

Book Notices

James S Lee, *The underworld of the East: being eighteen years' actual experiences of the underworlds, drug haunts and jungles of India, China and the Malay archipelago*, introduction by Mike Jay, London, Green Magic, 2000, pp. 192, £9.99 (paperback 0-9536631-1-6). Distributed by Counter Culture, BCM Inspire, London WC1N 3XX.

Mike Jay has done historians of medicine, particularly those who write about drugs, self-experimentation, or indigenous medicines, an immense favour by saving James Lee's 1930 classic tale of drug use from obscurity. His introduction is helpful in placing Lee's book in its social context: when the Dangerous Drugs Act of 1920 came into force. Before the Act, it was possible to buy cocaine, marijuana, and heroin (but not synthetic party-drugs like ecstasy, amphetamines, or LSD) at the local chemist, without prescription.

Lee's memoirs follow his initial use of morphia, a drug to which he became addicted, but he remedied this addiction by swapping his dose with cocaine on the advice of his doctor. Lee also experimented with hashish—far superior to *ganja* and other cheaper forms of marijuana, he claims. He took numerous psychedelics, including some new ones found in the jungles of the East. His descriptions of these drugs and their effects could give credibility to the claims about drugs which some historians make, but—perhaps—are not based on personal experiences. It also makes us rethink some of our preconceptions about the “typical” drug user of the early-twentieth century.

Klaus-Dietrich Fischer, *Bibliographie des textes médicaux latins: antiquité et haut moyen âge, premier supplément 1986–1999*,

Université de Saint-Etienne, Centre Jean-Palmerie, 2000, pp. 62. Orders to: Centre Jean-Palmerie, 35 rue du Onze-Novembre, 42023 Saint-Etienne Cedex 2, France.

This supplement to the 1987 *Bibliographie*, containing over 150 entries, shows the continued growth of interest in Latin medical texts, especially from Late Antiquity. It refers to several first editions, particularly of anonymous sections drawn from more famous authors, e.g. Soranus. The most interesting new discovery is that of Byzantius (if that is his name), an early Byzantine author who survives for the most part in fragments of an early medieval Latin translation. Also important is a fragment of a (6th century?) Latin translation of Hippocrates' *Air, waters and places*. Scholars will be grateful to Professor Fischer for making so accessible the results of his and others' researches.

BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review. Items received, other than those assigned for review, are ultimately incorporated into the collection of the Wellcome Library.)

Emily K Abel, *Hearts of wisdom: American women caring for kin, 1850–1940*, Cambridge, MA, and London, Harvard University Press, 2000, pp. ix, 326, £34.50 (hardback 0-674-00314-4).

Vincent Barras and Michel Porret (eds), *Homo criminalis: pratiques et doctrines médico-légales (XVI^e–XX^e siècles)*, *Equinoxe. Revue de Sciences Humaines*, autumn 1999, No. 22, pp. 143, SFr 33.00, FF 132.00 (2-940227-05-5).