

myrtle. Ibn Butlan composed his text in Baghdad, a generation before Ibn Baklarish produced his in Spain, so we have a near contemporary comparison between two geographically remote sources. Both texts share some structural features, but have little in common when it comes to details. Similar comparisons are then made, again with reference to myrtle, with al-'Ala'i's *Kitāb Taqwīm al-adwiya al-mufrada* and al-Tiflisi's *Kitāb Taqwīm al-adwiya al-mufrada wa-l-aghdiyya*. The most interesting results, however, come from the final comparison with Maimonides's *Sharḥ Asmā' al-'uqqār*, where a closer relationship is apparent, suggesting that Maimonides made use of Ibn Baklarish's earlier work or that they both shared a common source. Savage-Smith asks whether it is a coincidence that the only clear evidence for Ibn Baklarish's influence on later writers occurs in the work of another Jewish scholar. Was his work primarily circulating within the Jewish community?

In the final chapter, Anna Contadini asks how the medicines derived from animals that occur in the *Kitāb al-Musta'īn* compare with those in contemporary literature, specifically the *Kitāb Manāfi' al-ḥayawān* of Ibn Bakhtishu'. After discussing the structural differences between the two works, she moves on to more specific issues such as whether the animal parts are said to have the same properties, methods of preparation, uses, etc. In the specifics, there is a striking degree of difference, once again, between the two works. Finally, the sources used by Ibn Bakhtishu' and Ibn Baklarish are compared, and, not surprisingly, the only common sources are Aristotle, Galen and Dioscorides. Caution is advised by Contadini, however, against concluding that the differences between the two works are due to the existence of two geographically distinct schools or traditions, as there is sufficient evidence for mobility among physicians in this period.

The book ends with a useful bibliography, an index, and fifty-two excellently reproduced colour plates of the manuscript (in addition to

the numerous colour plates that occur throughout the volume).

Inevitably in a multi-authored work such as this, there are some apparent points of contention. For example, will readers agree with Labarta, who states that "Ibn Baklarish was both original and comparatively modern in the way in which he collected the material . . . and arranged it in tables that facilitate quick consultation" (p. 23)? Or, in the light of Savage-Smith's reference to the probable earlier use of tables in the 'Alexandrian Summaries', will they think that Labarta slightly overstates the case? Perhaps more importantly, will Savage-Smith's intriguing conclusion regarding the influence of Ibn Baklarish within the Jewish community prove to be more persuasive than Wasserstein's attempt to diminish Ibn Baklarish's Jewish identity? In both cases, I find myself inclined to agree with Savage-Smith.

As each article is self-contained, there is a fair bit of repetition, especially in the introductory sections (compare, for example, pp. 15, 27, 43 and 95) but sometimes in other respects as well (see pp. 27–31 and 47–9). Overall, however, this is a delightfully well-produced and informative volume that will bring great pleasure to the present reviewer for many years to come. It serves as a paradigm for how such manuscripts should be brought to the attention of both the wider scholarly community and the general public and, for this, the publishers are to be congratulated.

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Bronwen L Wickkiser, *Asklepios, medicine, and the politics of healing in fifth-century Greece: between craft and cult*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008, pp. xiii, 178, £29.00, \$55.00 (hardback 978-0-8018-8978-3).

The cult of the healing god Asklepios was immensely successful in antiquity. Wickkiser

here examines the rapid development of his cult in the fifth century BC. At the centre of her reflection is a rejection of dichotomies such as rational versus irrational, church versus state, and public versus private, which have dominated scholarship since the publication of the monumental work of Emma and Ludwig Edelstein (*Asclepius*, Baltimore, 1945).

The first section (chapters 1 to 3) tackles the rational–irrational dichotomy. The cult of Asklepios has often been considered as “irrational” when compared to contemporary, “Hippocratic” medicine. Wickkiser maintains that “medical healing” (healing whose efficacy was explained without reference to divine intention) existed in Greece since at least the Bronze Age, but that in the fifth century it became more clearly defined as *iatrike*, a skill (*techne*) acquired through training. Central to the definition of *iatrike* was the recognition of its limits, by which doctors had to abide: there were ailments physicians could not treat. The rapid expansion of Asklepios’ cult seems to be directly related to the written recognition of the limits of *iatrike*. Asklepios’ healing methods were very similar to those of mortal physicians (drugs, diet and surgery), but the god specialized in the treatment of those “chronic” ailments judged untreatable by mortal physicians. Thus, the cult of Asklepios and medicine complemented each other in a spirit of collaboration rather than competition.

In the second section (chapters 4 to 6), Wickkiser disputes the idea whereby the cult of Asklepios was a private affair, functioning apart from politics. She centres her argument on the importation of Asklepios to Athens from Epidaurus (420 BC). She suggests that beyond the plague at Athens (430–426 BC), there were other important reasons for this importation—reasons related to the Athenian state and its imperialism. Asklepios at Athens found himself linked to two other gods: Eleusinian Demeter and Dionysus Eleuthereus, both topographically (the temple of Asklepios was situated next to that of Dionysus on the slope of the Acropolis) and by cult. Indeed, the festivals in honour of Asklepios (the *Asclepeia* and *Epidauria*)

coincided with the City Dionysia and the Eleusinian Mysteries—two major Athenian festivals that celebrated Athens’ position at the centre of a vast empire. Moreover, Asklepios’ cult was imported in the context of the Peloponnesian War from Epidaurus, a place of significant strategic importance in the Peloponnese. By doing so Athens may have attempted to bring Epidaurus under its political control. There was clear civic interest in the cult.

I have enjoyed reading this work enormously, and would recommend it to anyone seeking a short introduction to Asklepios, or to anyone teaching a course on ancient medicine or ancient “religion”. The range of material examined by Wickkiser is most impressive; her style is concise and fluid; her argument convincing. I do, however, object to her use of the word “epilepsy” to designate the ancient “sacred disease”, and question her designation of the ailments treated by Asklepios as “chronic” (the adjective *chronikos*, used to qualify diseases, appears quite late in ancient medical literature). I also wonder whether patients consulted Asklepios after a long period of time (p. 59) not only because they had sought the help of other healers, but also because they felt shame in their condition (the authors of the Hippocratic gynaecological treatises deplore the feelings of shame of their female patients). Nevertheless, these minor criticisms only distract me from my conclusion: do read this book!

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R J Hankinson (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Galen*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. xxi, 450, £45.00, \$85.00 (hardback 978-0-521-81954-1), £17.99, \$29.99 (paperback 978-0-521-52558-9)

This volume is among the most important, not to say useful, volumes that Cambridge University Press has produced. Galen is a