

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!

Laurence Totelin,
University of Cardiff

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

sleeping giant among ancient authors, taught to few students in Classics departments; distinguished with great difficulty from the Galenic tradition by medical historians; and largely off the radar of the general public, who might recognize the name but go to Ayurvedic or Chinese medicine if in search of an alternative system to biomedicine. Vivian Nutton observes: “To describe the fortunes of Galen over the centuries is almost to write the history of medicine since his death” (p. 355). Thanks to library and online resources “a scholar is now in a far better position to understand Galen, and Galen’s opinions, than at any time since Galen’s own day”(p. 358). So what can a reader do?

I mentioned the volume’s utility, a key idea in Galen’s own thought world. First, Appendix 1 sets out the works of Galen in Kühn’s vulgate edition (with Latin translation) and beyond, with their conventional Latin titles, abbreviations and editions. A second appendix lists English titles and translations into vernacular languages. Once we know what Galen wrote, whether there is a translation from the Greek, Latin and/or Arabic and what the basic bibliography is (pp. 405–33), we can turn to the contributors for summary guidance. Julius Rocca explains how Galen used anatomy as “the hallmark of the complete physician”; but “even at its peak, anatomy did not invariably lead either to a better understanding of the function of the body nor to improvements in medical practice” (p. 257). On physiology, Armelle Debru concludes that Galen prefers to base claims on anatomy rather than cosmic and spiritual considerations, which are difficult to prove (for example, the soul exists but its substance is uncertain). “The accounts thus become nuanced, complex and plausible only, with shades of meaning which the subsequent tradition of a rigid, dogmatic Galenism has served to erase” (p. 281). Galen’s therapeutics, Philip van der Eijk observes, has “never received anything remotely aspiring to a comprehensive scholarly treatment” (p. 283). Yet Galen brings to patient care “systematicity . . . comprehensiveness, [and] . . . theoretical

and conceptual sophistication” (p. 300). Again, further research for the reader. On more invasive treatment, Sabine Vogt reviews Galen’s pharmacology, which tried to identify a drug’s impact on humoral balance “with no exact method to measure simple biological facts [such] as temperature, much less any biochemical analysis” (p. 317). In the face of contradictory evidence, Galen developed his trademark system of logical argument based on empirical evidence: Teun Tieleman reviews his ambiguous relationship with the rival medical theories of the Empiricists and others. Similarly, Geoffrey Lloyd shows that Galen’s arguments with his contemporaries are sometimes dismissive (43 Atomists), but at other times indicate partial (sometimes silent) assimilation of the work of others. On psychology, Pierluigi Donini takes on *PHP* and *QAM* (two of those enigmatic abbreviations of Latin titles), concluding that Galen is not as clear as he might be on the implications of following a Platonic model of the soul (against the Stoics); and that Galen does not fully engage with what his predecessors had established. Jim Hankinson, the editor, takes on the key matters of Galen himself, his bibliobiographies, his epistemology and his theory of nature. These are given masterly treatment: Galen is perhaps too confident about what can be known empirically but at least concedes that much is unknowable. On nature, everything from bread to the humours and the cosmos is discussed concisely and authoritatively. Ben Morison and Rebecca Flemming lucidly discuss his logic, language and scholarly commentaries, areas as integral to Galen’s work as his empirical studies.

John Wilkins,
University of Exeter

Christopher S Mackay, *The hammer of witches: a complete translation of the Malleus maleficarum*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 657, £17.99, \$29.99 (paperback 978-0-521-74787-5).