beneficent’; ‘regularly elected consuls’ (3.3.10; 5.2; 13.9) requires more elucidation than the note on p. 304; and *campi doctores* (8.28.1) should be translated ‘drill instructors’, not ‘army doctors’.

Emperors might try to ban astrology, and philosophers despise it: Firmicus’ clients, whether high-born consuls or sweaty sewer-cleaners, knew better. Readers of *Medical History* should therefore be warned that (8.25.10) those who have the ascendant in the 30th degree of Libra will be verbose liars, inflated with fluent speech; or, if beneficent planets are conjoined, great physicians who travel much and die a violent death.

EBERHARD HERMES (translator and editor), *The ‘Disciplina clericalis’ of Petrus Alfonsi*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977, 8vo, pp. x, 203, £5.95.

In 1106 a Jewish physician and theologian from Huesca in Aragon embraced the