

## Book Reviews

C. J. HACKETT, *Diagnostic criteria of syphilis, yaws and treponarid (treponematoses) and of some other diseases in dry bones (for use in osteo-archaeology)*, Berlin, Heidelberg and New York, Springer-Verlag, 1976, (*Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Mathematisch-naturwissenschaftliche Klasse* 1976, 4. Abhandlung), 8vo, pp. 134, illus., DM.86.00.

Methods of diagnosing or denying syphilis in ancient bones is of vital significance for the interpretation of the early history of syphilis. Dr. Hackett has taken the first essential step, which is the establishment of diagnostic criteria of syphilis in dry bones found in present-day museums of pathology, using macroscopic appearances only. He provides the archaeologist and anthropologist with a comprehensive guide, and with the data he presents osteo-archaeologists will be able to compare or contrast their ancient specimens in an attempt to reach a precise diagnosis. Moreover, as Dr. Hackett suggests, it revives "the dying skill of diagnosis of disease in dry bones". His introduction is an excellent brief survey of current ideas on the origins of syphilis.

This is an important publication, because it introduces precision into a previously imprecise field, and will lead the way to much more accurate assessment of osteo-archaeological material, and eventually, it is to be hoped, to a solution of the origin of the syphilis enigma.

LUISA COGLIATI ARANO, *The medieval health handbook "Tacuinum sanitatis"*, London, Barrie & Jenkins, 1976, 8vo, pp. 153, illus., £10.00.

Although on a medical topic, this book is intended primarily for the historian of art and the manuscript expert. It contains forty-eight coloured illustrations and 243 in black and white taken from manuscripts and depicting the factors influencing health: air; food and drink; movement and rest; sleep and wakefulness; elimination and retention of humours; joy and anger, fear and distress. These must be carefully balanced, for herein lies the secret of health; if they are unbalanced illness occurs.

There is a long introduction with detailed discussions of the extant manuscripts in Liège, Paris, Vienna, Rome, and Rouen, taking into account bibliographical and artistic aspects. There is, however, no account of the medical theories the illustrations are depicting and without it readers will have difficulty in interpreting the legends.

Nevertheless this is a book of high quality production and with this in mind the price is not excessive.

LESTER D. STEPHENS (compiler), *Historiography; a bibliography*, Metuchen, N. J., Scarecrow Press, (Folkestone, Kent, Bailey Bros. & Swinfen), 1976, 8vo, pp. iv, 271, £7.65.

A guide to the widespread and voluminous writings on historiography (usually taken to mean the study of the processes of historical inquiry) has long been needed, and this bibliography is therefore most welcome. There are four sections: 'Theories of history'; 'Historiography'; 'Historical methods'; and a brief listing of reference works. It is, however, intended as only a starting-point to a vaster literature. Like so many American accumulations these days, there is a biased selection of material in English; this is necessary, claims the author, in order to limit the book's scope, which seems to contradict the aims of bibliography.

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Each section is broken down into sub-sections; thus 'Historiography' consists of 'History of historical writing' and 'Studies of historians'. Book and article titles are grouped separately and individual entries have full citations, together with a very brief descriptive comment in many instances. There is a name index only. Many references to sociology are listed, and although 'Psychohistory', that curious and unproven hybrid, is given a separate grouping, the histories of science and medicine are not accorded any special mention.

GIORGIO TAGLIACOZZO and DONALD PHILLIP VERENE (editors), *Giambattista Vico's science of humanity*, Baltimore, Md., and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. xxix, 496, £13.30.

The Neapolitan philosopher, Vico (1668–1744), is now receiving more attention than previously, because by means of a holistic, humanistic idea of man he provides a better way of understanding the human mind and knowledge as far as the imagination, the will, creativity, feeling, the sensuous, and the aesthetic are concerned. Earlier philosophers, especially Descartes, and their schools failed to do this. Vico's classic, *Principi di scienza nuova* (Naples, 1744), is now better known, and its significance for present-day thought better appreciated.

This book continues the process of popularization by presenting twenty-eight essays on Vico's multifarious endeavours. They are in five groups: historical and interpretive studies tracing the development of Vico's thought; Vico's conception of history and historical knowledge and its significance for problems in modern philosophy; Vico, philosophy and the history of philosophy, showing the relationships between him and modern philosophers; Vico and topics in humanistic and social scientific thought; Vico's views on politics. They provide further insights into Vico's thought and into the acceptance of it today, and are all of a high order of scholarship. A list of critical writings on Vico in English provides a most useful reference tool.

The editors and their contributors have produced an important and useful book which will serve for some time as a repository of information concerning Vichian philosophy for the student of early eighteenth-century thought. They will, however, be less keen to use this as a means of solving modern philosophical problems.

P. J. PERRY, *A geography of nineteenth-century Britain*, London, Batsford, 1975, 8vo, pp. xii, 187, illus., £3.20 (paperback).

Although comparable with Darby's *A new historical geography of England*, (1973), no reference is made to it. However, Dr. Perry's book is the more competently written of the two; it includes Scotland, and it is better integrated. It is intended for the historian as well as the geographer and deals with the railway, the cotton industry, mining, the postal system, population, technology, agriculture, and transport, all of which have medical associations and are therefore of importance to the historian of nineteenth-century British medicine. The author's deep knowledge of his subject allows him a wide breadth of view as well as skilful control of his data. His book can be warmly recommended, and it is hoped that it may induce others to look more closely at the many problems of the nineteenth century which have both geographic and medical origins.