Roman Pythagoreanism is first given a firm foundation with one of the longest contributions—a detailed investigation by Alfonso Mele into the spread of philosophy, and especially Pythagoreanism, throughout Magna Graeca in the fifth and fourth centuries. Then individual figures are studied. First, in 'Il mistero di Ippaso', Maria Silvestre suggests that the problem with Hippasus is that he was already known at Metapontum as a musician, and may well have established the elements of the musical scale as the fixed ratios of octave, fifth and fourth before the theory was taken over by Pythagoras as his invention (as recorded, for example, by Iamblichus, *VP* 115). This means that harmonics, rather than irrational numbers, may have been the source of the rivalry between the two. Then Amedeo Visconti on Aristoxenus of Tarentum continues the musical theme with 'musica e attività politica'. Alfonso Mele in a second essay discusses Archytas' connections with the Roman aristocracy, arising from Cicero's notice at *Cato* 39, and Bruno Centrone writes on the pseudo-Archytas *Περὶ νόμω καὶ δικαιοσύνας*. The last contribution is by Enrico Flores on Ennius and Pythagoreanism.

This is a wide-ranging and useful collection, with a good spread of new material and fresh inroads into more familiar territory. Useful additions might have been some reference to Virgil's use of Pythagorean/Platonic metempsychosis and, more obviously, to Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.

University of Wales Lampeter M. R. WRIGHT

RETROSPECTIVE DIAGNOSIS AND THE *EPIDEMICS*

L. A. Graumann: *Die Krankengeschichten der Epidemienbücher des Corpus Hippocraticum. Medizinhistorische Bedeutung und Möglichkeiten der retrospektiven Diagnose*. Pp. xxii + 272. Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2000. Paper. ISBN: 3-8265-8216-0.

The words 'retrospective diagnosis' in the title of what was originally G.'s dissertation for the Dr. med. may cause historians of medicine to sigh in exasperation, but they will be well advised to continue reading: G. is not yet another doctor indulging in an ahistorical interpretation of ancient medical texts. The introduction opens with some common statements about the Hippocratic *Epidemics* (empirical, realistic case histories, practically free of any theory and therefore open to diagnosis, often containing the first description of some particular disease, etc.). G. makes it clear from the start, however, that he takes a more sophisticated approach to ancient medicine and to the possibilities of retrospective diagnosis.

Every author writing about Greek medicine faces the necessity of having to explain the background before entering into the actual argument if the book is not to be limited to a very small audience. G., too, begins with an introduction into the Hippocratic Corpus (including the question of authorship) and the *Epidemics*—the meaning of the title, a structural analysis of the seven books, a discussion of their contents, geographical background, date, interrelations and later reception. He also highlights how Galen's verdict of inauthenticity condemned *Epidemics* 4, 5, and 7 to almost total obscurity for about 1800 years. Describing the various phases of transmission, G. rejects the accepted view of the case histories as objective observations and descriptions, pointing out how they have been used as support for a

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variety of medical theories over the centuries. After all, the mere act of writing down 'case histories' already constitutes a selection: they are realistic only insofar as they reflect reality as experienced by the writer.

The central section of the book discusses the possibility and methodology of retrospective diagnosis, beginning with an explanation of the term 'diagnosis' in modern medicine, and questioning whether the ancient term corresponds to this. Given the importance of prognosis (which included present and even past conditions) in Hippocratic medicine as reflected in the texts, diagnosis was at any rate subordinate to it. According to G., it is only in the surgical treatises that one can speak of anything approaching the modern meaning. In the case of internal diseases, the name that was the result of the 'diagnosis' was often not so much a clearly defined nosological entity as a description of a symptom or the simultaneous presence of symptoms, comparable to the modern concept of syndrome.

Although attempts at retrospective diagnosis were already being made in antiquity, in these cases the person making the diagnosis still had the same framework of medical concepts (e.g. Galen writing about the *Epidemics*). It is therefore only from the second half of the nineteenth century that one can speak of retrospective diagnosis in the modern sense, which is made on the basis of palaeopathology and iconographical or textual material. G. sets out the main guidelines for attempts at this, i.e. 'forgetting' modern medicine, avoiding value judgements (such as 'unscientific'), making use of one's knowledge about the way of life or the epidemiology of the period in question, and making it clear that the interpretation always has to remain subjective.

G. also presents an outline of M. D. Grmek's thoughts about retrospective diagnosis. However, he doubts the existence—postulated by Grmek—of a group of terms whose meaning has remained unchanged (e.g. *karkinoma* or *haimorrhoides*). The fact that modern medical terminology is based on (often latinized) Greek can mislead the researcher into 'finding' a modern disease entity in the ancient texts, but G. repeatedly warns the reader of this danger: often the concept behind the name has changed (e.g. words ending in *-itis*, which did not have the meaning of 'inflammation'), other disease concepts (e.g. *kausos*) are no longer in use, one has to take into account the phenomenon of pathomorphosis, etc. He finishes by demonstrating on a concrete example (*Epid.* 7.83) the possibilities and limitations of retrospective diagnosis, concluding the book with about eighty pages of tables. This is an insightful and important book, which should be made required reading for medical historians, especially those with a medical background.

University of Cambridge CHRISTINE F. SALAZAR

DE MORBO SACRO

J. LASKARIS: *The Art is Long.* On the Sacred Disease *and the Scientific Tradition*. (Studies in Ancient Medicine 25.) Pp. ix + 172. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002. Cased, €69/US$81. ISBN: 90-04-12152-8.

The small essay *De morbo sacro* may be called with confidence a star among the variety of works that form the *Corpus Hippocraticum*. It is undoubtedly its most read part—no doubt often in translations—and thus for many people represents the Hippocratic writings as a whole. What scholar would not be fascinated by the

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