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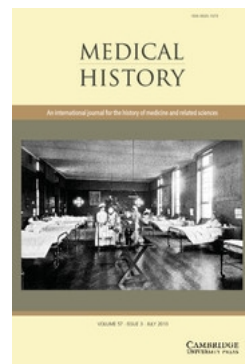
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**Mark Grant, *Galen on food and diet*, London and New York, Routledge, 2000, pp. ix, 214, illus., £15.99 (paperback 0415-23233-3).**

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## Book Reviews

Greek is here followed, despite Schleifer's demonstration that its "Greekness" derived from its incorporation of large chunks of Galen in Syriac translation. Misprints are amazingly few, and none should cause problems, except perhaps for page 169, n. 48, read "Vasquez Bujan", and for the uncoordinated placing of (3) on page 331.

All those concerned in the production of this book deserve the heartiest of congratulations. Whether one is interested in Galen as a writer of Greek and a literary figure or as a medical guru in his own day and across the centuries, this edition offers a magnificent starting point for further research.

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**Mark Grant,** *Galen on food and diet*,  
London and New York, Routledge, 2000,  
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23233-3).

This new selection of translations from Galen arouses mixed feelings in this curmudgeonly reviewer: gratitude for the accessibility of some of the more interesting texts in the Galenic Corpus, constant irritation at the many minor errors and misunderstandings. Mark Grant, an experienced cook as well as a classics teacher, has chosen to turn into English a variety of treatises relating to diet, in both the narrow sense of foodstuffs and the wider one of bodily constitution. *On the powers* (better, properties?) *of foods* is filled with fascinating glimpses of life in the countryside of ancient Greece, and shows Galen's great skill as an observer and an expositor. None of these treatises has previously been available in English, and the translator can only be congratulated, not least on the felicitous way in which Galen's rebarbative Greek has been turned

into something more elegant. His experience with other ancient texts to do with foods and cookery gives his identifications of the names of plants authority.

But there are also many mistakes, some of them serious. On pages 70–3, for example, at 6.458 K. (alas, no references are given to enable those with Greek to cross-check easily), Grant fails to note an essential comparative: "there are even people who can digest beef easier than rock fish" (for Galen, the most digestible of all). At 459 K., technicalities are misunderstood: read, "bile which should flow to the bowels from the liver goes back up to the belly". At 461, pronouns are misunderstood; read, "everything boiled in water takes something from it [the water] and in return contributes something of its own property". The omission of a phrase at the top of 465 then makes nonsense of Galen's careful claim that our digestive processes may be affected by our natural constitution, an acquired condition of the stomach, or the essential nature of the food that is being digested. Similar slips can be found throughout, to be detected only by very close reading and the belief that Galen did not write logical nonsense.

Other problems arise from Grant's decision to follow the old text of Kühn instead of a more modern edition. It is true that many errors in Kühn have little effect on the sense, but sometimes they do. So, at 515 K., the list of Bithynian cities is badly garbled in Kühn, and could have been easily corrected from Helmreich's 1924 CMG edition—or from a glance at any map of the region in Antiquity. At 518 K. mistranslation hides a point of crucial importance: the peasants of Upper Mysia always use einkorn and rice-wheat for their bread *because* their wheat is taken away to the cities (elsewhere Galen notes, under compulsion).

Despite what is said, on page 2, Galen never studied at Corinth; on page 3, these journeys are very unlikely to have been made in 161 (better, 166–7), and I would

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now argue for a date of death even as late as 216/217; on page 5, Galen's style has nothing to do with the "pointed" style of Seneca or Tacitus. More seriously, in a book that claims to be a translation of Galen, only a careful reading of the bibliography reveals that the first treatise 'On the humours' is not in fact by him, but is a much later summary, albeit based on Galenic material. The unwary will go away

believing this to be a work by Galen; the more scrupulous will wonder why the translator did not defend his choice more openly.

It is a pity that such errors and confusions remain to mar what is otherwise a valuable and potentially useful collection.

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