

Essay Reviews

CAELIUS AURELIANUS, *Akute Krankheiten. Chronische Krankheiten*, pt. 1: *Akute Krankheiten*, bks 1–3, *Chronische Krankheiten*, bks 1–2, ed. Gerhard Bendz, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1990, pp. 677, DM 190.00 (3–05–000351–0).

GALEN, *Sull'ottima maniera d'insegnare. Esortazione alla medicina*, ed. and transl. Adelmo Barigazzi, *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum V 1, 1*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1991, pp. 172, DM 98.00 (3–05–000745–1).

G. E. R. LLOYD, *Methods and problems in Greek science: selected papers*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. xiv, 457, £45.00, \$59.50 (0–521–37419–7).

VOLKER LANGHOLF, *Medical theories in Hippocrates: early texts and the 'Epidemics'*, *Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 34*, Berlin and New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1990, pp. 285, DM 166.00 (3–11–011956–0).

ROBERT SALLARES, *The ecology of the ancient Greek world*, London, Duckworth, 1991, pp. x, 588, £42.00 (0–7156–2339–7).

OWSEI TEMKIN, *Hippocrates in a world of pagans and Christians*, Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991, pp. xiv, 315, £28.50, \$46.00 (0–8018–4090–2).

Over the past twenty-five years, the study of the medicine of Classical Antiquity has enjoyed a boom unparalleled since the Renaissance. Conference proceedings, books, translations, and articles have appeared in profusion from Venezuela to Japan, and the classical authors themselves are now more widely available in translations for the non-linguist than ever before. In all this two connected developments stand out. The first is that among classicists the student of ancient medicine is no longer an academic oddity on the fringes of respectability. At Cambridge, Oxford, Princeton, and Yale, to name but four anglophone universities, recent appointments to major chairs in classics have gone to scholars with more than a passing interest in medical history. A passion for Pelagonius is no longer the bar to academic advancement it might have once been. By contrast, the involvement of medical men (and women) in the interpretation of ancient medical writings has diminished as a knowledge of the ancient languages becomes less common in schools and as the standards of philological analysis are set ever higher. But there are signs that this decline is being halted, and that classicists and medics are learning to cohabit successfully. As the books under review demonstrate, both groups are needed, for they have complementary skills.

At the bottom of any enquiry into the medicine of Antiquity must lie the ancient texts themselves, properly published and understood. Perhaps surprisingly, unknown medical writings are still being brought to light, usually in the medium of a medieval translation into an oriental language (Arabic, Hebrew, or Armenian), but sometimes even in their original tongue—witness, for example, the publication by Carlos Larrain of new fragments of Galen's *Medicine in the Timaeus* in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 85, 1991, 9–30. But for the most part, scholars can only re-edit treatises, many of them half-forgotten and inaccessible, and seek to improve the text through either a better knowledge of its constituent manuscripts or a surer awareness of style and contents. The end result, it must be admitted, is not always an improvement over what has gone before.

The Latin treatise *On acute and chronic diseases*, by the (fifth century AD?) African physician Caelius Aurelianus, is a major source for the medicine of the so-called Methodist school, and, in particular, of its greatest name, Soranus of Ephesus (fl. 110 AD). The last edition, by I. E. Drabkin, appeared in 1950, along with an excellent English version, and has been long out of print. The new edition in the *Corpus Medicorum* series, by the late Gerhard Bendz, comes

provided with a solid German translation by Ingeborg Pape. Its improvements over Drabkin are due to the editor's superior grasp of the complexities of late Latin (no mean accomplishment), and to his provision of a wider selection of variant readings and parallel passages. Many of his changes are felicitous, although the suggested emendation at p. 360, line 7, would involve a Herophilean going directly against the teachings of his master (cf. Herophilus, T81a, ed. Von Staden) and is for that reason unlikely. Other difficulties lurk unnoticed: the discussions of various portions of Caelius by J. T. Vallance in his *The lost theory of Asclepiades of Bithynia* (1990) show just how much of modern reconstructions of past theories may be overturned by a retranslation or a simple emendation. The new text of Caelius marks only the start of what may be a very long road to understanding. It is unfortunate that the death of the editor and the general format of the Corpus series prevented any discussion of the medical questions involved, where Drabkin still remains an essential guide.

Rather more in the way of assistance is provided by Adelmo Barigazzi in his long (Latin) introduction to two small Galenic tracts, *On the best method of instruction* and the (incomplete) *Exhortation to medicine*. Barigazzi himself had edited the former in 1966 in his *Favorino*, and his new text represents his second thoughts—mainly for the better, but not at 98.8. His text of the *Exhortation* is far superior to that of Ernst Wenkebach (1933, 1935), and owes much to the skill of an earlier editor, Georg Kaibel (1894). The lucid Italian translation is an added advantage in seeking to understand Galen's at times convoluted arguments in this pair of treatises aimed at a non-medical audience.

Barigazzi's introduction focuses on two main problems, one textual, the other contextual. By a long and careful collection of examples he shows the great depths of Galen's philosophical and literary learning, and his place in contemporary debates on education. He reveals how the *Exhortation* fits into a long tradition of such introductory pieces, and how Galen plays on his own and the audience's knowledge of that tradition. We now have Galen the literary man to set alongside the doctor and the philosopher.

Barigazzi's discussion of the manuscript foundations of the Greek text, however, is less felicitous, in part the direct result of the book's long gestation in the Berlin womb. Both treatises were printed in 1525 from a manuscript now lost, and hence scholars must place considerable reliance on sixteenth-century editions, translations, and annotations, material complex and difficult to use. Although, at a late stage in the book's production, Barigazzi was apprised of my *John Caius and the manuscripts of Galen* (1987), he was not able to draw as much profit from it as he might. His discussion of the lost "codex Adelphi" adds further weight to the suggestion that this was a printed book with marginalia, and, at the same time, argues against the identification of Adelphus with Johann Adelphus Muhling of Schaffhausen. A far more plausible candidate would be John Frere or Friar, a friend of Caius, who himself travelled in Italy and became a Fellow of the London College of Physicians. But the identity of the owner does not entirely resolve the question of the value of the readings in this "codex", and I am not as convinced as Barigazzi that some traces of a now lost Greek manuscript do not still remain. In his discussion of the relationship between Politian's lost manuscript of the *Exhortation* and the 1525 Aldine edition, Barigazzi misses the evidence that the Aldine editors used a manuscript from the library of the recently deceased Leonicensis as printer's copy. This was unlikely to have been the manuscript seen and used by Politian (add to the discussion, p. 75, the reference to ch. 9, p. 132, 14–16 in Politian's *Lamia* [of 1492], p. 11, 26–27). If in the end we learn more from this about Politian than about Galen, it also provides some of the background to the revival of the new Greek Galenism in renaissance Italy.

This is solid scholarship, well worthy of the Berlin Corpus, but, like many other volumes in that series, not as accessible as one might hope. One wonders whether, in the new political situation, it would not be a business proposition to reissue in paperback the translations (into English or German) in the series by themselves, and thereby reach a new public, both medical and non-medical.

It has been among students of ancient philosophy that the revival of interest in ancient medicine has been most marked, in part as a result of the work of G. E. R. Lloyd, who for more than a quarter of a century, since his *Polarity and Analogy* (1966), has investigated the

development of Greek ideas on medicine, philosophy, and science. By combining a broad anthropological and philosophical approach with a detailed understanding of individual ancient texts, he has broken away from many traditional interpretations of Greek science. His *Selected papers* contain some of Lloyd at his very best, whether on zoology, cosmology, or medicine. He is adroit at pointing out the limits to our understanding of fragmentary ancient sources (not least over the vexed question of the identity of Hippocrates and his writings), as well as at suggesting new problems that are capable of solution and new methods that might profitably be brought to bear. He stresses not only the continuities, e.g. on anatomical experiment or on the morality of experimentation, but also the discontinuities, often forgotten in claims for the Greeks as founding fathers of Western science.

This selection contains three previously unpublished papers; on Aristotle's zoology, Galen's Hippocraticism (further evidence of Lloyd's involvement with later Greek science), and a more general essay on the Greek invention of nature. The earlier papers are all provided with prefaces setting out the circumstances of their production and the subsequent development of the topic by Lloyd himself as well as by others. This is extremely valuable, especially when the original paper has stimulated a very lively international debate, or where Lloyd has been led to modify his own judgments. At least two of the chapters, 6 and 12, can best be characterized as more popular presentations of these argued at length elsewhere. What they lack in academic documentation, they more than make up for in their clarity, which in no way detracts from Lloyd's customary subtlety. No library with an interest in ancient medicine and science should be without this volume, and a paper-back edition, affordable by students, is greatly to be desired.

Lloyd's emphasis on the variety within early Greek medical thought is also shared by the Hamburg scholar Volker Langholf in his *Medical theories in Hippocrates*. Like Lloyd, he focuses on patterns of thought, both implicit and explicit, across the Hippocratic Corpus; methods of cognition, the definition and use of the doctrine of crises and critical days, as well as examples of scepticism and uncertainty. He concentrates mainly on *Epidemics* I–IV and VI, which he believes incorporate material used for teaching. So, for example, he interprets the famous dissection record at *Epidemics* II.5 as the result of actual instruction involving the anatomy of an animal. He is reluctant to believe in a Hippocratic (or Homeric) system of physiology, preferring instead to point to the variety of ways in which the data could be, and were, combined. This fluidity is only one of the arguments he brings against the traditional dichotomy between writings associated with Cos and those associated with Cnidos, and his conclusions only confirm the views of Smith, Thivel, and Di Benedetto on the weakness of this distinction as a premiss for investigating the Corpus. Langholf looks instead at other groups, including diviners and oracle-mongers, comparing their procedures with those of Hippocratic healers. It is unfortunate that the book's long passage through the press prevented the author from taking into account the arguments on the *Epidemics* put forward by the contributors to the 5th Colloque Hippocratique, whose proceedings entitled *Die hippokratischen Epidemien*, appeared in 1989 as a supplement to *Sudhoffs Archiv*.

Tardiness is not an accusation that can be levelled at Robert Sallares, whose *The ecology of the ancient Greek world* is a brilliant, if also infuriating, attempt to place medical history at the very centre of Greek history. He seeks an answer to a well-known problem, the size of the population of Classical Greece, and, concomitantly, the reasons for the apparently sudden and massive expansion of population in the Aegean basin between 800 and 500 BC. He does this less in order to establish the actual figures for the population than as a way towards exploring what he sees as some essential (and neglected) features of ancient Greek history. Hence, among very much else, we are treated to expositions of the demography of ancient Greece, of (universal?) patterns of animal behaviour, and of the development of types of agriculture in the Third World as well as in Greece. This is history as ecology in the widest sense, and even those who wince at the author's views on Marx and Weber, Galton and *Gaia*, the modern British university scene and Butser Farm, cannot but admire his willingness to range widely and to incorporate as much relevant material as possible. His notes and bibliography alone, 150 pages in length, will serve as a wondrous quarry for others.

Two areas are of special interest to the medical historian. Sallares examines at length the whole question of ancient Greek fertility and contraception, and argues that most modern answers are fundamentally misconceived. The carrying capacity of the land is at least as important a variable as the carrying capacity of the mother, and what little evidence there is would seem to exclude the mass exposure of unwanted children or the successful use of contraceptive methods in maintaining a stable population. Even if one accepts the argument that some ancient contraceptives did work, John Riddle's theory of a massive and largely secret network of woman-to-woman advice seems exaggerated. In its place, Sallares proposes that it was abstention, not contraception, abortion, or exposure, that kept the population at a relatively stable level in the fifth and fourth centuries. This abstention was the result of a society divided, at times legally, into a series of age-classes, with privileges appropriate to each age-group. On this theory, only certain males had the right to procreate, and hence comparisons with the demographic development of Western societies are likely to be wide of the mark.

Less controversial are Sallares' views on disease in the ancient world, to which he devotes more than seventy pages. In his desire to be comprehensive, he goes far beyond Mrko Grmek, whose *Diseases in the Ancient Greek World* (Eng. tr. 1989) covers less ground than its title suggests. He looks at heart disease as well as leprosy, trachoma as well as malaria, typhoid fever as well as STDs. He utilises the evidence of palaeopathology as well as that of ancient literary and epigraphic texts, and draws attention to neglected material on even so well-worn a theme as the plague of Thucydides (where his argument for smallpox is less convincing than he thinks). For the most part, too, he is aware of the difficulties of identifying ancient and modern diseases, and refrains from some of the wilder of recent speculations. Simply to have brought this variety of evidence together would be cause for congratulation. Inevitably, though, there are queries and doubts. The evidence is pressed unduly at times: Galen thought the Thucydidean plague was like (not "identical" with) that in his own day, and the walking problem associated by Lucretius with Achaëa is far from clearly gout. There are occasional slips: James Longrigg is credited with a view on the identity of the Thucydidean plague that he rejects, and his valuable exposition of the problem is dismissed in silence, while not all will recognize the distinguished pharmacologist who lurks under the name Kobert-Rostock. What this suggests is not that Sallares is wrong, but that his abundant suggestions need careful checking. Only then can one fully exploit the information he has provided so generously for the history of disease in antiquity. His is a remarkable achievement, but one that in its organisation and methods of argumentation is far from user-friendly.

That is not a complaint that can be levelled at Owsei Temkin, whose *Hippocrates in a world of pagans and Christians* is a model of clarity and accessibility. In it he returns, remarkably, to themes that he first discussed over sixty years ago and that, in a sense, he has been considering ever since—how and why Hippocrates and Hippocratic ideas have come to lie at the very foundation of the Western tradition of medical ethics. This is not a study of medicine, but of the fortunes of ethical ideals within one sector of society as those of society in general change around them. He focuses on two periods relatively unfamiliar to medical historians—the Hellenistic Age (the last three centuries BC) and the transition from pagan Antiquity to Christian Byzantium (roughly 250 to 550). The former saw the development of the Hippocratic legend, the latter the acceptance of Hippocratic medical ethics within a Christian society which had its own views on health and disease. In all this Temkin is very much his own man, gently and firmly reproving error, and, more importantly, lighting on topics much misunderstood or unknown.

The Hippocratic letters (and legend) have recently attracted much attention after half a century of neglect. We have now two editions, by Sakalis (Joannina, 1989), and by Wesley Smith (Leiden, 1990), the first in a Leiden series of monographs on ancient medicine, and two major studies, of the Hippocratic legend, by Jody Rubin Pinault (Leiden, 1991), and of the meeting of Democritus and Hippocrates by Thomas Rütten (Leiden, 1992). Temkin chooses to emphasise the ethical questions involved in the letters, the relationship between patriotism and the doctor's duty to the sick, the doctor's freedom, and, somewhat surprisingly, the self-

confessed inadequacy of Hippocratic priorities when confronted with the probings of the true philosopher. Yet even in apparent defeat, Hippocrates triumphs, for he has learned from Democritus and, so it is implied, incorporated what he has learned into his medicine.

Christianity was, however, different from Greek philosophy. True, in its theology and, largely, in its ethics, Hippocratic medicine was neutral, easily assimilable to Christianity, Judaism, or Islam, but its emphasis on natural, bodily health was not always compatible with a religion whose adherents could view disease as divine testing, and asceticism as a qualification for sainthood. In the accounts in the *Gospels* and *Acts*, Christianity had precedents for a truly Christian healing that was at variance as much with Hippocratic healing as with charismatic exorcists and with Asclepius cult. The later attempts of Origen and Macarius to define the healing appropriate for Christians reveal the complexities of the relationship. Temkin is right to stress the general lack of hostility to secular medicine, and his exposition of such ambiguous texts as the *Epistle* of James and the *Oration* of Tatian points to a more positive view of medicine than is usually granted. But, at the same time, these formulations could (and still do) give rise to a rejection of secular healing of the body that goes far beyond the rejection of the claims of Hippocratic medicine to treat also the mind or soul. Nor is the rise of the healing shrines of saints as unimportant, or unprecedented, as the few pages devoted to it here might suggest.

In one sense, Temkin's *Hippocrates* is Hamlet without the prince, for the victory of Galenism, so well analysed by Temkin himself in 1973, also confirmed the primacy of Hippocrates. As Lloyd shows in one of his essays, Galen's version of Hippocrates was not shared by all Hippocratics, and it was the success of Galenism in driving out alternatives that imposed the Hippocratism familiar to us today. It is relevant to note that Galen wrote a commentary on the Hippocratic *Oath*, partly edited and translated into English by Franz Rosenthal (*Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1956; repr. in *Science and medicine in Islam*, 1990), and, even more, that what survives (perhaps as much as a quarter of the whole) is concerned with it from an antiquarian rather than an ethical viewpoint. Galen's apparent failure to mention the *Oath* in the recently discovered *On examining the best physician*, and, indeed, to cite it frequently in his writings, suggests that its adoption as the universal standard of ethical practice was owed to later Galenists in the Christian centuries. This would also fit with the transformation, noted by Temkin, of other Hippocratic ideals to fit a Christian framework.

This is a wise and humane book, revealing at least as much about its author as about its subject. Abreast of modern research, it displays in a broad perspective problems of the past that are still with us today. Never dogmatic, always courteous, rarely wrong, this is a work that can be read, and reread, with pleasure and profit by classicists, philosophers, theologians, and doctors. How much Temkin and the history of ancient medicine have changed over the decades since he first wrote about it is only too apparent. His *Hippocrates* transcends the old boundaries of the discipline to incorporate religion and pseudonymity, Isidore of Pelusium as well as Agnellus of Ravenna, yet it remains faithful to his historian's creed. He challenges the doctor and his fellow scholars to think, and thereby to improve themselves and others—an enterprise worthy of Hippocrates himself.

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ROY PORTER, *Health for sale: quackery in England, 1660–1850*, Manchester University Press, 1989, 8vo, pp. xi, 280, £19.95.

As historians of medicine (and doctors) have long been aware, certified professionals have never enjoyed a *de facto* monopoly of medical practice. A long line of books has described the activities of the physicians' rivals, usually to condemn them, and we have several serviceable histories of "quackery" and "superstitious" medicine. A major limitation of these older works,