Übersetzen von Paracelsus stets Interpretieren von Paracelsus bedeutet. Er sah sich deshalb oft vor die Entscheidung gestellt, Wortspiele und andere Wendungen möglichst wörtlich zu übersetzen oder dann in die Übersetzung eine gewisse Interpretation einfließen zu lassen. Weeks entschied sich oft für das Letztere mit der Begründung, da der Text ja im deutschen Original quasi als Referenz verfügbar sei. Trotzdem, oder gerade deshalb, überzeugen Weeks Übertragungen oft in erstaunlichem Masse, wenn man schwierige Passagen des deutschen Texts mit der gewählten Übersetzung vergleicht. Der Band ist ferner mit einer ausführlichen Einleitung versehen. Zu allgemeinen Bemerkungen gesellen sich Beschreibungen der Schriften und eine Betrachtung zur Mehrdeutigkeit («ambiguity») bei Paracelsus. Weeks Paracelsus-Ausgabe darf als gelungen bezeichnet werden. Wichtige Werke des Paracelsus werden nicht nur einer breiten englischsprachigen Leserschaft zugänglich gemacht, sondern auch der deutschsprachige Leser wird mit Gewinn die englischen Übersetzungen und die entsprechenden Kommentare heranziehen, um den nicht selten schwierigen Originaltext besser verstehen zu können. Es wäre wünschenswert, wenn diese Form der Edition auf weitere Paracelsus-Schriften ausgedehnt würde.

Urs Leo Gantenbein, Zürich

Pennuto, Concetta: **Simpatia, fantasia e contagio**. Il pensiero medico e il pensiero filosofico di Girolamo Fracastoro. Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2008. XXII, 518 p. (Centuria 5). € 68.–. ISBN 978-88-8498-384-8.

Fracastoro, Girolamo: **De sympathia et antipathia rerum**. Liber I. Ed. Critica, trad. e commento a cura di Concetta Pennuto. Roma, Edizione di storia e letteratura, 2008. CII, 362 p. Ill. € 58.–. ISBN 978-88-8498-383-1.

The two volumes published by Concetta Pennuto reassess with a great deal of competence and scholarship the natural philosophy and medicine of Girolamo Fracastoro (1478–1553) as they are found in his *De sympathia et antipathia rerum*. The interpretative essay and the critical edition (henceforth, *SFC* and *DS* respectively) are the result of a single research project – a doctoral thesis discussed at the University of Geneva in 2005 – which concentrated on the natural-philosophical and medical implications of the concept of *sympathia* in the Veronese physician. Each of the two books is autonomous and fulfills its goal independently from the other, yet there is also a correspondence between the text of *De sympathia* and the structure of the monograph, as the arrangement of its chapters closely follows the content structure of Fracastoro's text. The analysis provided is both focussed in scope and broad in range, as great care is taken with the philosophical sources and to the positioning of Fracastoro's philosophy within the late sixteenth-century philosophical debate.

De sympathia rerum was first published in Venice in 1546 together with the three books of *De contagione, contagiosis morbis et eorum curatione*. The twelve subsequent editions (there could have been more, as some editions mentioned by early sources are not accounted for) that appeared until 1671 are a testimony to Fracastoro's influence, and the printing history of the text is duly reviewed by the author (*DS*, pp. XXXV–XLVII). An influential physician and natural philosopher, controversial astronomer and revered poet during his lifetime, Fracastoro's success faded very grad-

ually though never completely in the early modern era – suffice to say that his poem *Syphilis* continued to be read and translated well into the eighteenth century. *De sympathia* starts off with a list of examples (a “catalogue”) of natural sympathies and antipathies spanning the three realms of the natural world. Traditional cases range from the innate fear of an animal of its predator – the young chick fleeing the sparrow, but not bigger animals such as the horse and the elephant – or the incompatibility between common vegetables – cabbage and rue (*DS*, pp. 12, 14) –, to common places of naturalistic literature, such as the magnetic compass, and the mutual sympathies and antipathies of gold, silver, water and oil (other examples are less familiar, like the deadly *catablepha*, a sort of Ethiopian gnu, which can kill a man with its gaze like Medusa). Contagions are only mentioned by Fracastoro in the final lines. Despite its nature of a brief phenomenological listing, this chapter of *De sympathia* defines the entire character of the work. The inclusion of contagions in this catalogue means that they belong to the *mirabilia*, the wonders of nature that seem to breach the laws of the physical world. These were traditionally explained through insensible agents, or ‘occult qualities’ operating at a distance, and not by direct contact as the natural elements. With this stroke, Fracastoro considers the medical phenomenon of contagion within the much broader framework of natural philosophy. Pennuto stresses this fundamental aspect both in the apparatus of the critical edition and at various stages of her analysis in the monograph. Sympathy and antipathy appear from the outset as the intellectual tools by which all *mirabilia* – including contagions – become understandable in the light of a theory of knowledge (*SFC*, p. 2, but cf. also chapters V and VIII). This, in turn, has close connections with, and to some extent depends on, the general arrangement of the universe and the nature of the beings within it. *De sympathia* does not leave much doubt about this: the first chapter is followed by cosmological discussions on the profound unity and harmony of the cosmos. The principle at the basis of the universe’s structure is what Fracastoro calls *consensus*, that is, the contiguity of the parts in the whole with the aim of self-preservation. Void does not exist in nature, as Aristotle prescribed, and therefore all bodies adhere together and no force (*potentia*) can create void between, or within, bodies (*SFC*, pp. 82–85). Sympathy is the force that binds the bodies together by *cognatio* and *tractio*. In the words of Pennuto, Fracastoro defines sympathy as “*vis conservatrix* that allows the movement of the elements to their natural place, the movement of the inanimate bodies in the whole, the aggregation of mixed bodies from simple ones, the attraction between bodies similar to each other and the repulsion between opposites” (*SFC*, p. 8, and cf. chapter IV). A crucial step in the interpretation of Fracastoro’s concept of *sympathia* is the issue of his alleged atomism – a controversial theme in recent Fracastoro scholarship. According to Pennuto, Fracastoro did not support the Lucretian theory of *semina* and *seminaria*. The recurrence of Lucretian and the atomist tradition’s lexicon in *De sympathia* is not a philosophical blueprint but the result of a process of terminological assimilation and literary imitation (cf. *SFC*, pp. 196–221 and 217, where Lucretius’ *De rerum natura* is mentioned as a model of scientific prose). Instead, Fracastoro adopted the Aristotelian principles, adapted and transformed by the commentary traditions (Averroes, mostly: cf. p. 220; but also the Roman and the Alexandrine traditions, as well as the medieval, namely Albert the Great: cf. p. 204) and with notable insertions from the Neoplatonic traditions (*SFC*, chapter III and pp. 153–159 for a summary). This section of *Simpatia, fantasia e contagio* is the one I found most

interesting as it provides a precise reference grid for the consideration of Fracastoro's natural philosophy with respect to the philosophical debate of the time, from the Paduan school to late sixteenth-century Italian naturalism.

The second part of *De sympathia*, as well as that of Pennuto's essay, is dedicated to the effects of sympathy and antipathy on the soul and the body of the human individual. This discussion is thematically far reaching and studies the multifarious consequences of *consensus* and *dissensus* at all levels of human psychology, from motion and nutrition, to sensation (very interesting for the early-modern debate is the discussion of sounds and harmonies, in *DS*, chapter 14 and *SFC*, pp. 293–302) and knowledge. Also of relevance is the discussion of the effects of sympathies and antipathies on the imagination (or *phantasia*). These can affect human behaviour by triggering reactions such as shame, fear and hate, and even have consequences on the body, as the well-known case of pregnant women transferring their cravings on the skin of their babies (*SFC*, p. 371). Above all, these cases are interesting insofar as they show how the theme of sympathy (and Fracastoro's version of it) concerns a wide cluster of topics at the crossroads between natural philosophy, magic and medicine. Contagion only appears in the very last chapter of *Simpatia, fantasia e contagio*. This theme is not directly addressed in *De sympathia*, yet it is the very reason why the book was written in the first place, and Pennuto provides a relatively concise and interesting analysis of how Fracastoro's thinking finally comes together in order to explain the spreading of infectious diseases without recurring to occult qualities. In fact, contagions spread by contact from one body to the other due to a *consimilis infectio* and the process of putrefaction (*SFC*, pp. 405, 407). Moreover, they can also spread through miasmas and exhalations (like plague) due to the presence of *seminaria* in the body.

Pennuto has done a good service to both Fracastoro specialists and those with intersecting research interests on the subject: Fracastoro's *De sympathia* is an interesting treatise, even when read independently from *De contagione*. Its edition has been handled with competence and care (missing pagination is the only slip-up I found in the copy I received, but this is very likely due to printing error), the translation flows very well, the critical apparatus and commentary bring a substantial amount of primary sources and secondary readings (it takes up more than half the book). The monograph is certainly intended for specialised readership, but it is very readable and explicative. In each chapter Pennuto discusses at some length both the philosophical background and the recent scholarship on the issue at stake, thus providing a challenging but ultimately rewarding read.

Dario Tessicini, Durham (GB)

Ruisinger, Marion Maria: **Patientenwege.** Die Konsiliarkorrespondenz Lorenz Heisters (1683–1758) in der Trew-Sammlung Erlangen. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008. (Medizin, Gesellschaft und Geschichte, Bd. 28). 308 S. € 43.–. ISBN 978-3-515-08806-0.

Le livre de Marion Maria Ruisinger porte sur les consultations épistolaires adressées au médecin et chirurgien de Helmstedt en Basse-Saxe, Lorenz Heister (1683–1758). L'ouvrage est dense, solide et bien construit. Il comporte un index des lieux, des noms