

information. One may have hoped for a more consistent presentation here, and the choice of reference works and articles is, by necessity, selective, but such information is none the less helpful. The quality of the catalogue is further enhanced by the judicious inclusion of fascinating illustrations from selected works.

The collection described here is not large, and is far from providing comprehensive coverage of the history of traditional Chinese medicine, or adequate resources for in-depth research into the subject. Its value lies rather as a fascinating collection of rare and interesting items, to be dipped into with great reward by those interested in traditional Chinese medicine, as well as Western missionary medicine in China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This highly informative catalogue at last makes access to these gems easier.

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Peter Cordes, *Iatros: das Bild des Arztes in der griechischen Literatur von Homer bis Aristoteles*, Palingenesia, vol. 39, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 1994, pp. 208, DM 78.00, SFr 78.00 (3-515-06191-6).

Investigating the status of the ancient physician or healer has been often attempted, and one groans at the thought of yet another book proving the unprovable. Happily, this short dissertation brings some rarely considered texts into play, reviews them with learning and care, and tries with fair success to relate them to the picture familiar to readers of Edelstein, Gourevitch, and Kudlien. The middle section, on the Hippocratic Corpus, is the weakest, although those unfamiliar with the treatise *On the art* will benefit from its careful exposition, and the final section, on Plato and Aristotle, neatly summarizes current thinking.

By far the most useful, however, is the first section, a survey of evidence for healers and healing in poetry from Homer, Hesiod, via Pindar and the tragic poets, to Aristophanes

and the writers of Attic comedy in the late fifth and fourth centuries BC. Even if Dr Cordes takes his comic authors with perhaps too much seriousness, he has assembled a variety of neglected texts, and students of ancient medicine will do well to ponder them. One might, however, have expected a greater use of the epigraphic texts, as well as a certain degree of scepticism towards some of the incidents described by Herodotus.

In general, however, Dr Cordes is right to believe that those who offered healing generally enjoyed a good press in early Greek literature, and to stress the links between medicine and mantic divination, evident in Solon and Empedocles. He misses, however, one of the tensions among the practitioners of healing. On the one hand, the Hippocratic physicians emphasized often their learning and their social skills, and many modern scholars have also seen the development of Hippocratic medical ethics as a way in which family codes and training were institutionalized in a wider world of open teaching. Hippocrates was a gentleman, or so his family believed. This urban (and urbane) type of healer can be contrasted with the figure of the wild healer, the man from the woods with strange potions and remedies (even poisons). The archetypical hero of this healer is Chiron the centaur, half-man, half-horse, living in the mountains. So too an Attic playwright, perhaps Sophocles, introduced onto the stage a chorus of satyrs, than whom few could be more uncouth, who loudly claimed that they were responsible for the development of skills such as prophecy, music, astronomy, and medicine, frag. 1130 Radt. This unusual text, not used by Dr Cordes, has its parallels in art, as well as in Aristotle, who hints at a tradition that the satyrs were once the repositories of a wisdom not always appreciated by the modern Athenian. At the very least, this "alternative" history of medicine should cause a little hesitation before accepting all the claims of medical superiority of the upholders of Hippocratic medicine.

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