

Book Reviews

PAOLA MANULI, and MARIO VEGETTI, *Cuore, sangue e cervello: biologia e antropologia nel pensiero antico*, Milan, Episteme Editrice, 1977, 8vo, pp. 248, L.12,000.

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This interesting and provocative book tries to set Greek ideas down to Aristotle on the heart, blood, and brain as the source of life within their general social and philosophical context, and to provide them with an anthropology. To do this, the authors employ a series of theoretical antinomies—e.g. heart/brain, technician/prophet, democrat/oligarch, experience/intuition, sensation/intellect—some of which are more convincing than others. However, the traditional and unsatisfactory dichotomy between Coan and Cnidian medicine still lingers on, and there is little attempt to see whether there is any development over time in any of the ideas in the Hippocratic Corpus. Where a Corpus text is discussed in detail, it is the singular and puzzling ‘On the heart’, given in Littré’s Greek and an Italian translation, and dated c. 340 B.C., just before Aristotle: contrast *Medical History*, 1973, 17: 1–15, 136–153, for stronger arguments in favour of a date c. 300–250 B.C.

The most valuable portion is the long and lucid appendix on Galen, which, as well as trying to set him in his intellectual milieu, points out many of the difficulties and inconsistencies in his marriage of Plato and Hippocrates and in his reconciliation of their theories with the anatomical data provided by his own researches and those of Herophilus and Erasistratus. But while rightly insisting on the varied purposes of his treatises, the authors miss the opportunity of investigating the chronological development of his thought. His last work, ‘On my own opinions’, which I am in process of editing, provides an authentic summary of his views at the end of his life, which do not always correspond to those of his youth and middle age.

Not all the ideas of the authors are convincing. The “Hippocratic” tract ‘De alimento’ is dated, p. 165, to the first century A.D.: this raises many problems, and, following Joly, I prefer to place it c. 250 B.C. or slightly earlier. On p. 174 Galen’s post as doctor to the gladiators is connected with the shrine of Asclepius at Pergamum: wrongly, for the highpriest who appointed him was in charge of another cult, that of the Roman emperors.

This challenging book is valuable as an attempt to set ancient medical thought in its context, and, although it is not everywhere convincing, its methodology and its willingness to consider wider issues make a refreshing change from conventional continental approaches to the achievements of Classical Greece.

MACDONALD CRITCHLEY (editor-in-chief), *Butterworth’s medical dictionary*, 2nd ed., London, Butterworth, 1978, 4to, pp. xxxii, 1942, £45.00.

The first edition of this famous dictionary appeared in 1961 with the title, *British medical dictionary*, and under the editorship of the late Sir Arthur MacNalty. Since then it has won a well-deserved reputation, and it is now republished with about eight thousand new entries. Extensive revision has also been carried out, and the