

PHILIP J. VAN DER EIJK: *Medicine and philosophy in classical antiquity: doctors and philosophers on nature, soul, health and disease*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005. ISBN 0-521-81800-1. XIV, 404 pp. GBP 55.

This substantial volume on medicine and philosophy by Philip van der Eijk consists of 11 selected articles which were – except for the one on Aristotle and dreams – originally published between 1989–2003 in various journals and books. The articles have been only slightly revised for the present purpose. Two of them are translated from Dutch and German in order to be accessible to a larger readership. The book provides a thoughtful discussion on the interconnections of philosophy and medicine in ancient Greece.

The detailed introduction (pp. 1–42) presents an informative overview of the recent developments in the study of ancient medicine. At the same time, it also elucidates those shifts that have taken place in the past few decades in historical, literary and linguistic studies in general. First, the scholarly interest in ancient medicine has been rapidly growing and not only among classicists or medical historians, but also in many other disciplines such as history of philosophy, rhetoric and literary studies. This means that ancient medicine is no longer conceived of as a narrowly defined, special field as it may have earlier appeared. Thus, ancient generic and disciplinary boundaries – in the form they have been understood in scholarship – have also been called into question. Medical literature affected philosophy and vice versa, and substantial overlaps existed between these two areas of activity. Greek philosophers showed an active interest in medical issues and the human body, and medical treatises were affected by philosophical themes, methods and argumentation.

Second, earlier studies on medical history emphasized continuities, that is, medical historians studied the extent to which ancient medicine was familiar with certain discoveries (such as the nervous system or blood circulation) that contemporary medicine now knows. Instead of studying continuities, questions are now asked about the uniqueness of Greek medical thought or its relationship to Eastern medical traditions. (pp. 3–4.)

Third, as in the scholarly world in general, the emphasis has shifted from major literary and theoretical texts to non-literary and less-known writings and to medical practices. In the field of medical studies, this means that more and more research is now done on technical and minor literature such as advertisements, pamphlets and medical reports. Related to this, the intellectual elite and great names such as Hippocrates or Galen are no longer dominating the field. Minor names and the whole diversity of ancient medicine have received increasing attention. Scholars are now interested in druggsellers, rootcutters and other practitioners of folk medicine. Accordingly, contemporary ideas of ancient medicine have gone through considerable changes as regards its rationality and homogeneity. What was earlier taken to be a purely rational and scientific discipline is now shown to have been more open and receptive to "pseudo-scientific" phenomena, superstition, folklore, religion and magic (pp. 4–6).

Fourth, scholarly attention has not only turned from texts to contexts, but to everyday contexts in particular. Scholarship is now interested in asking how medicine affected the lives of ordinary people and how it was related to peoples' beliefs, attitudes and everyday practices. But while historians, linguists and literary scholars in general

nowadays also tend to call attention to the cultural environments of the texts and not merely to the texts themselves, the development in medical studies has gone in the entirely opposite direction. Scholars have become aware that medical texts have noteworthy linguistic and textual characteristics and rhetorical strategies which need to be examined. Thus one of the recent trends has been to focus on the interconnections between scientific and poetic modes of discourse, either by showing how scientific ideas have affected and been inherent in literary texts or how scientific writing also has its literary conventions and devices.

This interesting outline of the recent scholarship is followed by 11 chapters which focus on the Hippocratic corpus and Aristotle in particular. In contrast to what was said of the scholarly trends, van der Eijk thus keeps on dwelling on the most famous medical texts and the great masters. In the Hippocratic corpus, his favourite treatise seems to be one of its most well known writings, "On the sacred disease", which he uses as a key text when dealing with divine and natural origins of diseases, and the seat of the mind. It is highly interesting to read what Hippocratic texts, such as this one on epilepsy, tell us about the divine nature of the disease, i.e., how "divine" here does not equal "god-sent" but rather something that is in nature. Van der Eijk shows us how religion and an idea of divine intervention still played a part in rational thinking and how religious explanations co-existed with "natural" explanations of the disease. Van der Eijk also explores ancient views of dietetics, doctor's duties in therapeutics and the seat of the mind since these issues were treated in some texts belonging to the Hippocratic corpus.

When discussing Aristotle, the author points out that the relationship between Aristotelianism and medicine has remained a somewhat neglected area. Van der Eijk examines how Aristotle's medical and physiological interests were reflected in his philosophy. This influence is examined, for example, in a case study on the medical background of melancholy and in two chapters dealing with the physical and divine causes of human success and good fortune. The author also deals with the bodily background of human rationality and thinking. In one of the most interesting chapters in the book, van der Eijk studies Aristotle's treatment of sleep, dreams and divination in sleep in his two short treatises. One chapter focuses on a (pseudo-)Aristotelian text "On Sterility". The book concludes with chapters on Galen and Caelius Aurelianus.

Van der Eijk's detailed articles are extremely well researched, clearly written and easy to follow – sometimes also helped by slight repetition. For the most part, van der Eijk's views of the philosophers' ambivalent attitudes to religion and the various modes of rationality are among the most interesting results to be found in the book. Even if the book does not offer an all-embracing or systematic discussion of the relationships between medicine and philosophy – which would be difficult to achieve in a book that is basically a collection of separate articles – it provides much food for thought. It gives new insights into how medical issues and philosophical texts can be approached from interdisciplinary perspectives and, most importantly, how such an approach is essential for a nuanced interpretation of the source texts. The bibliography (50 pages!) and the indices are impressive. The quotations from the primary sources are always followed by an English translation. A minor weakness is that no conclusion is provided by the author.

With its serious attempt to cross disciplinary boundaries by relying on careful reading of the source texts, the book can be warmly recommended to all interested in the

multiple relationships between ancient medicine and philosophy.

Sari Kivistö

Ugo Bianchi. Una vita per la Storia delle Religioni. A cura di GIOVANNI CASADIO. "Il Calamo", Roma 2002. ISBN 88-88039-24-4. 525 pp., 2 app. EUR 37.

This book is a miscellaneous collection of papers read at a conference that was held in memory of the Italian historian of religions Ugo Bianchi (1922–1995) [UB] at the University of Salerno in April 1997, plus some recollections contributed by international colleagues.

The book has four sections and two appendices. The first appendix contains an extensive and useful bibliography of UB and the second one the Salerno conference programme and selected correspondence between the organiser and academics invited to that conference (this correspondence seems totally misplaced in the publication as it does not add anything of real academic value to the book).

The first part of the book, "La vita", gives an overall picture of UB's academic career from its very beginnings in war-time Rome (by Ennio Sanzi pp. 31–44) through his various academic posts, e.g., in Messina (by Concetta Giuffrè Scibona pp. 45–54) and Bologna (by Giovanni Casadio pp. 55–65) to his last academic office, professor of the history of religions at the University of "La Sapienza" in Rome (by Silvia M. Chiodi pp. 67–73). These four articles make monotonous reading for someone not interested in the tortuous administrative parlance and bureaucratic processes of Italian academia but entertaining for those readers for whom "history of learning" holds a fascination.

The fifth article in the opening section, by Peter Antes (pp. 75–83), discusses UB's complicated and no doubt in many ways invigorating relationship with the International Association for the History of Religions I.A.H.R (founded in 1950). UB was IAHR's vice-president 1985–1990 (p. 78, N.B. according to the IAHR website: 1980–1990) and president 1990–1995 and a passionate discussant in the many life-or-death (or so it seemed) battles of this young organisation (e.g., over the name of the association; UB defended the old name and the dispute was resolved in UB's favour, though only after his death).

The second part of the book, entitled "L'opera", shows the incredibly wide spectrum of academic fields covered and touched upon by UB's publications. His wide-ranging interests may be as much due to the mid- and late 20th century developments in the history of religions as an academic subject and its early phenomenological tradition, which UB was *de facto* following rather than rejecting even if he was in an apparent struggle against it (cf. the discussion between the "history of religion" and the "phenomenology of religion" on p. 401). In this pioneering spirit, UB displayed his erudition in the religious thinking of ancient Mesopotamia, Iran, Egypt, Greece, and Rome from the perspectives of comparative religion, philosophy (though he himself partly denied his philosophical inclinations, claiming philosophy was too abstract to be of methodological aid to a historian, cf. Francesca Brezzi pp. 329–352 and Aldo Natale Terrin p. 370), and ethnology.