

## Book Reviews

viewpoint by the late Mirko Grmek. As he points out, *Epidemics* 5 and 7 are remarkable examples of ancient case-reporting, often giving sufficient detail to allow a precise modern diagnosis. In this respect they are in no way inferior to the more famous *Epidemics* 1 and 3, and show the Greek physician at the bedside in an extremely favourable light. Indeed, on at least one occasion a modern clinical finding about a disease allows an emendation of the text that might otherwise have escaped improvement. Both in the commentary and in the introduction, Grmek offers suggestions from his wide experience as to the particular condition under discussion, arguing, rightly, that medical documents like these need to be interpreted medically as well as philologically. Even if one does not agree with all his suggestions, they add considerably to our understanding of diseases in the ancient world.

These books also contain fragments of a wider attempt to understand the place of disease within the community. "Epidemic", suggests Jouanna, in the title means a general disease residing within a community, which can be identified by bringing together individual cases into a broader "constitution". This examines general climatic conditions and changes within the locality over a year which have an effect on the population, which in turn produces harmful changes within the individual's humours. The shared section of cases talks of "sufferers from melancholy", a rare term in the Hippocratic Corpus but here showing the gradual acceptance of this fourth humour.

These general "constitutions" are built upon a variety of cases from a number of practitioners. These books show debate going on within a group of physicians, and also with others who are travelling around Greece, just like the authors of the cases themselves. These doctors are not afraid to comment on their own mistakes, to indicate how in future they might do better; and to describe their own uncertainties when face

to face with an ill patient. They form a contribution towards prognosis, although the favoured word here is rather "prorrhesis", which incorporates also the announcement of the forecast.

Anglophone readers will have to rely on Smith's Loeb for their understanding of these two books, and, for the most part, they will not be misled. (Jouanna's criticisms are far more concerned with the deficiencies of the Loeb format than with those of Smith's own scholarship.) But those with French will be wise to turn to the Budé, for the abundance of information and judicious guidance that it contains.

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**D R Langslow,** *Medical Latin in the Roman empire*, Oxford Classical Monographs, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. xv, 517, £65.00 (0-19-815279-5).

This very welcome linguistic study of terminology in Latin medical texts is a revised and extended version of Langslow's 1991 Oxford thesis. Even if in the last thirty years interest in the study of ancient medical texts has considerably increased, works concerning medical language are still relatively infrequent.

Langslow's research is based on a corpus of four writers, namely Cornelius Celsus (first century AD), Scribonius Largus (first century AD), Theodorus Priscianus (fourth to fifth century AD) and Cassius Felix (fifth century AD). This large corpus is therefore adequate not only to establish general conclusions but also to show evolution in the use of medical language as well as stylistic tendencies in the authors.

The book is divided into six chapters. In the first one Langslow justifies the nature of the study. He gives a definition for "technical term" after examining the

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differences between such “technical terms” and everyday vocabulary. However, this general definition is modified to explain what should presently be understood under “medical Latin”. Even if there are cultural and social differences between ancient and modern medical languages, “medical Latin” will be a term used to denote a “Fachsprache”, i.e., a variety of language used by those with a special medical knowledge. This first chapter ends with an introduction to the above-mentioned four authors, including a summary of the works studied. After this extensive account, a much shorter catalogue of other medical texts is included.

The second chapter deals with lexical borrowing. With his exhaustive account of the Greek terms used by the four authors, Langslow shows that the borrowing of Greek terms is commonly overestimated, for instance, in the case of Cassius, apparently the most Hellenizing author, Greek borrowings are never more than 45 per cent of all the medical terms considered. But Greek terms are used in very different ways by the authors, and Langslow establishes a precise typology depending on the presentation of the Greek term in the text and on its integration in the technical vocabulary.

Semantic extension, phrasal terms, and compounding and affixal derivation are covered in the following three chapters. Here the results of the research show very clear distinctions among the lexical fields he distinguishes (anatomy, pathology and therapeutics); for example, specific semantic dimensions are closely related to anatomy. Concerning phrasal terms, they seem to have a basic unmarked word order. Langslow suggests that exceptions to this order may be explained by contextual or stylistic factors.

The last chapter is probably the most suggestive part of the book because it provides very interesting possibilities for the use of such semantic study. By making comparisons between the alternation of

simple technical terms with clausal expressions, Langslow goes further to deal with some syntactic features and shows how important the combination of both fields can be, above all to determine the style, nature and age of the works studied.

The author must be praised for combining the tasks of a linguist with those of a classicist. His work is therefore intended for those with knowledge both of Latin and linguistics. Nevertheless, the book and the three indexes included in the appendix will be used as an essential reference tool for future research.

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**Christine F Salazar**, *The treatment of war wounds in Graeco-Roman antiquity*, Studies in Ancient Medicine, vol. 21, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2000, pp. xxvii, 299, illus., Nlg 138.83, \$78.00 (hardback 90-04011479-3).

Attempts to examine this subject are few indeed. E Gurlt, *Geschichte der Chirurgie*, 1898, is one (a text not cited by Salazar). More well known perhaps is G Majno, *The healing hand*, 1975. Both, however, are not devoted exclusively to the treatment of war injuries, and Majno's text deals with wound therapies from Greece, China, Egypt, and India. Salazar's text, a revised version of her doctoral thesis, can be said to break new ground. It is divided into three parts. Part One examines wounds and their treatment. This is the meat of the text, and within its five chapters Salazar provides a lucid survey of the source material, the physical aspects of treatment, as well as surgical management provided by armies, experts, and laymen. Part Two is an aesthetic relief. Concentrating firstly on the *Iliad*, the wound as symbol is carefully analysed. Wounding enables the victim to attain heroic status (Alexander the Great being