

(Joëlle Jouanna-Boucher), and the sixth-century Byzantine doctor, Alexander of Tralles (Alessia Guardasole). The editors contribute very different pieces. Franck Collard studies the career of Jean de Grandville, whose failure in 1391 to cure Amadeus VII of Savoy resulted in accusations of murder. Évelyne Samama, by contrast, looks at the difficulties of deciding whether a healer in Hippocratic times was competent or not. Her discussion overlapped with a paper by Véronique Boudon, on doctors and charlatans at Rome, which appeared instead in the *Revue des Etudes Grecques*, 2003, 116: 109–31. Its absence is to be regretted, for not only does Galen, as Boudon shows, set the agenda for subsequent discussion of the distinction between medics and charlatans (a term that does not strictly appear at all in the period covered by these essays), but he provides many vignettes of medical activity at a variety of levels. Boudon's exposition of the variety of terms used by Galen to classify lesser practitioners is also more extensive and more subtle than Samama's.

There are many useful observations. Both Scribonius and Alexander record what might be termed magical or marginal recipes far more often against chronic conditions, such as epilepsy, than against acute. The fluctuating boundary between acceptability and non-acceptability is neatly exemplified by Guardasole's discussion of 'Natural remedies' (*Physika*). How a single unlucky case could end a flourishing career is nicely shown by Collard, although he could have said more about aristocratic uses of "irregular" practitioners, for there is considerable doubt as to whether Grandville had a university degree.

But there are also many opportunities missed. Only Nicoud really sets out the legal and institutional background of the healers she discusses, a task also attempted by Grunberg, although from a much thinner base. But even Nicoud, in what is the best paper, fails to set Milan into a wider context of Italian and other intellectual developments. This is a great pity, for the simplistic questions that are here raised can hardly be resolved on the basis of one city or one author. The editors' very brief introduction, which does little more than repeat the titles of

the chapters, is a disappointment, for one might have expected bigger questions to be raised here—the validity of any distinction between higher and lower practitioners, the varieties of therapies on offer, the effects of guilds, universities, and even official examinations, and so on. The differences between Greece and Rome, on the one hand, and the later Middle Ages and Renaissance, on the other, would have been worth much more detailed exploration than they receive here. The absence of an index also prevents an easy comparison between topics discussed many pages apart.

Publications of conference papers are always difficult to judge. Here, although the individual papers are of a reasonable standard, they do not form (or are not formed into) a coherent whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. This is a pity, for the choice of speakers offered an opportunity for an innovative cross-cultural comparison on a theme that is relevant even to medical practice today.

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Luis García-Ballester, *Galen and Galenism: theory and medical practice from Antiquity to the European Renaissance*, ed. Jon Arrizabalaga, Montserrat Cabré, Lluís Cifuentes, Fernando Salmón, Variorum Collected Studies series, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003, pp. xii, 332, £57.50 (hardback 0-86078-846-6).

This is the second volume of collected essays by Luis García-Ballester, the renowned Spanish scholar in the field of the history of medicine who died towards the end of 2000. In some ways, however, it looks backwards from the first (*Medicine in a multicultural society: Christian, Jewish and Muslim practitioners in the Spanish kingdoms, 1222–1610*, also published by Ashgate), opening as it does with four articles on the classical roots of the medieval medical world that was more particularly his domain.

It is the figure of Galen, the most influential of ancient medical thinkers and writers, who is the focus of this quartet. A new English version of a

synthetic essay on Galen's life and work, originally produced by García-Ballester to introduce a Spanish translation of Galen's major treatise *On the affected parts* (*De locis affectis*), joins such well-established essays as that 'On the origin of the "six non-natural things" in Galen'. Then matters move on from Galen himself, to the medical system built out of his ideas and writings in the medieval West; and seven essays are dedicated to tracing and analysing these developments. Indeed, it is in many ways changes within these intellectual currents, and their institutional setting and professional involvements, that are of particular interest, as articles on 'The new Galen', and 'The construction of a new form of learning and practising medicine in medieval Latin Europe' indicate. Away from these pretty well-known and influential discussions, there are two essays (in Spanish) on medieval debates on fevers, and other pieces on medical teaching and the circulation of Arabic medical manuscripts in Spain, the former rendered into English for the first time.

The book is completed by a full (and very impressive) bibliography of García-Ballester's publications, and a welcome index of persons, texts, places and institutions. There are, it has to be said, some problems with the English, the typography, and the general presentation of the volume; but such a collection is valuable none the less. It brings together in a thematic manner essays by a prominent scholar from a wide range of sources, some more accessible than others.

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Julie Laskaris, *The art is long: On the sacred disease and the scientific tradition*, Studies in Ancient Medicine, vol. 25, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2002, pp. ix, 172, €69.00, US\$81.00 (hardback 90-04-12152-8).

On the sacred disease has traditionally been seen as an example of rational, secular medical thought, diametrically opposed to magico-religious practices and superstition. Julie Laskaris argues instead that the work "is best

understood as a sophistic protreptic speech that was meant to demonstrate its author's superior understanding and treatment of that disease for the purpose of attracting students and a clientele" (p. 2). Laskaris proposes "a new analytic model" through which to interpret the text (p. 6). This analysis, which she acknowledges owes much to Karl Popper, involves placing the text in its intellectual tradition. This is followed by a survey of modern scholarship on ancient medicine, which tells the historian of medicine nothing new, but is useful for others. Chapter 1 provides an excellent overview of early healers, the transmission of medical knowledge, and the important subject of religious healing. Chapter 2 summarizes *On the sacred disease* and discusses its early and modern receptions. For all its supposed importance as a harbinger of scientific medicine, the text was not highly regarded in antiquity. Its fame is a nineteenth-century construct. In Chapter 3, Laskaris argues clearly that *On the sacred disease* should be read as a sophistic protreptic speech. Chapter 4 examines how humoral physiology and its imbalance are used by the author to account for the disease. The length of these humoral explanations are driven, according to Laskaris, by "competition with the magico-religious healers" (p. 131). Were it not so then "the author . . . would surely have been inclined to make his own account as simple and unified as possible" (p. 133). This is an interesting, but speculative point.

Laskaris maintains that the strongly argumentative style of texts such as *On the sacred disease* and *On ancient medicine* reflects either an inability or an unwillingness to offer alternative therapies to those provided by magico-religious healers. Because of such constraints, "polemical rhetoric was in effect the only avenue left to secular practitioners to demonstrate their superiority; the similarities in their practices and results prevented them from doing so by any other means" (p. 13). Laskaris' analysis successfully demonstrates that the text has strong protreptic elements which would have been useful in attracting a client base. She is also right to stress the highly competitive milieu in which all manner of persons styling themselves "healers" sought custom. Yet *On the*