1610 and 1622. From them one can see how different their view of epidemic disease was from our own, and, in passing, they reveal their awareness of the appalling social and economic consequences if they announced the arrival of plague. Cipolla's doctors uncover a variety of diseases, influenza, malaria, typhus, smallpox, which they treat with a variety of therapies. They note the consequences of poverty and malnutrition, often invoke government help in their relief. Venesection is rarely and carefully advocated, a far more typical situation than the mass bleeding implied elsewhere by Cipolla.

As always, his vignettes give a whiff of the malodorous life of the past, but one looks for a more extended commentary on the ideas behind the epidemiology. Ann Carmichael's studies of the variety of epidemic disease in Florence and Milan go unnoticed, and the claims for the superiority of North Italian Health Boards, p. 1, neglect the parallel developments at this period in Holland and in some German cities. Transcription and translation are also shakier than previously: e.g. p. 44, the Hippocratic quotation should read "hebetantes et" (Latin is left largely untranslated); p. 8, Asburgo-Lorena is more familiar as Hapsburg-Lorraine; and p. 35, Dr Cartegni held the Ordinary Chair in Medical Theory, not in the theory of ordinary medicine.

Vivian Nutton, Wellcome Institute

GUY SABBAH (ed.), *Le latin médical: La constitution d'un langage scientifique*, Actes du III[e] Colloque international 'Textes médicaux latins antiques' (Saint-Étienne, 11–13 septembre 1989), Centre Jean-Palerne Mémoires X, Saint-Étienne, Université Jean Monnet, 1991, pp. 424, illus. (paperback, 2–86272–016–X).

The vigorous revival of studies in Roman medicine is due in no small part to the work of the directors and collaborators of the Centre Jean-Palerne in Saint-Étienne. This is the fifth volume of their *Mémoires* to be dedicated to this field.

Those interested in the theory and practice of ancient medicine should not be put off by the title; neither should philologists and linguists raise their hopes too high. The collection covers all aspects and periods of Roman medicine (including two papers on veterinary medicine), and the overall standard of the contributions, including notes and references, is very high, but the yield in insights into the express focus of the conference and its proceedings is meagre.

The book—it is presented as a book—falls into three sections. I ('La tradition latine') contains seven contributions on the Latin (and Arabic) textual tradition of Greek medicine; the last of these makes some valuable remarks on central linguistic issues and belongs properly in section III. II ('Les mots et les choses') comprises seven articles on miscellaneous *realia* lying behind expressions in medical texts. III ('Le latin médical') embraces seventeen pieces in 250 pages ostensibly on the subject of the title of the whole; several are concerned more with points of history, ancient theory, textual criticism and similar matters than with the formation of a Latin medical language, and could have constituted a fourth section.

The idea of a collection on (ancient) medical Latin is a good one. A more than superficial treatment of the subject is much needed and a perfectly feasible project, given the groundwork for linguistic research laid by editors, historians of medicine and archaeologists. Unfortunately, for all the promise of the title, the sub-title and the preface, there is little here on the formation and development of a scientific language of medicine in Latin. Of the thirty-one papers presented, only eleven are primarily linguistic in intent and substance. Important linguistic questions about medical Latin, which are adumbrated in a most promising fashion in the preface (pp. 5–6), receive attention only in footnotes and in odd general remarks here and there, in what seems to be mere lip-service to the professed theme of the whole.

The concepts "scientific language", "technical terminology" receive little attention, although reflection in general terms and comparison with the modern world may be helpful. For instance, a modern scientific language is not less worthy of the name for showing (like medical Latin) considerable variation in its terminology along parameters other than the time-axis, nor for containing a large number of fully-integrated loanwords (contrast p. 96).

It is claimed that the same linguistic means of term-formation as those found in Celsus continued to be used by medical writers until the fifth century, with variation only in detail (pp. 184, 200–1; contrast p. 87). Given the level of generality of the description (borrowing; affixation; semantic extension; use of noun phrases), it would be amazing were other linguistic means found; still, no mention is made of the use of proper names in naming medicaments and instruments. The differences (developments?) in *details*—such as the status of Greek terms, the types of semantic extension, the lexical function of favoured suffixes, the use of nominalisation—are clear, interesting, surely the very stuff of *le latin médical*.

On the other hand, some studies of narrow scope yield interesting results on particular authors, notably on Celsus (the proposed focus of *Mémoires* XII, to appear in 1993); on Marcellus of Gaul; and on the possible link in terminology between fourth/fifth-century Roman Africa and the translators of eleventh-century Italy. The question of the continuity of development of medical Latin is one on which linguists may return a favour in providing evidence to historians of medicine whose research has made possible linguistic work in this field.

D. R. Langslow, Wolfson College, Oxford

DAVID ROSNER and GERALD MARKOWITZ, *Deadly dust: silicosis and the politics of occupational disease in twentieth-century America*, Princeton University Press, 1991, pp. xiii, 229, $29.95 (0–691–04758–8).

What is silicosis? In medical dictionaries the answer looks straightforward. To paraphrase, it is a lung disease which increases susceptibility to tuberculosis. Contracted through inhalation of silica dust particles, it affects workers in mineral mining, quarrying, stone masonry, and sand blasting. Symptoms include pulmonary fibrosis and progressive breathlessness. There is, however, little certainty about the public health threat posed by the disease. Today, some US specialists see this as minimal, while others argue that occupational exposure to silica dust continues to damage the health and shorten the lifespan of millions of Americans.

In *Deadly dust* Rosner and Markowitz are concerned only incidentally with epidemiology and scientific discovery. Their primary interest is in social context and the way in which changes in that context can alter attitudes towards and perceptions of disease. What is it, they inquire, that makes a particular health threat a public issue at a particular time? By examining the twentieth-century American history of silicosis they elucidate how cultural, political, economic, and industrial considerations define disease. They document how, after 1900, developments such as the changing relative power of labour and capital put silicosis into and out of the public consciousness. During the depression years of the thirties silicosis became "an issue of national import" but, by the fifties, it had ceased to attract virtually any attention.

Rosner and Markowitz argue that the "rise and decline" of silicosis owed little to objective changes in morbidity and mortality rates. Of far greater importance were the struggles of conflicting interest groups. Thus, while poverty-stricken, unemployed workers of the depression years struggled to broaden medico-legal definitions of silicosis in order to facilitate lawsuits, insurers and industrialists fought for narrower definitions and a more circumscribed liability. In the 1930s the silicosis lawsuit became, for many workers "a legitimate alternative to charity". But as the chances of a successful action diminished, the sick became reluctant to reveal symptoms of lung disease because of the risk of dismissal and a future with neither wages nor compensation.

Until the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act in 1970 there was not only little interest in the history of occupational health and safety in the US, but also a widely-held assumption that the field was a barren one. Since that time the position has changed completely. While Rosner and Markowitz's thesis is not entirely original, their book, richly documented and cogently argued as it is, represents an important addition to what has now become a substantial corpus of US occupational health history.

Peter Bartrip, Wolfson College, Oxford