

Notes from the
John Martin Rare Book Room
January 2019

AULUS CORNELIUS CELSUS (25 B.C.-50 A.D.). *De medicina*. Venice: Philippus Pincius, for Benedictus Fontana, 1497 .

Aulus Cornelius Celsus was a Roman encyclopaedist, known for his extant medical work, *De Medicina*, which is believed to be the only surviving section of a much larger encyclopedia. The *De medicina* is the oldest medical document after the Hippocratic writings. It was written about 30 A.D. After the invention of printing it was still considered important, being one of the first medical books to be set up in type. Celsus has left the best account of Roman medicine; he was the first important medical historian. The manuscript of the *De medicina* was lost during the Middle Ages and rediscovered in Milan in 1443. Celsus was probably not a professional physician, and his work seems to be a compilation of the work of others, echoing the Greeks and especially Hippocrates. Nevertheless, it is an extremely able and interesting history of medicine and surgery, including descriptions of symptoms and treatment of disease as well

as descriptions of plastic surgery, goiter operations, tonsillectomies, treatment of fractures, and dental procedures. This Celsus volume is one of few volumes in the John Martin collection which has been completely digitized. <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/jmrbr/id/6326/rec/1>.



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