

FLORIAN STEGER: *Asklepios. Medizin und Kult*. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2016. ISBN 978-3-515-11447-9. 162 S. EUR 26 (pb).

Greek medicine has often dominated discourses on healing in antiquity but this book aims to show that Asclepiadic medicine in the Roman imperial period was one of the most readily available sources of healing for people in antiquity. This work is a revised version of an earlier book that was published in 2004, which also focused on Asclepiadic medicine, but now expanded sections on the cult of Glykon as well as Aelius Aristides' orations have been added.

This book is divided into four chapters, the first of which is an introduction. This provides a brief summary of the background of the cult, lists relevant scholarship, and also lays out the aims of the book. Steger argues that too much attention has been given in current scholarship to the religious and mythological aspects of the cult of Asclepius and that the medical features are too often overlooked and understudied. He seeks to address this issue in his work, which aims to focus predominantly on these medical aspects.

The second and third chapters form the main body of this book, with the second focusing on the medical context of Asclepiadic medicine. The healing options, both sacred and secular, that were available to people in Rome are discussed here. The chapter provides a solid overview of the medical gods whose cult was present in Rome but also of the medical schools that practised medicine there. It then moves on to examine the various medical writers who had an important effect on our understanding of ancient medicine such as Galen and Scribonius Largus.

The third chapter looks at the myths and healing of Asclepius. It starts by examining the earliest mentions of Asclepius in the Iliad and gives a brief overview of other gods who had a healing function. Various cult foundations are examined here and an overview of how cults of Asclepius were disseminated across the Roman world is given. Up to section III.3, literary sources have been used as the main source of evidence, but now Steger's focus turns to other source materials such as the Epidaurian *iamata* and anatomical ex-votos. However, in section III.4 Steger's focus returns to literary sources, namely Aelius Aristides' *Hieroi Logoi* and how these demonstrate medical practices at the Pergamene sanctuary, such as the use of bathing, dietary requirements, medications, and salves. The same source analysis is then performed on two inscriptions which were erected by two near-contemporaries of Aristides called Iulius Apelles and Aelius Theon and which also show such a prescription of medications and dietary requirements. The final chapter presents a summary of what has been discussed in the previous chapters.

This work provides a good survey of ancient medicine, especially on the ancient medical schools, and the strongest parts of this book are those which focus on ancient Roman medical practice. The discussion concerning important medical writers such as Galen and Celsus is also one of the book's more compelling points. For the most part, the arguments laid out here are supported by a reasonably comprehensive bibliography, though it should be noted that a number of key texts are absent. This mainly affects some of the subsections of the work that could have benefitted from greater detail and depth on the discussed subject, which is one of the main weaknesses of the work. Steger tries to be as inclusive as possible and cover all aspects of ancient medicine and its relationship to the cult of Asclepius. This sometimes leads to somewhat cursory sections, for example II.2 which looks at Babylonian and Egyptian influences on the cult. The discussion of the latter would have greatly benefitted from including A. Łajtar (2006) *Deir El-Bahari in the Hellenistic and Roman*

*Periods.* This cursory treatment is more often a problem in discussing religious and cultic elements of the cult, whereas medical sections (see II.3) are better.

It also seems that Steger's purpose of directly addressing the medical aspects of the cult over the religious and mythical ones is slightly undone by the fact that he spends considerable time discussing Asclepius' origins as well as the various cult foundations. There does not appear to have been such a strict division between these various aspects of the cult in antiquity, and for modern scholars it is difficult to examine solely one such aspect of the cult when they are clearly connected at a fundamental level. Without this strict division, the book works very well in providing an introduction to the cult of Asclepius as well as the medical history of the period.

The chapters are clearly laid out and the work has obviously been carefully researched. Its arguments are underpinned by a strong research base, making this book a good introduction to the medical practices which were undertaken within the cult as well as providing information about the historical backgrounds of various cults, for example at Epidaurus, Cos, and Pergamum. As such, the work will provide a solid introduction to both the cult of Asclepius and medical practices in antiquity.

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JEAN MACINTOSH TURFA: *Divining the Etruscan World. The Brontoscopic Calendar and Religious Practice.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2012. ISBN 978-1-107-00907-3. XIII, 408 pp. GBP 65, USD 110.

J. M. Turfa has, with the *Brontoscopic Calendar* as her starting point, written a valuable book that collects most of our knowledge about the life, beliefs and culture of the Etruscans.

The *Calendar* is preserved in the sixth-century book *De ostentis* by Johannes Lydus. Lydus offers a "word for word" Greek translation of the work by the Roman Figulus from the sayings of Tages. At the end of the translation, Lydus states: "This brontoscopic almanac Nigidius claimed was not universal, but was only for Rome." Hence, the first translator, from Etruscan into Latin, was P. Nigidius Figulus, the contemporary and friend of Cicero. In her introduction, the author presents what we know about Tages, Nigidius Figulus and Johannes Lydus, about parallel sources on Etruscan religion, as well as about the Roman interest in Etruscan divination and the transmission of the text.

The *Calendar*, in modern printing 13 pages, has 360 daily entries, from June to May, all starting "If it thunders", and then giving the soothsaying, like "the people will be of marvelously good cheer" (October, 23), or "it threatens for the people, bad conditions and spotted diseases" (the day before, October, 22). The author gives the Greek text and the English translation (published before in N. Thomson de Grummond – E. Simon (eds.), *The Religion of the Etruscans*, Austin 2006).

In the thematic analysis of the *Calendar*, the author has the opportunity to present various sides of the Etruscan life and culture, as far as the predictions touch them. She has arranged the discussion under the themes "weather, fauna, agriculture, pests", "health and disease", and "society", but the scope is clearly wider and presents the author's many-sided erudition and skills. There is not much new, but her knowledge is up-to-date. The few errors I have noted concern Etruscan epigraphy