

illuminated medical ideas and practices that co-existed with, challenged, and informed the more familiar classical tradition, but that are not readily apparent within the canonical texts themselves. In so doing, they have added greatly to our understanding of the complexity of medicine at Dunhuang, and of Chinese history more generally.

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**Manuela Tecusan**, *The fragments of the Methodists: Methodism outside Soranus. Volume one: Text and translation*, Leiden, Brill, 2004, pp. ix, 813, €149.00, \$197.00 (hardback 90-04-12451-9).

With this book, Manuela Tecusan provides the first edition ever (with English translation) of the fragments of the so-called Methodists. A commentary and indices should follow soon in a second volume. The Methodists were the third main medical sect or “school of thought” to emerge in the Roman era. The sect rapidly became successful in Rome, for it had charismatic leaders and, apparently, proved efficient. Nevertheless, the Methodists also received sharp criticism from more traditional doctors (the Empiricists and the Rationalists), whose claims to knowledge and efficiency were suddenly challenged by people who dropped Hippocrates and the Ancients into the dustbin of history and were believed to practise medicine after only six months’ training. Because our main source about the Methodists is Galen, who was a fierce enemy of their sect, our understanding of the Methodist doctrine is somewhat twisted. Since Galen’s view of the Methodists prevailed in early modern Europe, for many centuries they, and above all Thessalos of Tralles, have been considered sophists or dangerous quacks. Nevertheless, a few attempts were made to reconsider the Methodists’ views as early as the seventeenth century by Prospero Alpini (*De medicina methodica*, Venice, 1611), as Jackie Pigeaud’s pioneering work has shown (*Pinel. Aux portes de la psychiatrie*, Paris, 2003). For the Methodists’ conception of medicine was anything but foolish: reading recent scholarship

on the subject, it even seems that Methodism was an amazing theoretical revolution in medical history.<sup>1</sup>

Manuela Tecusan’s collection gives crucial elements for an understanding of the reasons for that success. Of course, one would need the second volume to use this precious material properly and reliably to evaluate Tecusan’s work, but the original texts and the English translation provide key insights into Methodist theories—one should insist on the fact that there were, in reality, several kinds of Methodism during the Roman period, an evolution of their concepts, and divergences from one doctor to another. This is why any attempt to reconstruct ancient Methodism through the fragments is extremely problematic, as Tecusan convincingly states in her introduction.

However, Tecusan has not checked the Greek manuscripts of the Galenic works, which have not been critically edited. The text is therefore provisional in some cases. Since many mistakes have already been detected by others, and editorial choices discussed in other reviews, I prefer here to emphasise some good conjectures that she has made in the case of an important source: Pseudo-Galen’s *Introductio sive medicus* (fr. 282–285). In fragment 3 of the *Medicus* for example, Tecusan justifiably reads συγγεγυμνασμένων instead of συγγεγυμνασμένον (this is confirmed by the manuscripts—and had also been rightly conjectured by Isnardi in a paper of 1961). However, taking fragment 2, for which Tecusan offers no less than five conjectures: in all cases, the manuscripts provide either an equivalent, or a better text than that offered by Tecusan and make her conjectures (clever as they may be) not as helpful as they appear at first sight. One fears that the same occurs in the case of the numerous fragments from the treatise *On the method of healing*, also taken directly from Kühn. This shows how crucial it is now to provide new editions of Galen and of the numerous pseudo-Galenic texts before editing fragments of ancient doctors based on Galenic material. Indeed, only a better understanding of each of those texts will help to examine accurately the passages dealing with Methodism. One may wonder about the

validity of commenting upon the treatise *On the best sect* (Tecusan's fragments 277–279), if it is, as stated by Iwan Müller over a century ago, an early modern fake. The qualifications made by the reviewer obviously aim at improving slightly a very impressive, dedicated and useful work; in any case, the details of the Greek text are of importance only to a part of Tecusan's readership, which will be wide enough, as soon as the commentary is published.

At any rate, thanks to Manuela Tecusan, the Methodists, once vilified by Galen and neglected by most of the Moderns, receive at last well-deserved attention; one is impatient to see the second volume published, in order to use the first one “according to the right method” (as Galen would say).

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<sup>1</sup> Ph. Mudry, ‘Le regard souverain ou la médecine de l'évidence’, *Les cinq sens dans la médecine de l'époque impériale : sources et développements* (Actes de la table ronde du 14 juin 2001, ed. I Boehm and P Luccioni), Paris, De Boccard, 2003, pp. 31–8 ; J Pigeaud, ‘Les fondements du méthodisme’, in *Les écoles médicales à Rome* (Actes du 2<sup>e</sup> colloque international sur les textes médicaux latins antiques, Lausanne 1986), Publications de la faculté des lettres de Lausanne, XXXIII, Genève, Droz, 1991, pp. 9–50.

**Florian Steger,** *Asklepiosmedizin: medizinischer Alltag in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Medizin Gesellschaft und Geschichte, Beihefte 22, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 2004, pp. 256, €38.00 (paperback 3-515-08415-0).

“*Asklepiosmedizin*”, the medicine of Asclepius, or Asclepius in the medical tradition, is a field of study which has been looked at from various angles—archaeology, history of medicine, Greek and Roman religion, history or cultural history of the Mediterranean just to name a few. The research of any of its various features is very complex and requires meticulous work on archaeological findings as well as a profound knowledge of the general intellectual discourse of their time.

This volume describes and contextualizes Asclepiian medicine of the Roman imperial period. It is the revised version of a PhD thesis written at the Institute of Ancient History at the University of Bochum. The book consists of five main parts, an introduction with a survey of earlier studies on Asclepiian medicine in general and an outline of the main issues; an extensive chapter on the medical marketplace in imperial Rome and the different types of medical profession, including also ritual healers; a description of the Asclepius cult and its origins; an analysis of the influence of Oriental and Greek thought on Roman culture; and a conclusion with a summary of the preceding chapters.

The book covers, within the limitations of a monograph and beyond the scope of a PhD thesis, all aspects relevant for a historical analysis of the topic. Its structure is clear and lucid and an elaborate system of references guides the reader and makes sure he or she does not get lost in details of sub-paragraphs. The intended audience is not just a minor fraction of ancient historians—where necessary, background information on less known subjects is provided, making the book accessible for scholars from other disciplines.

Changes of perspective between the main sections and also within chapters is one of the leading features of the book. The focus shifts from analysis of secondary literature to anecdotal accounts of healings, academic discourse on medical sects in antiquity and interpretation of cultural exchange in the Roman empire. Thus, it gives insight into all relevant parts and aspects of Asclepiian medicine, institutions, buildings and their setting, practices and the needs of the patients.

The central part of the volume consists of a study of three texts in which, in a broader sense, patients describe their experiences of Asclepiian treatment. Carefully avoiding the problems of retrospective diagnosis, Steger analyses the nature of the disease, the treatment applied and the setting in which it took place. He follows the only right assumption, that some dietetic measures might not be limited to a medical meaning but could also be part of a cult or a religious ritual, or, of course, common sense and