
Hippocrates in Context: Papers Read at the XIth International Hippocrates Colloquium, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 27–31 August 2002 edited by Philip J. van der Eijk

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This volume brings together 29 studies concerned with the Hippocratic Corpus that were originally presented at the conference mentioned in its title. The notion of context, to be sure, is a highly flexible one and applicable in about as many different ways as there are perspectives from which the Hippocratic treatises can be studied. But what most of these studies have in common is that they illustrate the tendency in present-day Hippocratic studies to transcend the boundaries of the historiography of medicine in the strict sense and focus on what we may learn from these treatises about the civilization in which they were written and functioned. But if the treatises reflect aspects of Greek society and mentality, the converse process will also have occurred, viz. they will also have influenced other disciplines and other areas of culture. In his introduction, the editor speaks of an interdisciplinary approach needed to study these interactions [xi].

The volume divides into sections corresponding to five main kinds of context:

1. The Epistemological Context of Hippocratic Medicine
2. The Social Context of Hippocratic Medicine
3. ‘Hippocratic’ and ‘Non-Hippocratic’ Medicine
4. The Hippocratic Medical Discourse in its Linguistic and Rhetorical Context
5. The Impact and Later Reception of Hippocratic Medicine.

As such, clearly, the volume caters for various tastes, ranging from the archaeology of Attic cult centers to the $\epsilon\nu$ -/ $\delta\nu\sigma$ - prefixes of Greek vocabulary, though it is weighted in favour of the intellectual context—

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there are no less than three studies of *On Ancient Medicine* (by Barton, Dunn, and Schiefsky) as well as studies of its impact in later periods, which after all constitute a context as well.

One of the questions arising from this interest in context is the obvious one of identifying a relevant context for each treatise under scrutiny. In a number of cases, scholars have rashly assumed a Hippocratic context for what they had found in other, non-Hippocratic texts. Thus, Jacques Jouanna, one of the founding fathers of the modern Hippocrates industry, effectively questions the influence—which has often been too easily accepted—of key Hippocratic notions such as the precipitating cause and the crisis on the thought of the great historians Herodotus and Thucydides, providing a few useful lessons in methodology in the process. Likewise, but from a diachronic perspective, Véronique Boudon shows that the technical notion of medicine as a stochastic art has been unjustifiably traced back to the Hippocratic corpus on the basis of its mere use of the term *στοχάσασθαι* ('estimating the right measure').

This volume brings together contributions from scholars of different generations. On the Hippocratic stage there has always been a strong Mediterranean presence, i.e., work by French, Spanish and Italian scholars (some of whose contributions have here been translated into English) but a number of American and British scholars are here present as well. The age of some of them suggests that Hippocratic studies have a future in their part of the world as well. The whole book thus attests to the health and vigor of this branch of the historiography of Graeco-Roman science. The quality of scholarship is on the whole very good. One welcomes the useful indexes appended at the end.