

However, what detracts from *The cult of pharmacology*'s overall importance is not just the familiarity of some of the points made, but also the way that these are presented. Too often, DeGrandpre relies on a very limited selection of sources and uses these uncritically. At the same time, he also has a tendency to stray into unnecessary detail, citing numerous, lengthy case-studies when one or two would suffice. He also makes a few unfortunate mistakes—a casual reference to George Orwell's "dream of *soma*" (p. 163) when surely he means Aldous Huxley—hardly inspires confidence. Furthermore, the book is frequently repetitive, and uses phrases, labels and metaphors that obscure rather than reveal. Comparing what he describes as "pharmacologism"—the belief that certain drugs are inherently good and others inherently bad—to Nazism seems shallow and inappropriate. Moreover, by stressing the importance of drug pharmacology when it suits him, the author undermines his own argument about the social construction of drugs. A lengthy exploration of the evidence that links Prozac to suicide, self-mutilation and murder seems to leave DeGrandpre convinced that drugs do have a pharmacological effect on the user, even if it is not the one intended. Perhaps this merely serves to illustrate the power of the "cult of pharmacology": even the book's author would appear to have become a victim.

Alex Mold,
London School of Hygiene and
Tropical Medicine

Hippocrates, *On ancient medicine*, translated with an introduction and commentary by **Mark J Schiefsky**, *Studies in Ancient Medicine*, vol. 28, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2005, pp. xiii, 415, €134.00, \$181.00 (hard-back 90-04-13758-0).

The medical writing *On ancient medicine* is one of the some fifty works transmitted since Antiquity as a part of the *Corpus*

Hippocraticum. The treatise did not attract much attention in Antiquity, the Middle Ages or the Renaissance; probably as a result of Galen's thinking that it was not the work of Hippocrates himself. Nevertheless, this attitude changed soon after Emile Littré placed it in the first volume of his edition of Hippocrates' complete works. Littré considered the treatise to be a genuine work of Hippocrates, and, ever since, *On ancient medicine* has been one of the most commented, studied, edited and translated Hippocratic writings. Traditional scholarship has been concerned mainly with three topics. The first is the so-called "Hippocratic Question", namely the identification of the author with the historical Hippocrates; the second deals with the search for medical and philosophical influences and dependencies between this writing and that of other authors; the third discusses the controversies over attempts to establish the identity of the theorists attacked in this treatise.

Mark Schiefsky's book is based on the reworking of his 1999 doctoral thesis. He uses the Greek text established by Jacques Jouanna in his 1990 *Les Belles Lettres* edition, but provides a general introduction, a translation facing the Greek text, an extensive commentary, two appendices, and three indexes (general index, Greek words, and texts and authors cited). The Greek text offers references to both Littré's and Jouanna's pages, which makes it very user-friendly, and the translation is clear and accurate (where I have checked it). The introduction presents a survey of many of the issues raised by this work, such as the opposition between *téchnè* (art, science) and *túchè* (chance, luck) and the role of accuracy (*akribèia*) in medicine. It also presents a summary of its content, an overview of the intellectual context in which it was composed and addresses general topics, including audience, date and authorship. Many of these issues are revisited in greater detail in the commentary, as they are meant to be the main supporting evidence upon which to base the claims of the introduction.

The discussion about the intended audience of the treatise and its character of oral discourse underlines our lack of knowledge of key topics concerning medical literature, such as who these works were intended for, how accessible they were, and when and why they began to be written and read. Concerning audience and genre, Schiefsky establishes some parallels between *On ancient medicine* and other Hippocratic writings such as *Affections, Art, Breaths, Diseases I and Nature of man*. In doing so, he raises some stimulating questions for further research on other Hippocratic writings. Regarding the date of composition, problematic as it always is in connection with anonymous works, Schiefsky argues the treatise was written not much before 420 BC. He may be right, but one of the arguments he bases his conclusion on is the date of composition of the treatises *On generation / Nature of child* and *Diseases IV*, which is itself controversial and by no means sure.

The thorough and thoughtful commentary is, I think, Schiefsky's greatest contribution. Concerning questions of medical and scientific method, it goes beyond Jouanna's and Festugière's. Each chapter of the treatise is given a general overview, with attention paid not only to the theoretical and empirical aspects of medicine in early Greece but also to some questions of textual criticism (when they happen to support his interpretation of the passage) and to a minor extent, the author's prose style. Two appendices discussing the relationships between *On ancient medicine* and medical empiricism, and the affinities and differences between this treatise, Plato, Aristotle and other authors on the imprecision of medicine close the volume. With it Schiefsky has achieved one of the aims he states in the preface: his book is undoubtedly a worthy companion to Jouanna's critical edition and will definitely serve as inspiration to other scholars writing commentaries on Hippocratic writings.

Pilar Pérez Cañizares,
University of Newcastle upon Tyne

Véronique Boudon-Millot (ed. and trans.), *Galien: Introduction générale; Sur l'ordre de ses propres livres; Sur ses propres livres; Que l'excellent médecin est aussi philosophe*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2007, pp. ccxxxviii, 315, €75.00 (paperback 978-2-251-00536-2).

This new volume of the Budé edition of Galen should be on the shelves of anyone interested in ancient medicine. Of the tracts here edited, one, *That the best doctor is also a philosopher*, represents a succinct statement of a dominant theme throughout Galen's own writings, and the other two, *On the order of my own books* and *On my own books*, are the foundation for all biographies of Galen. Their availability in an elegant and accurate French translation, along with detailed notes, is a major contribution to the understanding of Galen and his milieu. But this edition stands out for three different reasons, which together mark an important stage in Galenic studies.

Intended as the first volume in the whole series, it opens with two novel surveys. The first is the most up-to-date and easily accessible biography of Galen in any language. The Budé format has allowed Mme Boudon-Millot to deal with many knotty problems of dating at greater length than I could in my *Ancient medicine* (2004), and unlike Prof. Schlange-Schöningen, whose German study of Galen's life and milieu appeared in 2003, she has the gift of seeing the wood for the trees. I may disagree with her on some minor points—for example, she believes that Galen left Rome in 166 to avoid the plague, although its arrival is usually associated with the return of Roman armies from the East to Rome in 167—but she gets the basics right.

Secondly, she provides the first general survey for nearly a century of the textual history of the Galenic Corpus. Contrary to what was once believed, many Galenic manuscripts go back to the twelfth century, and the whole Greek textual tradition is older, and possibly more secure, than we believed a generation ago. This introduction must be the first port of call for all future editors, for it brings together the results of major manuscript investigations