

Book Reviews

version goes dangerously astray: in ch.9, the Elders (*sic*) are not a specific group but merely older physicians as contrasted with the youthful Galen. Yet, given the editor's unfamiliarity with Greek and with the institutions of the Greek world, such errors of English translation are remarkably few, and the alert Galenist will be able with a little thought to work out the words of Galen that lie behind the double translation. The editor would, however, have been better advised not to attempt a commentary single-handed, for his notes are full of error and rarely deal with the major problems raised by this new text: e.g. p. 143, the kings are not the Asclepiads, but such as Attalus III; 144, Hippocratic texts from the fifth century BC hardly attest the decline of medicine in Rome; 161, the note on 84.13, taken over from De Lacy's commentary on CMG V.4,1,2,282, is irrelevant since the Greek word elucidated does not appear in the Hippocratic quotation under discussion. In place of this weak commentary, it would have been better to have had a more detailed discussion of the role of this and similar treatises in the Arabic world: cf. Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam*, p. 53, for a late allusion in the *hisba* literature. Yet, in the final analysis, these criticisms are more than counterbalanced by Dr Iskandar's great services in bringing this important text to light, and in making it accessible to those students of Galen who lack Arabic. Without his labours, they would not be able to take issue once more with Galen at his most infuriating.

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PAUL POTTER, *A short handbook of Hippocratic medicine*, Sillery, Québec, Les Éditions du Sphinx, 1988, 8vo, pp. 60, illus., [no price stated], (paperback).

In this student guide, Potter provides brief English summaries and even shorter bibliographies of the individual works in the Hippocratic Corpus, and an exposition of the most notable features of Hippocratic medicine. He passes quickly over questions of authenticity, adopting the view that the Corpus is an accumulation of varied material. His order of analysis goes back ultimately to Erotian in the first century AD, and thus reflects an ancient classification. One may wonder what Galen had to say about this in his *On the genuine and spurious writings of Hippocrates*, which is now lost but which was translated in the ninth century by Ḥunain ibn Ishāq and by his son Ishāq.

Limitations of space in the second part prevent Professor Potter from making more than an allusion to the contemporary background of the Corpus, and to medical ideas and terminology in authors such as Homer or Euripides. His outlines of the fundamentals of Hippocratic "scientific" (better, "rational") medicine deal with theory, practice, and the medical profession, and show clearly the interaction between medicine (health and disease) and man (patient and practitioner). Where space is so evidently at a premium, it is curious to find, in a work avowedly for students, two pages reproducing texts in Greek, a Renaissance Latin chart of the constituents of the body, and the title-page of the first Greek edition (1526). More of Professor Potter's own ideas, or a more generous bibliography, would have been preferable.

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F. ROSNER (trans. and ed.), *Maimonides' Commentary on the Aphorisms of Hippocrates*, vol. 2, *Maimonides' medical writings*, Haifa, The Maimonides Research Institute, 1987, 8vo, pp. xv, 218, \$14.95 + \$2.00 p&p from the North American distributor, Israel Book Shop, Inc., 410 Harvard St., Brookline MA 02146, USA.

This translation provides the first rendering into English of Maimonides' commentary on the *Aphorisms of Hippocrates* and is based on Muntner's Hebrew edition published in Jerusalem in 1961. This edition is itself based on the translation of Moses ibn Tibbon, preserved in Munich Ms. 275, translated from the original Arabic in 1268 and transcribed in 1583. The two extant Arabic manuscripts, various Hebrew translations of Moses ibn Tibbon and an anonymous translator, whose identity is suggested, and various printed editions are discussed in a short but useful bibliographical section which is followed by notes on the content and an analysis of the commentary.