vigorous athletics; his slight women take passive exercise on a swing.

This is an ambitious book, and some may find its chronological and geographical scope over-ambitious, for it is hard at times to follow the author as he moves from scholastic professors in medieval Paris via Counter-Reformation confessors to Robert Burton and even the French Enlightenment. There is great learning on display, as in the Appendix of European terms for "recreation", but the argument becomes at times dangerously abstract. A discussion, for example, of the role of exercise in the *consilia* for individual patients, many easily available in print, would have clarified the extent to which general theoretical recommendations were applied in practice. Likewise, Richard Mulcaster's takeover into English of Mercuriale's views on gymnastics needs to be correlated with other evidence for the introduction of "games" into English schools from the late sixteenth century onwards.

Vivian Nutton,
The Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at UCL

Konstantinos Kapparis, *Abortion in the ancient world*, London, Duckworth, 2002, pp. viii, 264, £40.00 (hardback 0-7156-3080-6).

Abortion is one of the most controversial subjects in contemporary society, demonstrably capable of generating the fiercest passions (arguments concerning stem-cell research are a reflection of part of the wider abortion debate). One of the merits of this book is to remind us that the arguments are not new, "but rather the latest manifestations of an old, inconclusive debate that started thousands of years ago and still continues today" (p. vii). Konstantinos Kapparis' twofold intention, admirably fulfilled, is to examine the link between the ancient and modern views on abortion, and to show how the subject might "shed further light upon important legal, religious, political and cultural aspects of the ancient world" (p. vii). There are seven chapters and two useful appendices. The first is a translation and commentary of Pseudo-Galen's *An animal sit quod est in utero*; the second, of the Philadelphia Inscription (*LSA* 20) and its relationship to the Hippocratic Oath. There is an index of ancient authors and of topics. The bibliography is unfortunately marred by mistakes in several authors' names. Thus "Dreichgräber" instead of Deichgräber; "R.T". Hankinson, for R.J; "Minuli" instead of Manuli; "Murdy" for Mudry; "Prioreeschi" instead of Prioreschi (and Elizabeth Craik's edition of Hippocrates' *Places in man* was published by OUP in 1998, not "London 1988.")

Abortion drew upon all aspects of Greek and Roman medical practices. Chapter 1 discusses the methods of abortion, including drugs, mechanical and surgical means, ancillary techniques (such as venesection, hot baths and strong emotional shock, all designed to weaken the physical condition of the mother and so induce labour), and the use of magic. When does human life begin? What is the status of the embryo? Do the unborn have rights? Chapter 2 examines these profound questions, which take us to the heart of the abortion debate. Kapparis shows that, as now, there were no settled answers to these questions in Antiquity, and notes that the notion of human life beginning from conception had its original in Pythagorean thought (pp. 39–41). On the other hand, many philosophers and learned doctors such as Galen propounded a more widespread view. They "might not even call it an 'abortion' if a termination had taken place in the very early stages of the pregnancy, while the foetus was still unformed. They would not recognise as human something which did not yet look human" (p. 47). As Kapparis goes on to point out, the distinction between an unformed and formed foetus is also to be found in Exodus 21: 22–4, a passage ignored, deliberately or otherwise, by most (but by no means all) of the Church Fathers.

Chapter 3 looks at the role of the doctor and the midwife, and if Kapparis perhaps attaches too much importance to the Hippocratic Oath in antiquity, he at least places the Oath's injunctions in their social and cultural context. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the debate from, respectively, the female and male viewpoint. Chapter 6 offers an

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excellent discussion on abortion and the law, concluding that the reason behind the Severus–Caracalla rescript declaring abortion illegal (but not a capital offence) was not due to a shift in biological or ethical thinking but a matter of demography. There was a perception that the Roman way of life was under assault from the alien cultures within and the barbarians without. Increasing the number of Romans became a priority. Chapter 7 offers a judicious conclusion, reminding us that "in practice abortion has been an act that has little to do with high principles, and much to do with compelling circumstance" (p. 199). Konstantinos Kapparis has provided an excellent treatment of an important subject, and has shown clearly how the views of Antiquity both define and continue to influence contemporary debate. To anyone with even the slightest interest about this subject, this book is strongly recommended.

Julius Rocca,
Center for Hellenic Studies, Washington, D.C.

M S Valiathan, *The legacy of Caraka*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 2003, pp. lxxxvi, 634, Rs 550.00 (hardback 81-250-2505-7). Distributed in UK by Sangam Books Ltd, 57 London Fruit Exchange, Brushfield Street, London E1 6EP.

The legacy of Caraka is an ambitious "retelling" of the *Caraka-saṃhitā*, the earliest extant Sanskrit medical manual dating from the early to mid-second century CE. M S Valiathan, a western-trained cardiologist, provides us with a reorganized version of the text in which he has rearranged and condensed the material found in all eight *sthānas* ("sections") of the Sanskrit original. He has organized the material according to theme. In his introduction, Valiathan properly highlights the philosophical and religious eclecticism of the *Caraka-saṃhitā*, emphasizing its non-dogmatic nature. The text's author, Caraka, most likely a physician at the court of Devaputra Kaniṣka, a second-century king of the Kushan empire, was, as Valiathan writes, not a "passive borrower of ideas, and in this case whatever was borrowed, underwent a transformation in his mint" (p. ii).

Though generally a very useful book, the introduction is marred by moralizing fabulations (pp. xv–xvi). Valiathan also strains to establish a continuity of tradition from the much older *Atharva-veda*, which delineates a medicine that is largely based on the deployment of *mantras* and the bestowing of amulets, up through Caraka's text. He writes of *Atharvan* "echoes" in the *Caraka-saṃhitā*, but "echoes" by nature are interpretively suggestive. Valiathan also states that the *Atharva-veda* "anticipates" the *tridoṣa* (or "trihumoral") system of Caraka, but does not provide us with any textual evidence or "proof" to enforce this point of view. But that said, Valiathan includes in his introduction a most useful discussion of diseases, and by systematically plotting the recurrence of the names of disorders in Caraka's text, he attempts to reconstruct the "epidemiologic scene . . . in Caraka's period through the mist of twenty centuries" (p. xlvi). Fever, of course, wins.

The book is strewn with many observations—some of them quite insightful—that speculate on major *āyurvedic* theories (particularly on *tridoṣa* and *vega*, or "urge") and how they may be thought about in terms of western medical science. As long as we remain solidly in the realm of analogy and do not wander into the problematic realm of correspondence, such speculations are useful, and can serve to deepen a reader's understanding of how these theories "work" in a physiological sense.

Valiathan's section on *rasas* ("tastes") is particularly good, and the tables that he provides are of great value (e.g. Table 16.1, pp. 107–8, which lists food incompatibilities). He has also chosen to condense the more unwieldy and elaborate portions of the *Caraka-saṃhitā*, but he never does so without alerting readers to the fact. His "digests" are made with great care—Valiathan never sacrifices the underlying logics and principles prevailing in these portions; in fact, they shine through a bit more clearly than in the original text precisely *because* of his condensations. The words of modern science and medicine do creep in now and then—"ova", for instance—and translators as well as the new

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