

detailed study, Ferrari re-evaluates Benedetti's contribution.

Benedetti was at once a physician and a dedicated humanist, describing himself as "physicus et orator clarissimus", and author of several other non-medical works. His project for the refounding of anatomy, according to Ferrari, can be broken down into four elements: a literary strategy (his use of language and style), a physical space (his anatomy theatre), a target audience (the medical-surgical community and notables) and an ideology (moral anatomy). And yet it is a study in failure. Benedetti stressed the importance of observation but, in seeking to reconcile Aristotle and Galen, he was quite willing to deny what he saw with his own eyes if it proved inconsistent with Aristotelian physiology. He put his faith in Pliny, producing an edition of the *Natural history* in 1507, at a time when others were just beginning to advocate a move away from the regressive humanist restoration of texts to the progressive ascertaining of "truth". Benedetti's *Anatomice* failed to displace Mondino dei Liuzzi's older text (the *Anothomia*) for study at the Venetian College and was ridiculed by contemporary physicians like Nicolò Leonicensio, a crucial figure in the sixteenth-century revival of Galenism.

Ferrari convincingly argues that the exploration of "failure" can tell us much about an important moment in the history of science. The debate between Benedetti and Leonicensio was, at its heart, a debate between two different ways of evaluating the past and how it should be used to advantage in the present. The two physicians had much in common, above all their humanist preparation and outlook, combined with a desire to return to the purified medicine of the ancients. But here they parted company. Leonicensio's approach stressed the didactic and theoretical uses of the classical texts, favouring the qualities of simplicity, logic and consistency. Benedetti the practising physician, with experience as both community and military practitioner, adopted a more eclectic approach to them, tempered by his practical concern with treatment over disease.

Ferrari clearly favours her protagonist and goes to some length to rehabilitate Benedetti's historical position. She has a good eye for both relevant detail and anecdote. At times they become overwhelming. Her in-depth study of the *Anatomice* (chapter two, nicely titled 'Anatomy of a book') will no doubt prove useful to historians, but it reads like a list of approaches and features, somewhat jumbled in the way they are presented. These are minor quibbles, however. Ferrari's study is an important work of scholarship, complete with detailed notes and bibliography. It sheds much-needed light on the period when authors sought a reconciliation of humanism and anatomical observation, before the latter gained the upper hand and the anatomy theatre itself became, in Ferrari's words, a sort of tribunal.

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Hellmut Flashar, et al., *Médecine et morale dans l'antiquité. Dix exposés suivis de discussions*, Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique, vol. 43, Geneva, Fondation Hardt, 1997, pp. viii, 415, SFr 70.00.

Any collection of papers provides no guarantee of consistent quality. Happily, the ten essays (in English, French and German) by leading figures in the history of medicine, together with wide-ranging discussions (after all but the final essay), provide more than worthwhile contributions to the ever-expanding debate on medical ethics, past and present. This is a well-presented volume with good indexes of ancient and modern authors (but no subject index). The question of Hippocrates and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Oath form the focus of this collection. Hippocrates, the totemic figure in Western medicine, has, in medical hands at least, often been treated in an ahistorical fashion. Jackie Pigeaud is right to remind us that part of the problem of analysing Hippocrates lies in determining whether the Hippocratic Corpus should be considered part of the history of its own time, and judged accordingly, or whether the writings yield

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“concepts ‘éternels’” (p. 23) to which we must respond.

The first two papers (by Hellmut Flashar and Vivian Nutton) survey the similarities and differences between Hippocratic medical ethics and our own. As Nutton points out in the discussion of Flashar’s paper, “the relationship between modern medical ethics and those that can be loosely termed Hippocratic is far from simple” (p. 21). “Hippocrates” can be used as a pulpit from which the shortcomings of the medical profession can be addressed. Perhaps more powerfully, the Oath can also be used as “an important article of faith” (p. 47) from whence the medical profession claims authority.

The next six papers deal with the Graeco-Roman period. Thomas Rütten gives a learned study on the deontology of the Oath and its variants. Charlotte Schubert discusses the concepts of health and disease as metaphors of moral, political and ethical status (the equating of health with καλός and disease with κακός has a terrible resonance for our century). Heinrich Von Staden gives an excellent analysis on the relationship in Greek medicine between a physician’s skill (τέχνη) and his life (βίος), concluding that one’s moral comportment is essential to, and may even reflect, one’s professional conduct. Von Staden maintains that the structural heart of the Oath contains a “profoundly moral pledge” (p. 191), binding on a person’s public as well as private life. Jacques Jouanna explores how Galen incorporates (and to a significant extent, alters) the meaning of key Hippocratic texts, concentrating the analysis on Galen’s *Commentaries*. Galen does this to underwrite his own claims that the best physician should be seen “comme modèle Hippocrate” (p. 230). However, Galen remains silent on the Oath and Law, which leads Nutton to note that this may reflect Galen’s stress on τέχνη (p. 248). If so, this provides a key theme taken up by Western medicine: the physician as source of specialized knowledge *simpliciter*.

Jackie Pigeaud examines medical ethics in Rome, using Cornelius Celsus as a main source, and this discussion is extended in

Philippe Mudry’s paper dealing with the *Preface* of Scribonius Largus. He, like Celsus, possesses a more distinctive voice than generally thought. The penultimate paper takes us to the medical world of Late Antiquity and Byzantium (Antonio Garzya). Finally, Olivier Reverdin discusses the handling of the translation of the *Materia Medica* of Pedanius Dioscorides by the remarkable sixteenth-century Lyon-born (but Geneva based) physician Jean-Antoine Sarasin.

By engaging with the past, medicine is better equipped to analyse current ethical debates, and respond to their imperatives coherently. This volume gives us, in 381 pages of analysis and debate, far more than a survey of past medical ethics. It provides a reference base for which this reviewer, a former medical practitioner, is grateful.

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**Roshdi Rashed** (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the history of Arabic science*, 3 vols., London and New York, Routledge, 1996, pp. xxviii, 1105, £160 (0-415-12410-7).

This encyclopedia is a virtually complete survey of Islamic sciences by subject, which includes astronomy, the various branches of mathematics, optics, nautical and musical sciences, engineering, alchemy, medicine and botany. Some chapters dealing with the influence of several Arabic sciences on the medieval Latin and Hebrew traditions have been also included. This reviewer, however, misses the presence of independent chapters on astrology and pharmacology.

Despite the fact that one short chapter does not allow an exhaustive study, since contributors are in general outstanding specialized scholars, they have provided a basic but accurate picture of their respective subjects. Therefore, taken as a whole, this three volume publication constitutes a useful overall introduction to Arabic science. This review will focus only on those chapters related to the scope of this journal: medicine and allied sciences.