

## Book Reviews

*Commentarius*), which is frequently mentioned in his other writings. The latter work, too, is preserved only in fragments. A long passage from the third book was initially published by Daremberg in 1848 and was subsequently edited in the *CMG* in 1934 by Schröder and Kahle. In this book Larrain demonstrates that the reading of MS. scor. graec. Φ-III-11 (Revilla 230) pp. 123<sup>r</sup> -126<sup>v</sup>, whose subject-matter is concerned with problems regarding the soul, contains some thirty-five fragments derived from the first and second books of the *Commentary*. This excerpt reveals many correspondences with the *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*. Larrain raises, only firmly to reject, the possibility that it was perhaps based on a *Timaeus* commentary by another author, who incorporated elements taken from the *PHP* (elements that the excerptor later separated out again). He points out that the excerpt contains throughout several sections statements that do not appear in this treatise and adds that correspondences with it should not in any case themselves occasion surprise because Galen, in places where he mentions his *Timaeus* commentary, himself refers to such parallels. The excerpt itself follows the thematic arrangement of the dialogue, i.e. Fragments 2–27, from the first book, are concerned with *Tim.* 42e8–46c, and Fragments 28–34, from the second, with *Tim.* 64a–e. In his commentary upon these fragments Larrain provides an impressively wide range of references to other ancient authors ranging from Homer to Chalcidius and the Arab translators. It is difficult, therefore, to understand why the medical authors are themselves accorded such extremely sketchy treatment (Galen himself and Oribasius apart), which at times diminishes the value of the commentary. To take a single example, in his discussion of those fragments (13–17) treated together by him under the general heading of ‘Das Nervensystem’, surely references to the Alexandrians, at least, would have provided valuable historical perspective?

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**Galien, *L'Âme et ses passions***, Introduction and translation by Vincent Barras, Terpsichore Birchler, Anne-France Morand, Preface by Jean Starobinski, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1995, pp. lviii, 155, FFr 130.00 (2–25–33926–4).

Galen's three ethical treatises preserved in Greek, *On the passions* and *On the errors of the soul* and *That the faculties of the soul follow the temperaments of the body*, have long commanded substantial interest beyond the circles of medical historians. Their subject matter, the control of passion, the extinction of error, and the influence of the mixtures of the bodily humours on psychic states, puts each of the works at the heart of the Ancient debate on the tasks of moral philosophy. Furthermore, Galen's methodological approach as exemplified in the first chapter of *On the errors of the soul*, continued to be an object of either approval or rebuke right into the eighteenth century. Starobinski's succinct exposition of the vicissitudes of Galenic methodology is perhaps the most original part of the book. Starobinski alludes to the major flaw in Galen's method which, as Osler had observed, was reflected in his failure to discover the circulation of the blood, notwithstanding his regular use of techniques similar to those employed by Harvey, i.e. dissection and live experiments, and his citation of water clock design as an illustration of the geometrical method. The absence of quantitative approaches in Ancient physiology, which partly accounts for Galen's failure to transport the methods of mechanical investigation to the study of the animal body, would certainly have warranted mentioning in this context.

Starobinski proceeds to discuss the attitude of the French Enlightenment to Galenic methodology (p. x). The doctors of the time were sceptical about Galen's *perfectionnements quantitatifs* (which were in fact purely qualitative sophistications—the *arithmétiser* of humoral pathology is no more “quantitative” than the numbering of critical days) *et les généralisations qu'il a voulu apporter à*

*l'ancienne théorie humorale* (p. xi), preferring the simpler Hippocratic model. Starobinski concludes that the non-Galenic systems of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries—from Paracelsus to Hahnemann—were no less speculative and dogmatic than Galenism itself, even Cartesian mechanism which, albeit discarding Galen's teleology, stuck to *constructions hypothético-déductives*.

In their introduction the authors give a brief exposition of Galen's ethics and moral psychology. According to them, Galen adopted the Stoic scheme of passions, but used the Platonic hierarchy of the parts of the soul to oppose their psychology. The authors make the interesting suggestion that, for Galen, the tripartition of the soul is paralleled by similar patterns in anthropology (p. xxxvii). However, they are not clear about the relationship between errors and passions in Galen, failing at times to make the distinction between the two meanings of ἀμάρτημα, i.e. error deriving from a failed exercise of rational judgement and error in the more general sense, including those failures of rational judgement which result from its subordination to passion (V,2f. Kühn).

By reducing the punishment of wrongdoers to a purely legal issue, the authors avoid the question whether physiological determinism and morality can be reconciled. This represents one side of the ambiguity pointed out by Starobinski (p. xxvi): determinism can be used as a means of excuse, as for medieval sufferers from melancholy accused of being sorcerers, but likewise to justify harsh punishments required to rid the *corps social* of incorrigible wrongdoers. It would still have been useful for the general reader to be given references to the Stoic attempts at reconciling fate and morality (e.g. Cicero, *On fate*, 39 ff. and Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, VII, 2).

The translations are readable and reliable, only that τὰ δις δύο τέτταρα εἶναι (V, 59 Kühn) ought to be *que deux fois* (and not *et deux font quatre* (p. 44). These treatises had been made accessible in French before (by van der Elst in 1914 and Daremberg in 1854, respectively). The present translators, however,

had more recent critical editions at their disposal and found an eminent historian of ideas to persuade a broader public to take an interest not only in Galenism, but also in Galen's own writings, which laid the foundation for one and a half millenia of science and scholarship. This fortunate combination makes their book an important contribution to the popularization of Galenic studies.

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**Olav Thulesius, *Nicholas Culpeper: English physician and astrologer***, New York, St Martin's Press, 1992, pp. xi, 210, illus., £45.00 (0-312-07543-X).

Nicholas Culpeper was born in 1616 and raised in Sussex. He was sent to Cambridge intended for the Church but had to leave when he attempted to elope with an heiress, an adventure that came to a tragic end when the girl was killed by lightning. He was then apprenticed to a London apothecary but he chose not to become a Freeman of the Society of Apothecaries. Instead he settled in Spitalfields where he practised medicine describing himself as a student of physic and astrology. The contemporary profession regarded him as a credulous astrologer and quacksalver.

Culpeper was an unorthodox practitioner of medicine but his prolific writings reflect the orthodox medicine of his time. He had a command of Greek and Latin and he translated the books of a number of European medical writers, his aim being to provide the English with "the whole Model of Physick in their Native Language". He was viciously attacked for his translation of the *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis*. This, the official formulary compiled by the College of Physicians, was intended for the welfare but not the information of the common people.

This book by Olav Thulesius is the first modern full length biography of Culpeper. The author reviews the writings and observes that if we remove the shell of mystical astrology a core