important rice-growing region. Their analyses, which emphasize fluidity and interdependence in local ideas about identity, heredity, and personhood, are based on two terms that refer to the qualities of "what is stable and what changes in a person, *janiccu guṇam*—innate or natural qualities, considered to be 'fixed'—and *samsa guṇam*—changing or worldly qualities, which are fluid and flexible" (p. 470). The volume ends, appropriately enough, with Gilles Grévin's empirical study of cremation in India and Nepal. Carefully measuring the changing temperatures of the burning bier throughout the process of combustion, he ponders the problem of "the absent body" in the archaeological record.

Read as a whole, these essays interconnect to give the reader an excellent sense of what embodiment means in the Hindu world. We also gain an almost overwhelming sense of the body's changing history, as well as history's implications for the body. This volume has great potential as a basic teaching text—I can imagine its becoming a classic, in fact—and I urge the editors to investigate the possibility of publishing an English version, if one is not already in the works.

Martha Ann Selby,
The University of Texas at Austin

Irving L Finkel and, **Markham J Geller** (eds), *Disease in Babylonia*, Cuneiform Monographs, vol. 36, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2007, pp. viii, 226, €90.00, $122.00 (hardback 978-90-04-12401-1).

The study of Babylonian medicine has seen rapid development over the last decades and is enjoying increasing attention from a widening circle of scholars, even to the extent that there is now a specialized journal devoted to the subject (*Le Journal des Médecines Cunéiformes*). This development is very much to be welcomed, for the material is rich and of great interest but, due to its limited accessibility, has only partially been exploited. As this volume testifies, the renewed attention is partly the result of new decipherings and interpretations of the surviving cuneiform texts, but also of more general methodological developments in the discipline of medical history giving rise to new questions being asked about the material—as is reflected here, for example, in the attention given to social and cultural aspects of health care in the ancient Near East, different types of healers, etc.

The volume arose from a conference held in the Wellcome Institute in London in December 1996, although it contains only a selection of the papers presented on that occasion. Regrettably, the long delay in publication has meant that some papers are no longer up to date, although the editors insist that in spite of this the papers in this volume make significant contributions to the study of ancient Babylonian medicine. That is certainly true, for many of the chapters discuss hitherto unpublished material or cover otherwise new territory; and, taken together, they present a fascinating picture of an ancient civilisation's reactions to disease, its methods of diagnosis and classification, the role of belief in demons, apotropaic ritual and witchcraft in its understanding and treatment of diseases, and its distinctions between different types of healers.

Of the thirteen contributions, only a few can be singled out here. Marten Stol offers a wide-ranging survey of accounts of fever in Babylonia, the vocabulary in which they are referred to ("fire", "sun-heat", etc.), their typology, the descriptions of the (other) symptoms that accompany them and the treatments advocated. Nils Heeßel provides an illuminating study of the importance of the *naming* of diseases in the Babylonian texts—amounting to a kind of "managing" or "controlling"—their association with "the hands of the gods" or indeed with specific gods and their attribution to divine wrath. Mark Geller discusses intriguing similarities in humoral and colour schemes—for example, the notion of bile as a pathological entity—between Assyrian and Greek Hippocratic texts about bodily fluids and parts; and J V Kinnier Wilson and E H Reynolds

https://doi.org/10.1017/S002572730000346X Published online by Cambridge University Press

discuss stroke and facial palsy in a wide range of Babylonian texts. There are also contributions on women's medicines in ancient Jewish sources (John M Riddle) and on Hittite rituals against disease (Volkert Haas), and several more specific studies of demons and other divine powers associated with health and disease. If there is a query, it is, perhaps, that the authors seem to be taking too much for granted—for example, they seem to assume a more or less static picture for the whole of Babylonia (one contribution speaks of "the complex Mesopotamian system of healing the sick person", p. 120) and leave little room for geographical or chronological variation. There is also frequent use of terms without specific definition, as in the talk about "the medical texts" (which are they? What makes a text "medical"? How were they produced and meant to be used?), "technical language" (what levels of technicality can be distinguished? How did technical terminology develop?), "doctors" (what kind of healers?), as well as a readiness—perhaps too eager—to identify conditions in terms such as "malaria" or "stroke". Related to this is the fact that the volume, in spite of its intention to contribute to opening up the subject to a wider circle, is still somewhat esoteric in presentation—for instance, it does not offer a list of abbreviations of the main reference works (*AMT, BAM*, etc.)—although for most quotations English translations are provided. These are minor quibbles, but they are of some importance when it comes to connecting Assyriology with medical history. Of course, one has to start somewhere, and this volume is an important step forward. One hopes that it will contribute to an even greater interest being taken in the world of Babylonian medicine. The volume concludes with a useful general index, though specialists may regret the absence of an index of texts and passages discussed.

Philip van der Eijk,
Northern Centre for the History of Medicine,
Newcastle University

Jürgen W Riethmüller, *Asklepios: Heiligtümer und Kulte*, 2 vols, Heidelberg, Verlag Archäologie und Geschichte, 2005, vol. 1, pp. 392, vol. 2, pp. 508, illus., €135.00 (hardback 3-935289-30-8).

For the last sixty years, the study of the Asclepius cult has been dominated by one book, *Asclepius*, by Emma J Edelstein and Ludwig Edelstein. First published in 1945, it collected into a single volume all the literary testimony from Antiquity, and a selection of the epigraphic evidence, mainly the cure inscriptions from Epidaurus, Rome, Lebena and elsewhere. These texts were edited to sound philological standards, and translated into accurate English. A second, much smaller, volume, written by Ludwig Edelstein himself, contained the Edelsteins' conclusions about the growth and development of the cult. A paperback edition in 1998, with a foreword by Gary Ferngren, added some new bibliographical information, but kept the general outlines of the original work. Although some of the Edelsteins' theses have been rightly challenged, for example, the notion that the cult arose from the heroization of a doctor, most scholars have continued to repeat their conclusions, and, in particular, to rely for their own work on the material so patiently assembled by the Edelsteins. It is, indeed, a classic work, and not entirely superseded by these two hefty German volumes.

Although a few reviewers pointed out some major flaws, their comments were usually disregarded by subsequent scholars. In particular, as the Edelsteins themselves admitted, their collection of evidence deliberately excluded most inscriptions, and all coins, artefacts, and archaeological evidence. For that one had to seek out Eduard Thraemer's old article in Pauly–Wissowa (1896, s.v. Asklepios), and the even older book by F R Walton (1894), and few made the effort. Alessandra Semeria in 1986 provided a census of Asclepieia in southern Greece, but this represented only a beginning, and a far

https://doi.org/10.1017/S002572730000346X Published online by Cambridge University Press