

Book Reviews

Rev. J. Owens discusses Aristotelian ethics and medicine.

At a time when great concern is being felt regarding the doctor's ethical relations with his patients, this excellent volume will add philosophical dimensions to the various problems he encounters.

ISAAC BARZILAY, *Yoseph Shlomo Delmedigo (Yashar of Candia)*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1974, 8vo, pp. xii, 379, illus., Dfl. 84.00.

Doctor, scientist, rabbi, philosopher, and rationalist, Yashar of Candia (1591–1655), a Cretan Jew, was compelled to wander for much of his life in Egypt, Poland, and Germany, at odds with both non-Jews and the increasingly mystical Jewish communities he visited. This biography of a universal scholar sets him in the context of early seventeenth-century scientific rationalism and rightly emphasizes the added difficulties of his Jewish predicament. Of his medical training at Padua, little is said, although recent work on Harvey, his contemporary there, would have altered the largely negative picture of university medicine there, but the short section on his practice in Poland, Holland, and Germany is illuminating on the life of a doctor in the Jewish ghettos. At Amsterdam, the large number of Jewish doctors forced him to give up medicine for a time, perhaps not unwillingly, and the harsh contract he signed in 1631 to be the Jewish communal physician at Frankfurt-am-Main does not imply much confidence in his abilities. His medical writings, including a plagiarism of Galen's commentary on the Aphorisms, are of minor importance compared with his philosophical and scientific studies; yet, as this biography shows, it was the money he made from his practice that enabled him to travel, to buy his books, and at times just to exist.

JOHANNES PETER ROHLAND, *Der Erzengel Michael, Arzt und Feldherr: zwei Aspekte des vor- und frühbyzantinischen Michaelskultes*, Leiden, Brill, 1977, 8vo, pp. vii, 156, illus., Dfl.40.00 (paperback).

This careful study traces the development of the Byzantine cult of St. Michael as warrior and as healer from its Jewish origins to the tenth century. It shows how the emphasis on Michael as the commander-in-chief of the angels, pre-figured in early apocalyptic, receives greater stress from the seventh century onwards, while his reputation as a Christian healer may derive from Jewish circles in central Asia Minor, and his power over springs may be connected via pious legend with the biblical account of the angel at the pool of Bethesda. But the evidence does not permit us to decide easily how this cult gained strength in Egypt or, *pace* Dr. Rohland, whether its appeal was any more to lower-class believers than e.g. that of SS. Cyrus and John. The snobbish Aquilinus, an imperial lawyer who came to Michael only as a last resort in his illness, would have been shocked to find himself sent by Dr. Rohland, p. 102, to a public hospital. But many interesting questions are left unresolved. Can the importance of Michael as defender against diseases be correlated with belief in illness as caused by demons? Do Michael's healing shrines represent Christian take-overs of earlier pagan cults, as with that of SS. Cyrus and John at Menuthis or St. Bartolommeo in Rome?

Lovers of the stuffed owl will be delighted to learn from the Appendix that a related continental species, *Strix Wilhelmina*, still flourishes.