

CORDES Peter, *IATROS. Das Bild des Arztes in der griechischen Literatur von Homer bis Aristoteles (=Palingenesia, 39)*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 1994, p. 208

Ce travail risque de passer inaperçu dans la bibliographie, notamment en raison de son titre, aux allures arides. Et cependant il est des plus intéressants, puisqu'il retarde tout le développement de la figure du médecin lui-même dans la littérature classique antique, depuis l'*Iliade* et l'*Odyssée* jusqu'à Aristote. Ainsi part-il d'Homère pour passer ensuite à la poésie lyrique, à la tragédie et la comédie, à l'histoire, au *Corpus Hippocraticum*, à Platon et, enfin, à Aristote. Avec, chaque fois, un chapitre consacré à ces auteurs et, chaque fois, le relevé exhaustif et l'analyse des passages où apparaît le médecin. Le texte est nourri, avec des notes d'une parfaite érudition; il est suivi d'une bibliographie très abondante et s'un index des passages de textes classiques cités, mentionnés ou évoqués, index qui couvre un peu plus de 10 pages (P. 198-208). C'est dire donc l'ampleur du portrait brossé, vivant et détaillé, voire passionnant.

Alain Touwaide

DEMAND Nancy, *Birth, death, and motherhood in Classical Greece*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994, Baltimore-London, pp. 276

The Johns Hopkins University Press series *Ancient Society and History* is devoted to selected topics in the history of ancient Greece and Rome. The last book is dedicated to birth, death and motherhood in Classical Greece, a subject in the large field of the medicine of women, which has been greatly increased in the recent years. Following the English version of Soranus' *Gynaecia*, made

by Owsei Temkin (1956) and the critical editions of the Hippocratic treatises *De morbis mulierum* I, II and *De natura mulierum*, made by Hermann Grensemann, studies on women's world have been widely developed. From Danielle Gourevitch to Paola Manuli, from Ann Ellis Hanson to Giulia Sissa, from G.E.R. Lloyd to myself, diseases of women, pregnancy and pregnancy-related diseases, as well as relationships between maternity and society have been widely analyzed.

In this book, Nancy Demond, focuses on ancient contexts of childbirth, in the *pólis*, in which from Plato to Aristotle maternity is related to the demographical equilibrium and women outside the great social events, and on the *oikos* or household, in which the women were full members (daughter, wife, childbearer, older woman, and also widow): this double aspect characterizes female life, so that women's medicine is related to the great event of reproduction. The Hippocratic treatises are the largest source concerning the conditions and the disease of birth, girls and women: Reproduction, Nature of the child, Critical Days, Aphorisms, Prognosticon, Excision of the foetus, Diseases of Women, Barrenness, Superfoetation, Seventh [eighth] month's child, Diseases of girls, Nature of women, Epidemics.

A such large collection of writings is attractive for any commentator on this field. In her work Nancy Demand explores with great attention the social and cultural contest of child-birth in Classical Greece: midwifery, attitudes of doctors toward women, abortion, treatment of women's diseases, risks of childbirth (including eclampsia) were explored in the Hippocratic treatises (mainly *Aph.*, *Epid.*, *Morb. Mul.*, *Nat. Mul.*, *Nat.Puer.*, *Prog.*, *Septim.*, *Steril.*, *Superf.*) and related to Classical Authors, e.g. Plato. Pregnant women look to the gods for assistance, e.g. Apollo, Artemis, Eileithia, and Asclepius himself, so that in many Asklepieia (Epidaurus, Corinth, Lebena) have been found inscriptions or objects related to infertility.

Interesting comments are made on the clinical reports (*iamata*) figures alone (*pinax*) carved on the steles found in the Epidaurian Asklepieion: the midwife and the mother are the actresses and the stories are embellished or fantastic or miraculous, written to astonish the patients just entering the temple and focused on the role of the healing god Asklepius, which appears during a dream inside the temple. Many stories are about women: a pregnant (*ekúese*) woman delivered by abdominal section (cesarean?) two washtubs of worms; again, Kleo asking for fertility and pregnant for five years, who slept in the temple and gave birth to a boy. Of course, maternity is a field which has been object of the action of religious healers and charlatans and the Asklepieion is the house in which religious and lay-rational medicine coexist together.

Complications of pregnancy (including eclampsia) are discussed, whereas abortion is analyzed in all its aspects, from the common abortion to the nine-month abortion (*εκβάλλω* means also *to expose* newborn infant until death).

This book is an important synthesis of the anthropological, medical and social problems related to childbirth and medical events and life of the women in the Greece of Golden Age (V-IV cent. B.C.). Quotations from the Hippocratic texts are widely used (excellent, but not complete - e.g. see *Epid* IV.21, IV.26, V.12, V.53 -, is the Appendix B, with the catalogue of the clinical stories about pregnancy in the *Epidemiae*), so that the general comment is enriched by the suggestions derived from the references, i.e. original texts and modern commentaries and interpretations of the various aspects of birth and motherhood. The general view is that the Hippocratic gynecology did not improve (or very little) either medical conditions of women in the childbirth (hazards, disease of the child, etc.) or social conditions in the *pólis*. Only in the Hippocratic *De aeris aquis et locis* special women (Scitian) are quoted for their rôle as warriors [*De aeris* 17, Li. 2.66]. But they are without the right breast, i.e. half-men: when they are yet babies, their mothers cauterise the breast, so that all strengts and bulk are

diverted to the right shoulder and arm. To the special customs and social conditions of women correspond men with relaxed tissues so that they become impotent, do women's work and live like women [*De aeris* 22]: it is a social pathology!

It might be more useful to make a comparison with the Hellenistic age and Soranus' *Gynaecia*, a work which has been recently critically edited (books I-III) under the auspices of *Belles Lettres*, Paris. In fact, Soranus' view of motherhood is new respect to the Hippocratic treatises, because on the side of women and infants more than in any previous work of gynaecology.

Luciana R. Angeletti

*L'eau, la santé et la maladie dans le monde grec*. BCH Suppl. 28. EFA, Paris 1994 (Actes du Colloque de Paris 25-27 nov. 1992).

Compaiono oggi gli Atti di un Colloquio tenutosi a Parigi dal 25 al 27 novembre 1994, volto ad esaminare un argomento abitualmente lasciato al margine delle discussioni storico - mediche, filologiche ed archeologiche, ed invero meritevole di grande attenzione: lo studio dell'acqua nelle sue relazioni con il concetto di sanità da un lato e di malattia dall'altro.

Elemento infatti ambivalente per la sua stessa duplice natura - l'eau est blanche or noir, froide ou chaude, calme ou tourmentée, source de vie ou porteuse de mort (L. Villard, p. 2) - essa purifica ed insieme è in grado di produrre una singolare ebbrezza, simile a quella causata dal vino (Pierre Villard); guarisce se è utilizzata nelle prescrizioni mediche di Asclepio, nel caso dell'esperienza di Elio Aristide e della codificazione e sistematizzazione galenica (Véronique Boudon); è, d'altra parte, collegata al vocabolario della malattia sin dai testi della C.H., in cui essa è descritta come