

### Book Reviews

OWSEI TEMKIN, WILLIAM K. FRANKENA and SANDFORD H. KADISH, *Respect for life in medicine, philosophy, and the law*, Baltimore, Md., and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977, 8vo, pp. ix, 107, £5.95.

There are three essays in this book, based on lectures originally delivered at The Johns Hopkins University in the spring of 1975: 'The idea of respect for life in the history of medicine' (Temkin); 'The ethics of respect for life' (Frankena); and 'Respect for life and regard for rights in the criminal law' (Kadish). Each approaches the central topic from an entirely different point of view. Professor Temkin's essay is concerned with ways in which the duty to respect life was understood in early Western medicine, and, as one would expect, it is a thoughtful, scholarly, and well-documented piece. It is complemented by the other two articles, by a philosopher and lawyer respectively. The current interest in medical ethics will ensure this excellent book a wide appeal.

STANLEY JOEL REISER, ARTHUR J. DYCK and WILLIAM J. CURRAN, (editors), *Ethics in medicine. Historical perspectives and contemporary concerns*, Cambridge, Mass., and London, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1977, 4to, pp. xiii, 679, illus., £28.00.

At a time when a great deal is being written on medical ethics a book like this is most welcome. It is an anthology of 103 articles already in print, dealing with ethical problems, ranging in time from the Hippocratic Oath to 1975; most of the material has been published in the last two or three decades. There are eight sections: ethical dimensions of the physician-patient relationship through history; moral bases of medical ethics; regulation, compulsion, and consumer protection in clinical medicine and public health; truth-telling in the physician-patient relationship; medical experimentation on human subjects; procreative decisions (population policy, genetic dimensions, abortion, foetal experimentation); suffering and dying; rights and priorities in the provision of medical care. There are also sections entitled 'Illustrative cases', where examples of specific moral dilemmas are presented and decisions invited.

As each page has three columns of print, the book holds a vast amount of valuable material, which is well indexed. Despite its price, it will be acquired widely, because a similar collection does not exist and the selected articles have appeared in a variety of publications, some not readily available. It will be of immense value to clinicians of all kinds, historians, clergymen, philosophers, sociologists, and administrators concerned with health care. It provides both a source-book for reference and a teaching collection of documents and essays.

STUART F. SPICKER and H. TRISTRAM ENGELHARDT, jr. (editors), *Philosophical medical ethics: its nature and significance*, Dordrecht and Boston, D. Reidel, 1977, 8vo, pp. vi, 252, Dfl.55.00, \$19.50.

These are the papers given at a conference in December 1975, and they concentrate especially upon the problems of euthanasia and experimentation on people, and the role of the moral philosopher, as well as the doctor, in the practice of ethics. The major part of the book is concerned with present-day issues, but it opens with Dr. Chester Burns' remarks on some historical roots of American medical ethics, and the

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Rev. J. Owens discusses Aristotelian ethics and medicine.

At a time when great concern is being felt regarding the doctor's ethical relations with his patients, this excellent volume will add philosophical dimensions to the various problems he encounters.

ISAAC BARZILAY, *Yoseph Shlomo Delmedigo (Yashar of Candia)*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1974, 8vo, pp. xii, 379, illus., Dfl. 84.00.

Doctor, scientist, rabbi, philosopher, and rationalist, Yashar of Candia (1591–1655), a Cretan Jew, was compelled to wander for much of his life in Egypt, Poland, and Germany, at odds with both non-Jews and the increasingly mystical Jewish communities he visited. This biography of a universal scholar sets him in the context of early seventeenth-century scientific rationalism and rightly emphasizes the added difficulties of his Jewish predicament. Of his medical training at Padua, little is said, although recent work on Harvey, his contemporary there, would have altered the largely negative picture of university medicine there, but the short section on his practice in Poland, Holland, and Germany is illuminating on the life of a doctor in the Jewish ghettos. At Amsterdam, the large number of Jewish doctors forced him to give up medicine for a time, perhaps not unwillingly, and the harsh contract he signed in 1631 to be the Jewish communal physician at Frankfurt-am-Main does not imply much confidence in his abilities. His medical writings, including a plagiarism of Galen's commentary on the Aphorisms, are of minor importance compared with his philosophical and scientific studies; yet, as this biography shows, it was the money he made from his practice that enabled him to travel, to buy his books, and at times just to exist.

JOHANNES PETER ROHLAND, *Der Erzengel Michael, Arzt und Feldherr: zwei Aspekte des vor- und frühbyzantinischen Michaelskultes*, Leiden, Brill, 1977, 8vo, pp. vii, 156, illus., Dfl.40.00 (paperback).

This careful study traces the development of the Byzantine cult of St. Michael as warrior and as healer from its Jewish origins to the tenth century. It shows how the emphasis on Michael as the commander-in-chief of the angels, pre-figured in early apocalyptic, receives greater stress from the seventh century onwards, while his reputation as a Christian healer may derive from Jewish circles in central Asia Minor, and his power over springs may be connected via pious legend with the biblical account of the angel at the pool of Bethesda. But the evidence does not permit us to decide easily how this cult gained strength in Egypt or, *pace* Dr. Rohland, whether its appeal was any more to lower-class believers than e.g. that of SS. Cyrus and John. The snobbish Aquilinus, an imperial lawyer who came to Michael only as a last resort in his illness, would have been shocked to find himself sent by Dr. Rohland, p. 102, to a public hospital. But many interesting questions are left unresolved. Can the importance of Michael as defender against diseases be correlated with belief in illness as caused by demons? Do Michael's healing shrines represent Christian take-overs of earlier pagan cults, as with that of SS. Cyrus and John at Menuthis or St. Bartolommeo in Rome?

Lovers of the stuffed owl will be delighted to learn from the Appendix that a related continental species, *Strix Wilhelmina*, still flourishes.