

Book Reviews

VIVIAN NUTTON (editor, translator, and commentator), *Galen De praecognitione*, (Corpus Medicorum Graecorum, V 8, 1), Berlin, DDR., Akademie-Verlag, 1979, 8vo, pp. 262, M.78.00.

Reviewed by Wesley D. Smith, Ph.D., Department of Classical Studies, University of Pennsylvania.

This careful edition with its lively and accurate translation of Galen's *On prognosis* will be welcomed by all students of the history of medicine and of ancient history as well as by philologists generally. Heretofore there has been no complete English translation of this rich source for Galen's life. The text is more than usually troublesome, a fact which Nutton begins to account for with his address to its unusual style and to the odd transmission: Galen probably was unaware that the work had survived the fire of 192 and did not revise it as he did so many of his works. We now have a dependable text with clear reports of what is in the major Greek manuscripts, and in the Latin translations where they offer considerable differences. I am surprised to see how often the Latin translations have offered the clues to textual problems, though their general quality and the degree of their corruption is not to be obtained from this apparatus, which reports them only when they contribute to truth. As editor, Nutton is properly conservative, confining many of his suggested emendations to the apparatus criticus. There will now be increased discussion and improvement of the text, facilitated by the information this edition provides. I shall say here only that p. 132, 20-21, a passage that Nutton judges corrupt and wishes to emend, offers a perfectly sound text: it means that Peitholaus is exceedingly punctilious, so much so that his punctiliousness (*akribeia*) amounts to cowardice, yet he boldly gave food to the emperor's son on Galen's advice. One might think of emending *hôs* to *hôte*, but need not: see Liddell and Scott s.v. *hôs* B III.

Besides maintaining a high standard of accuracy in the translation, and in translating the text actually printed, he has given in the commentary indications of the stylistic peculiarities that the translation reflects. Still, the reader who cannot pursue the Greek will have to pursue other translations and advice to check what the English implies from time to time: for example, p. 87, "which it always does when it is trying to discharge an irritant from the body," *to lypoun*, here translated "an irritant", is a general word for what causes grief or trouble, and does not reflect a theory of excitability; p. 113, "I rushed in and saw her frozen stiff. Grabbing some nard ointment I began to rub her stomach." Galen's style is not hyperbolic and the Greek says only "when I saw that she had fainted I took onto my hands some nard ointment", etc.

Nutton's commentary will prove most valuable for the historian as well as for the philologist, for its incidental information which illuminates the text: explanations of the materia medica, evidence about doctors' fees, divination and astrological medicine, the custom of multiple consultations, and the like, along with a wealth of material explaining Galen's allusions to his own works and career. One would wish for an index to this incidental material, besides the useful indices verborum to the text which are provided. Here in the historical commentary the occasional lapse serves to set off the general excellence and precision of the whole: for example, Nutton identifies Eudemus, the Peripatetic philosopher who figures so largely in this work and in Galen's career, as

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a Pergamene, friend of Galen's father, who had come to Rome ten years before Galen (p. 157), and later impugns Galen's motives on the basis of the supposed family connexion (p. 160). No evidence is cited, and there is none. The background here is that J. Ilberg, *Neue Jahrb.* 1905, 15: 286-287, conjectured that Eudemus must have been part of a kind of Pergamene Mafia whose members boosted one another in Rome, *may* have known Galen's father, etc. These conjectures were presented as facts in the *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*, 2nd ed., 1944 (the 1st ed., 1897, lacks the errors). We are in difficulties where, as here, our basic reference materials enshrine misinformation, especially where, as with Galen's voluminous writings, we lack dependable texts, indices, and collections of material such as this edition by Nutton sets out to provide. Hence we may be grateful for the feast we have before us to digest.

Finally, on the subject of digesting the material, a remark about Nutton's summary statements concerning "the meaning and purpose of prognosis in ancient and Galenic medicine." Nutton seems much more inclined than I would be to take Galen at his own valuation: "There can be no dispute over Galen's skill in prognosis and of the reputation he gained thereby, even though it was occasionally attributed to magic and divination" (p.232). Galen is our only witness for his methods and for his success. He also gives us his reasoning: e.g., in an apparently malarial condition, Galen could predict that the crisis would be complete and the disease totally disappear because he felt in the artery "an upward movement even more than a lateral expansion," which informed him that the body's Nature was about to cast off the morbid element in the humours by one of the various routes for evacuating excrement (p. 85-89). Clearly we should not prefer Galen's rationality to our own. We should not lament that others chose the Methodist reasoning rather than practise feeling *that* pulse, nor that medical prediction "degenerated" into the medieval Prognostica before confirming, where we can, Galen's facts and affirming his reasoning. Short of that, we are limited to drawing the lines between what we know and do not know.

FRANCOISE LOUX, *L'Homme et son corps dans la société traditionnelle*, with a preface by Jean Cuisenier, Paris, Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1978, 8vo, pp. 145, illus., [no price stated].

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Although this attractively produced and well-illustrated volume was the official record of exhibitions held in Paris and Nantes in 1978, it is of far more than ephemeral interest. In her opening general essay, in the introductions to each section, and in her explanatory notes for each exhibit, Mme Loux distils the essence of the researches which she and other French scholars have been pursuing into the hermeneutics of the body in pre-industrial society. Working within an anthropology suggested by Durkheim and Mauss, Mme Loux is particularly concerned with the body as the focus of symbolic cosmological meanings (as is stressed in the conclusion: 'L'Homme, son corps, et l'univers'), and with the uses of the body to mark the passage from "nature" to "civilization" (section 1: 'Le corps, fondement de la vie sociale' and section 2: 'Le corps civilisé').

Sickness and death, health and medicine, are treated in a section on 'Risques et