

## Book Reviews

was sane when he was committed to an Austrian asylum, and he died from wounds inflicted there. Benedek argues that Semmelweis was suffering from progressive syphilitic paralysis and that he was insane when committed. Syphilis was, of course, an occupational hazard for nineteenth-century obstetricians; a high percentage of patients in maternity clinics were syphilitic and no one knew how to avoid infection. Yet Benedek's view does not explain all the facts. First, none of the recently published official documents relating to Semmelweis's disease mention that he had syphilis. This is hard to explain if, as Benedek argues, all of his colleagues understood the nature of his illness. Second, as both Benedek and Silló-Seidl point out, Semmelweis's illness and death were almost totally ignored by the medical establishments of Vienna and especially Budapest. Benedek claims that this was an effort to save the reputation of Semmelweis's family and of the University of Pest. But this is doubtful, especially given that the disease was fairly common among obstetricians.

Benedek's view is plausible but, from the available facts, Silló-Seidl's interpretation probably cannot be refuted. All Silló-Seidl's circumstantial evidence leads one to suspect that Semmelweis's relatives and colleagues were glad to put him away, whether or not they had good cause.

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FRANÇOIS LASSERRE and PHILLIPPE MUDRY (editors), *Formes de pensée dans la collection hippocratique*, Geneva, Librairie Droz, 1983, 8vo, pp. 541, [no price stated] (paperback).

Hippocratic studies are apparently flourishing. The latest volume of the proceedings of the fourth Colloque Hippocratique (Lausanne, 21–26 September 1981) contains forty-four papers, by authors from Dakar to Newcastle and from Kentucky to Romania. The decision of the organizers to restrict the theme has produced a more coherent volume, yet one that still reveals a refreshing variety of approaches to the investigation of methods of thinking in the Hippocratic writers. Three main lines of attack can be seen, the confrontation of Hippocratic writers with pre-Socratic philosophers, astronomers, historians, and even poets; philological investigation of the precise meaning of certain key terms, especially when looked at from the point of view of their linguistic development; and, finally, the use of parallels from anthropology and folk medicine. It is the last which is potentially the most fruitful, as well as the most dangerous, and not all who have essayed this enterprise are equally convincing in their conclusions. But where the anthropology and the philology are set in a firm historical context, then the results can be impressive, and Lonie's speculations on the impact of literacy on early Greek medicine are the most challenging of the whole volume. Here, a non-specialist can see the wood as well as the trees.

Yet some doubts still remain about the function of such congresses and the aim of these published papers, and it is a mark of the honesty of the organizers that the final paper is a substantial critique of many of the "formes de pensée" of the Colloque Hippocratique itself. Future conference planners should take note, if such international meetings are not to turn into introverted discussions over inessential details or the repetitive restatement of long-maintained positions. This volume is a valuable contribution to Hippocratic studies, yet it bears also the signs of an impending crisis.

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HARTMUT FÄHNDRICH (editor and translator), *Treatise to Salah ad-Din on the revival of the art of medicine by Ibn Jumay*, Wiesbaden, Steiner, 1983, 8vo, pp. viii, 49 + facsimile, DM. 75.00 (paperback).

In 1943, Dr Max Meyerhof, an eminent historian of Arabic medicine and a practising ophthalmologist, purchased in Cairo an old and nearly complete Arabic manuscript containing an unknown treatise composed by Ibn Jumay. Meyerhof had hoped to publish the Arabic text of the whole manuscript with a translation and commentary, but the untimely death of his collaborator Dr Paul Kraus, lecturer in Semitic languages at Cairo University, prevented the completion of the project. Meyerhof published an English translation of a section of the second chapter (*Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1945, 18: 169–178), in which he tells us that the manuscript, no mention of which has been found in printed catalogues and lists, was

transcribed in AD 1180, during the lifetime of Saladin himself, and probably during Ibn Jumay's life.

This manuscript is obviously different from the legible and undated manuscript on which Dr Hartmut Fährndrich has based his edition (Istanbul, Ahmet III, Topkapi Sarayı, no. 2136). Fährndrich has carefully recorded his own corrections to the text, which he divides into short passages, numbered from 1 to 154. These numbers do not exist in the manuscript, as may be judged from the illustration of fol. 219a, reproduced on p. 5.

The Arabic edition (pp. 7–49, numerals in Arabic) is followed by an index of personal names (p. 50). The introduction (pp. 1–4, numerals in English) is succeeded by the English translation (pp. 6–35), index of proper names (p. 36), references of quotations (pp. 37–38), and a glossary (pp. 39–49) in which words occurring in the text, for which English translations are provided, are arranged alphabetically according to the Arabic word-roots.

The title of this *Epistle (risala)* is not to be found in the bibliography of Ibn Jumay, given in Ibn Abi Usaybia's *Uyun al-anba*. Its subject-matter consists of the author's introductory note, followed by three chapters that deal with such material as the excellence and utility of medicine, the difficulties encountered by doctors in attaining perfection, the reasons for the almost complete decline of medicine, and finally Ibn Jumay's considered opinion of the revival of the art. He offers constructive criticism regarding the choice of eminent teachers, brilliant and trustworthy students, and the methods of examining them. He realized the importance of support by the authorities, if any progress was to be made in the art: "The first and most important ground is the princes' concern for it, and this concern is directed to three objects: first, concern for its teachers; second, concern for its students; third, concern for the examination of its practitioners".

Ibn Jumay was a well-read physician. He favoured the works of Hippocrates and Galen over those of their successors. He did not think highly of such books as Hunayn Ibn Ishaq's (Johannitius) *Questions on medicine*, al-Razi's (Rhazes) *al-Mansuri*, and Ali Ibn al- Abbas' (Haly Abbas) *Complete art of medicine*. He warned doctors against reading any of the concise books entitled *al-Kananish* (compendia) which had such alluring titles as *al-Kafi* and *al-Mughni*. Ibn Jumay quoted from Hippocrates and Galen extensively. Without mentioning any book-title, he borrows many passages (sometimes literally) from Galen's *On examinations by which the best physicians are recognized*: pp. 19 (nos. 50, 51), 20 (nos. 57, 59), 21 (no. 60), 29 (nos. 87,88), 33 (nos. 100–102), 34 (nos. 103, 104), 35 (no. 106), 36 (no. 112), 40 (no. 124), 41 (no. 125), 42 (no. 130), 43 (nos. 131, 133), 44 (no. 135), 45 (nos. 137–140), 46 (nos. 143–146), 47 (no. 147), and 48 (nos. 149, 150); he also borrows at length from Ibn Ridwan's *Useful book on the quality of medical education*: pp. 25–27 (nos. 75–83); see *Med. Hist.*, 1976, 20: 235–258; and *Revue de l'Institut des Manuscrits Arabes*, 1977, 23: 24–56.

A commentary on the text, the many quotations appearing in it traced back to their original sources (an apparatus of *similia*), and an English-Arabic index would have been desirable. Perhaps the following readings should be considered. The first of each is by Fährndrich, the second is a suggested alternative: *bahhaja*, enlivened (p. 24, no. 73,6 = p. 18, no. 73,8): *nahhaja*, drew the proper courses (the word *manhaj* or *minhaj* from the root *nahaja* means curriculum); *intaghasha*, shaky grounds (p. 25, no. 78,2 = p. 19, no. 78,2): *intaasha*, was revived; *fa-yatasaddunahu*, counteract (p. 29, no. 87,5 = p. 21, no. 87,6): *fa-yatasayyadunahu*, to hunt him (derivatives of this word [*li-tasayyudi'l-aghniya* and *li-saydi'l-aghniya* = hunting rich men] are to be found in the two manuscripts of Galen's *Fi'l-mihna allati yurafu biha afadil al-atibba* from which Ibn Jumay quotes the relevant passage); and *al-ka ina*, stems from (corrected reading for *li'l-kayna*, p. 48, no. 149,3 and margin no. 202 = p. 34, no. 149,1): *li'l-kihana*, of divination.

The great difficulties encountered in editing the text of this work from one manuscript should be remembered. One is inclined to doubt the authenticity of this *Epistle*. Ibn Jumay was an accomplished author, and would not have quoted from previous sources without giving due credit to the authors. It is possible, however, that the copyist of this manuscript omitted the titles of source-books. This problem might be resolved by the finding of Meyerhof's manuscript, and we appeal to scholars who may have access to it to declare its whereabouts. We should be grateful to Fährndrich for his Arabic edition with English translation of this long-awaited *Epistle*, which surely fills one of many gaps in the history of medicine.

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