

## Book Reviews

version goes dangerously astray: in ch.9, the Elders (*sic*) are not a specific group but merely older physicians as contrasted with the youthful Galen. Yet, given the editor's unfamiliarity with Greek and with the institutions of the Greek world, such errors of English translation are remarkably few, and the alert Galenist will be able with a little thought to work out the words of Galen that lie behind the double translation. The editor would, however, have been better advised not to attempt a commentary single-handed, for his notes are full of error and rarely deal with the major problems raised by this new text: e.g. p. 143, the kings are not the Asclepiads, but such as Attalus III; 144, Hippocratic texts from the fifth century BC hardly attest the decline of medicine in Rome; 161, the note on 84.13, taken over from De Lacy's commentary on CMG V.4,1,2,282, is irrelevant since the Greek word elucidated does not appear in the Hippocratic quotation under discussion. In place of this weak commentary, it would have been better to have had a more detailed discussion of the role of this and similar treatises in the Arabic world: cf. Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam*, p. 53, for a late allusion in the *hisba* literature. Yet, in the final analysis, these criticisms are more than counterbalanced by Dr Iskandar's great services in bringing this important text to light, and in making it accessible to those students of Galen who lack Arabic. Without his labours, they would not be able to take issue once more with Galen at his most infuriating.

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PAUL POTTER, *A short handbook of Hippocratic medicine*, Sillery, Québec, Les Éditions du Sphinx, 1988, 8vo, pp. 60, illus., [no price stated], (paperback).

In this student guide, Potter provides brief English summaries and even shorter bibliographies of the individual works in the Hippocratic Corpus, and an exposition of the most notable features of Hippocratic medicine. He passes quickly over questions of authenticity, adopting the view that the Corpus is an accumulation of varied material. His order of analysis goes back ultimately to Erotian in the first century AD, and thus reflects an ancient classification. One may wonder what Galen had to say about this in his *On the genuine and spurious writings of Hippocrates*, which is now lost but which was translated in the ninth century by Hunain ibn Ishāq and by his son Ishāq.

Limitations of space in the second part prevent Professor Potter from making more than an allusion to the contemporary background of the Corpus, and to medical ideas and terminology in authors such as Homer or Euripides. His outlines of the fundamentals of Hippocratic "scientific" (better, "rational") medicine deal with theory, practice, and the medical profession, and show clearly the interaction between medicine (health and disease) and man (patient and practitioner). Where space is so evidently at a premium, it is curious to find, in a work avowedly for students, two pages reproducing texts in Greek, a Renaissance Latin chart of the constituents of the body, and the title-page of the first Greek edition (1526). More of Professor Potter's own ideas, or a more generous bibliography, would have been preferable.

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F. ROSNER (trans. and ed.), *Maimonides' Commentary on the Aphorisms of Hippocrates*, vol. 2, *Maimonides' medical writings*, Haifa, The Maimonides Research Institute, 1987, 8vo, pp. xv, 218, \$14.95 + \$2.00 p&p from the North American distributor, Israel Book Shop, Inc., 410 Harvard St., Brookline MA 02146, USA.

This translation provides the first rendering into English of Maimonides' commentary on the *Aphorisms of Hippocrates* and is based on Muntner's Hebrew edition published in Jerusalem in 1961. This edition is itself based on the translation of Moses ibn Tibbon, preserved in Munich Ms. 275, translated from the original Arabic in 1268 and transcribed in 1583. The two extant Arabic manuscripts, various Hebrew translations of Moses ibn Tibbon and an anonymous translator, whose identity is suggested, and various printed editions are discussed in a short but useful bibliographical section which is followed by notes on the content and an analysis of the commentary.

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The commentary itself gives an interesting insight on medical thought and practice during the late twelfth century. The unrivalled position of Hippocratic medicine is evident from Maimonides' statement in his introduction that "these are the aphorisms which every physician, and even non-physician should know by heart". Seven sections follow containing various Hippocratic aphorisms, some of which Maimonides refrains from commenting on, some he states to be clear, some he elaborates on and explains, while he disagrees with a few and takes issue with Galen for justifying Hippocrates since although "one of the greatest of physicians, the justification of misstatements, even of a great man, is not admirable". For example, in section 4: 48 Maimonides contradicts Galen's explanation of Hippocrates' prognosis of imminent death when a patient displays symptoms of uninterrupted fever with the body externally cold and internally burning and also has a thirst. He contradicts Hippocrates' aphorism concerning intestinal disorders (section 2: 20) and states that Hippocrates makes generalizations from one or two examples, a point he repeats on several occasions. It can be clearly seen from comments like these that Maimonides had an independence of mind on clinical observation and logical deduction.

Here and there the odd typographical error crops up. The translation is, however, lucid and readable with useful notes and comparisons with the Talmud which will be of much value to those without access to this work in its original language or Hebrew.

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HOWARD CLARK KEE, *Medicine, miracle and magic in New Testament times*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, 55, Cambridge University Press, 1988, 8vo, pp. x, 175, £10.95/\$12.95, (paperback).

This paperback reprint of a book first published in 1986 offers a comparative study of Jewish, New Testament, and pagan attitudes towards medicine, miracle, and magic. The result, however, is profoundly unsatisfactory.

The tripartite division of healing, originally a purely heuristic device, soon takes over the narrative, and the fluid boundaries, particularly between magic and miracle, are quickly forgotten. Major topics, such as the relationship between sin and disease, are barely noticed, save for the Old Testament, while the crucial passage in the Epistle of James, 5, 13–16, receives a mere two lines. Kee is at his best in dealing with the Jewish evidence, where he can exploit new discoveries to go beyond the older survey of Preuss; his comments on Christian texts are strangely jejune; while his acquaintance with pagan authors is sketchy. Errors abound. The shrine at Cos has a full-scale operating theatre, benches, instruments and all (p. 70); Dioscorides (41) writes a medical encyclopaedia known as the *Greek Herbal*; the date of Celsus is out by a generation, that of Rufus by two. Secondary sources are often misunderstood. Garcia Ballester's careful exposition of Galen's rational medical conjecture is misrepresented (57); and Dioscorides is claimed as part of the imperial establishment (46). The account of Rufus (47–55) is marred by an uncritical acceptance of the authenticity of all the cases in the *Krankenjournal*. Misprints and wrong citations abound, not least in the bibliography, where the remarkably good selection of texts in A. J. Brock's *Greek medicine* is only the most conspicuous omission.

Oddest of all is the Appendix. In the 1986 edition, this contained Charlesworth's publication and translation of a new healing text from Qumran. In this edition, although it is cited on p. 47, and the reader is referred to the Appendix for further discussion, it has been replaced by some Jewish magical texts from the Christian period, taken from a more accessible publication. No reason for the change is given, and (p. 150) the notes to the old Appendix still remain.

This is a significant loss, for the Qumran text was far more relevant in date and in subject to the overall theme of the book, and was far from easy to locate otherwise. This botch-up has robbed this revision of what was, to this reviewer, the most valuable feature of its predecessor. A few good things still are to be found, but the reader must be constantly on guard against many unjustified statements.

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