

contributions of the medieval Islamic practitioners and the Latin translation centres in Toledo and Salerno. Chapter 4 confronts the early modern Galenic tradition with the world of Nahua materia medica and examines bioprospecting projects in the context of the Spanish colonization of the Americas. Chapter 5 examines the interactions of Galenic pharmacy with the tradition of alchemical pharmacy in the late seventeenth century and the emergence of the ‘chemico-Galenic’ compromise.

De Vos’s clear and methodical presentation of each topic is supported by tables and other illustrative materials. Additionally, several valuable supplements make this book a solid reference for research and teaching: four maps illustrate the wide geographical and temporal reach of her project, and six appendixes (two of them available online) will be a welcome source for researchers, teachers and students alike.

With its incisive and timely contributions to debates surrounding the global turn and focus on material and artisanal practice, as well as its erudite and patient presentation of source material, De Vos’s book will be of great interest to readers of histories of pharmacy and medicine.

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Peter H. Hoffenberg, *A Science of Our Own: Exhibitions and the Rise of Australian Public Science*

**Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019. Pp. 206.
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A Science of Our Own chronicles the importance of exhibitions to the emergence of Australian public science in the second half of the nineteenth century. In his conclusion Hoffenberg asks, ‘Why not consider the exhibition experience as part of the many networks and localities connecting nineteenth-century groups, interests, regions, and other historical or contextual factors?’ (p. 133). Throughout this book, he argues that we should do exactly that.

The book builds upon a similarly titled article from 2011 (“‘A Science of our Own?’ Nineteenth-Century Exhibitions, Australians and the History of Science’, in Brett Bennett and Joseph Hodge (eds.), *Science and Empire: Knowledge and Networks across the British Empire, 1800–1970*, pp. 110–39). The article is reflected in the introduction and first chapter and contains the central argument that exhibitions were not only an important platform for displaying science, but also a way to ‘address fundamental colonial dilemmas’ (p. 38).

The first chapter introduces the perspective at the forefront of this book: that of the Australian settlers and their struggle to establish an independent identity, in relation both to the British Empire and to Indigenous Australians. It also emphasizes the fluidity of the concepts of imperial, British, national, colonial and Australian and the different ways in which the Australian colonies identified themselves. In Chapter 2, we meet some of the scientists who helped shape Australian exhibits and learn about the ways

in which they interacted with both the scientific and public spheres. Chapter 3 zooms in on one particular scientist, Ferdinand von Mueller, a government botanist, and draws similarities between the exhibitions and the botanical gardens in terms of the tension between “rational” science ... [and] “irrational” entertainment’ (p. 73). Chapter 4 discusses the distance between the Australian colonies and the rest of the scientific world, not only in geographical terms but also politically, socially and intellectually. Exhibitions enabled the international exchange of objects and exhibits as well as an element of competition, which advanced the local scientific culture. In Chapter 5 Hoffenberg argues that science was the main instrument for the colonies not only in gaining credibility but also in establishing Australian identity as scientists “discovered,” explained, and represented an Australian past’ (p. 114). Indigenous Australian peoples and their languages and artefacts were studied and displayed alongside and with the same intention as natural history. Through that study, according to the Western settlers, the ‘empty continent’ (p. 106) of Australia gained an established natural and human history for the first time, something both the settlers and the indigenous people could make ‘their own’. Hoffenberg concludes his book by summarizing his arguments and giving some theoretical and historiographical reflections, including on the many meanings that ‘public science’ takes on throughout the book.

This book’s central thesis highlights the importance of exhibits to Australian public science and provides detailed descriptions of the people and objects involved in these exhibits. From time to time, Hoffenberg reiterates the same arguments, filling the book with many different examples that support the same conclusions. These examples and descriptions are interesting and important in their own right, but fall a bit flat when used to explain the same ideas. The combination of passionate argument and reference text did not always work for me, though the separate elements are executed very well and are readable and easy to follow.

Hoffenberg has thoroughly researched his topic and provides many resources for further study (his notes and bibliography comprise 46 of the 206 pages). Nevertheless additional context would have been helpful in places. One of his central arguments is that public science helped shape the Australian identity, but there is no discussion of the other elements that contributed to this identity. This makes the relative impact of public science difficult to ascertain. Another element that I would have liked to see discussed is the relationship between the settlers and Indigenous Australians, especially as a whole chapter is designated to the displaying of Indigenous artefacts, skulls and body casts. The relation of the scientist to these objects is discussed, as well as the acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples as part of the history of the land and thus settler identity, but the agency of Indigenous Australians is left out of the discussion. The story starts when scientists obtain objects for display and ends with the impact of science exhibits on the (perception of) Australian identity, but it rarely goes beyond this scope. This is not necessarily a fault of the book, as it encompasses what is promised, but it is something to keep in mind if you are looking for a broader context to exhibitions and Australian science.

I would recommend this book to anyone with an interest in the role of exhibitions in the advancement of science, the history of British colonial science and nineteenth-century Australia, especially if you already have a general idea of the context in which these topics exist and are looking for a more in-depth resource.

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