

advice that ‘there is little point in... attempting to identify Akkadian words with modern medical terminology’ (p. 12), Fincke routinely equates ancient symptom descriptions with Latinate, bio-medical terms. Similarly, Barbara Böck’s ‘On Medical Technology in Ancient Mesopotamia’ (pp. 105–128) groups (translated) snippets of ancient instructions on preparing medical treatments under headings such as ‘maceration’ and ‘decoction’ as if the latter were ahistorical phenomena.

In the final chapter, Paul Demont debates ‘L’Ancienneté de la Médecine Hippocratique: Un Essai de Bilan’ (pp. 129–149). This has relevance insofar as possible Babylonian influence on some strands of the Hippocratic corpus have recently been debated, as Geller explains (p. 6), but the author himself does not address Mesopotamian medicine at all.

In short, this work is a mixed bag. But it demonstrates that Assyriology is finally becoming increasingly receptive to, and willing to engage with, the mainstream of medical history.

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[Galen], *Galien, Tome III: Le médecin: introduction*, Caroline Petit (ed. and trans.), Collection des Universités de France (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2009), pp. cxl + 232, €69.00, paperback, ISBN: 978-2-251-00555-3.

Le médecin: introduction is Volume 3 in the Budé series of Galen’s works, the fifth volume to be published. It is not by Galen, although nothing on the book’s cover or title-page distinguishes it from Galen’s genuine works; one must read the Introduction to learn the editor’s view on its authenticity. Like the *Definitiones medicae*, *Le médecin* (its usual title in Latin is *Introductio sive medicus*) is a pseudepigraphic work of ancient date, probably produced by a contemporary or

rough contemporary of Galen, that circulated widely in the mediaeval period because of its convenient didactic form. All manuscripts name Galen as the author, but the text was ruled inauthentic by the editors of the first printed edition of Galen’s complete Greek works, the Aldine edition of 1525 (Petit, pp. cxix–cxx), and published among the pseudo-Galenic works. Petit concurs with this verdict and discusses its stylistic and doctrinal basis (pp. xxxvi–xli). Among doctrinal arguments, the treatise is noteworthy for its neutral treatment of the Methodist sect, which Galen virtually never mentions without contempt.

That the treatise appears to be nearly contemporary with Galen but does not cite him invites the hypothesis that it is a forgery, perhaps the same forgery Galen refers to in a story from *On my own books* – he witnessed an argument between a man who had bought a book called *Iatros* (‘The Doctor’) falsely ascribed to him, and another, familiar with Galen’s work, who denounced it as a fake after hearing the opening sentences. Petit, cautious here as throughout, reviews the arguments and notes that no evidence can prove or disprove the identity of the *Introductio sive medicus* with the treatise in the story (pp. xlv–xlix). Similarly, while many references to Egypt (including a brief mention of the practice of female circumcision) suggest an Egyptian provenance, these references are mostly literary in nature, cite information attested elsewhere in Greek sources, and are far from conclusive proof (pp. l–li).

Because of the treatise’s antiquity and influence on the history of medicine, a modern critical edition has long been desirable. No edition has been published since that of Kühn in 1821, which essentially reprinted the seventeenth-century text of René Chartier. Petit considers over forty manuscripts dating from the twelfth to the eighteenth century, and an ancient Latin translation of Chapters 16–20. No Syriac or Arabic translation survives or is attested. Two substantial late (Byzantine or Arabo-Byzantine) insertions are identified,

printed (in square brackets) and discussed: especially noteworthy is the expansion in Chapter 13 of the text's original discussion of elephantiasis (pp. lxix–lxxvi and 69–70 with notes), a disease entity that, in antiquity, was closely analogous to modern leprosy. The late expansion reflects a more wide-ranging conception of elephantiasis.

The text is of composite nature although probably, as Petit argues in consensus with most predecessors, the work of a single author (pp. lxv–lxix). It begins with a catechism (answers to neophyte questions, starting with 'How was medicine discovered?') and progresses to jejune outlines – little more than lists at times – of medical subjects. Its content can be divided into three main sections: the nature and history of the art of medicine; anatomy and physiology; and pathology and therapy (p. xvii). Petit's introductory section (Notice) addresses the place of the treatise in ancient medical–pedagogical ('isagogic') literature; its doctrinal stance; its date and authorship; its composition; and the history of the text. Appendices to this section print the prologues associated with each of the two manuscript families and compare the chapters attested in each of them.

Petit's text, translation and commentary are thorough, accurate and sagacious, and I noticed no mistakes or omissions. Anglophone scholarship is well-represented in the bibliography. While we learn nothing revolutionary about ancient medicine from Petit's introduction and notes, she provides us with a scholarly tool of the highest quality.

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Gary B. Ferngren, *Medicine and Health Care in Early Christianity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), pp. xiv + 246, £18.00/\$35.00, hardback, ISBN: 978-0-8018-9142-7.

Gary Ferngren's excellent and thought-provoking work is an invitation to reconsider some ideas about early Christianity and its relation to medicine that we have too long taken for granted. His main arguments are the following: Christianity was not a religion of healing, which means that Christ's miracles did not aim to heal people (like Asclepius), but were signs to attest his divine nature. Miraculous healing (and miracles in general) was not common among Christians during the first to third centuries CE. A sick Christian turned to physicians and not to magical–ritual–religious healing. Christian theological and practical philanthropy led to non-medical care for the sick, poor and distressed. With charity and organisation and money, Christianity led to organised (still non-medical) urban health care.

Chapter 2 focuses on the approaches to Greek medicine and physicians of the second-century apologists (Tertullian, Origen, Tatian and Arnobius) traditionally regarded as hostile to medicine. Ferngren reassesses these attacks either as exceptions, or as referring to particular cases, and by no means typically Christian. In favour of Christians' high valuation of medical practice he lists its popularity as an analogy for the healing of the soul, together with the naturalistic aetiology of diseases probably shared by most sick people, pagan or Christian. One could object that attributing an illness to natural causes would not deter the sick person from turning to healing deities or other ritual healing practices. Similarly, when it comes to the versatile and varied class of healing professionals, turning to any of them does not always reflect the patient's aetiology of his own disease, but often depends on availability, the advice of others, the healer's fame and popularity, the patient's financial means, or his possibilities of travel. What facilitated the embrace of medicine by Christians, in Ferngren's view, was the fact that, unlike Greek philosophy, 'medicine, like natural philosophy, could be detached from its pagan framework with relative ease' (p. 40). Chapter 3 emphatically argues against 'the thesis that early Christian sources ascribed all illness to demonic