

## Book Reviews

xix). Despite a tendency to interpretative ad hoc-ism, it does bring together the important monographic work (e.g. Bynum, Searle, Stocking, Young) that has been done, and in some instances offers perceptive independent readings of particular figures. One might quarrel with the decision to focus on the natural sciences in isolation from the social (and the failure adequately to appreciate the way in which Lamarckian assumption linked the two – archetypically in the work of Herbert Spencer, who is cited only three times), but, for the most part, the argument seems unexceptionable. While it climbs no interpretative heights, many readers may find this a “useful” book.

George Stocking  
University of Chicago

FELIX KLEIN-FRANKE, *Vorlesungen über die Medizin im Islam*, (Sudhoffs Archiv, Beiheft 23), Wiesbaden, Steiner, 1982, 8vo, pp. viii, 161, DM. 52.00 (paperback).

Comprehensive surveys of Islamic medicine have never been common and, until recently, they have been mainly out of print. To examine this latest addition to so distinguished a series has thus been a matter of especial interest.

The initial chapters trace the historical development of medical knowledge and practice from the earliest surviving references, particularly in Arabic poetry. Here the author liberally recounts anecdotes from Ibn Abī Uṣaibi‘a and others, and the reader may be surprised to find the word “Physiker” used in a rather specialized sense. The important chapter on Islam’s freely acknowledged debt to works translated from Greek clearly advances Islamic medicine as very much more than the mere perpetuation of a tradition derived from Greece, as the attention given to this field today might suggest. The author also illustrates the Arabs’ familiarity with the problems of textual criticism, and adds that they knew of Hippocrates largely through Galen’s commentaries. Apart from sections on Dogmatic and Empirical medicine, the remainder of the work discusses medicine’s relationship to religion and to astrology (the human body seen as a microcosm that responded to healing best when the macrocosm was benevolent).

As the title suggests, this work claims to be no more than an introductory guide for students new to the field. Misprints apart, its style is clear and accessible, and absolutely no knowledge of Arabic is assumed. The specialist, however, may well feel that certain aspects deserve fuller treatment, and he should not expect to be led towards unknown horizons.

Ian Cassells  
Pembroke College, Cambridge

WOLF ZUELZER, *The Nicolai case. A biography*, Detroit, Mich., Wayne State University Press, 1982, 8vo, pp. viii, 463, illus., \$30.00.

“Barbarus hic ego sum, quia non intelligor ulli.” This quotation from Ovid’s *Tristia* could be the leitmotiv of Georg Friedrich Nicolai’s whole life, not so much as a physician, but rather as a pacifist and humanitarian. Wolf Zuelzer deserves merit for this carefully researched and well-written biography, which does justice to a fairly difficult personality of encyclopaedic dimension and at the same time contributes extensively to our understanding not only of Wilhelmine Germany at war but even more so to that of the early period of the Weimar Republic.

Nicolai, the sometimes stubborn pacifist troublemaker, went through an ordeal as the victim of outraged hatred in the early 1920s which eventually forced him to leave Germany. His own scepticism about the real achievements of the German Revolution of 1918 proved all too true when he became the focus of fanatical antisemitic and nationalistically inspired student protests, ending, remarkably enough, in his “excommunication” from the academic community of Berlin University. He remained the *barbarus* not because his compatriots were unable to understand his ideas, but because they were unwilling to accept his new religion of humanity. Neither would they agree to his moral code based on the common biological and cultural denominators of mankind fighting an oversimplified and crude Darwinism which served the German public not only during the First World War, when Nicolai published his *The biology of war*. This was secretly distributed in a mere 2,000 copies and reached a greater audience only

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after the German collapse in its second edition of 1919. Here he argued from the point of view of bourgeois European culture in favour of saving civilization by a union of European states, including all those other nations whose culture derives directly or indirectly from Europe's.

Nicolai's Eurocentrism even went so far that he declared genocide to be understandable in the case of a Mongolian threat because in his opinion Asians were the natural enemies of the white man in the contest between the races to rule the world. This point might indicate that rationality in itself could lead to rather strange results. Probably this is part of the explanation of why Nicolai is virtually forgotten in Germany, another part being his bourgeois attitude which sometimes tended to be not far from arrogance towards possible co-fighters for peace and a better and more rational world. One is inclined to subscribe to Zuelzer's judgement that Nicolai was his own worst enemy. But his peculiarities certainly should not be taken as an excuse for continuing to neglect him as an uncompromising pacifist and European humanist who tried so hard to dig out traditions of tolerance, humanitarianism, idealism, and liberalism from German history. The story of Nicolai's failure and shortcomings immediately after 1918 provides a depressing picture of the political atmosphere in which a first attempt was undertaken to establish democracy in Germany.

Hans-Gerhard Husung  
German Historical Institute, London

WOLFGANG SCHNEIDER, *Paracelsus – Autor der Archidoxis Magica?* (Veröffentlichungen aus dem pharmaziegeschichtlichen Seminar der Technischen Universität Braunschweig, vol. 23), Stuttgart, Deutscher Apotheker Verlag, 1982, 8vo, pp. 30 + facsimile, DM. 15.00 (paperback).

The idea that Paracelsus was also a practising magus has been largely based on the *Archidoxis Magica*. This treatise had been regarded as spurious already in Huser's classical edition of the works, where it was relegated to the Appendix to the last volume. It is a richly illustrated corpus of magical signs and seals, mostly attached to amulets. The arrangement of the text varies in manuscript and printed versions. Inspired by the acquisition of a new manuscript, the author, the greatest living authority on Paracelsus' pharmacology and chemistry, now submits in the present book a detailed collation of all the versions available. The new arrangement of the text leaves the normally discredited genuineness of the treatise less unlikely than before on the strength of the higher age of the new manuscript. His conclusion is: the work as such is spurious, but the first four books of the treatise may very well be genuine. Tentatively, their date could be the same as that of the genuine *Archidoxis*, the fundamental chemical textbook of Paracelsus, namely 1526. As with all of Schneider's publications, the present book, which also contains a full facsimile of the new manuscript, is of great importance and interest.

Walter Pagel

CORNELIA D. SONNTAG, *Zur Geschichte der Apothekenprivilegien*, Stuttgart, Deutscher Apotheker Verlag, 1982, 8vo, pp. xviii, 267, DM. 28.00.

This modestly produced book is volume eighteen in a series entitled "Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Pharmazie", and by no means the least important. Our knowledge, in Britain, of the organization of pharmaceutical practice in Germany and other Continental countries, is so slight that the book could with advantage be translated into English. The concept of rulers or governing bodies granting to pharmacists, privileges and monopolies by means of a "privilegium", to which in return the pharmacist had to comply with certain conditions, is so foreign to us, that its comprehension comes with quite a shock. Miss Sonntag traces the history of these "privilegia" in one small part of Germany, the Duchy of Cleves, whose sole interest to most English people is that it supplied Henry VIII with his fourth wife. Owing to Cleves' geographical position, its fortunes have been even more varied than many other principalities, and as these frequently involved changes in pharmaceutical legislation, this has necessitated the writing of a carefully detailed history of the Duchy, which, however, could have been improved by the use of better maps.