

## Book Notices

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CARMÉLIA OPSOMER, *Index de la pharmacopée du Ier au Xe siècle*, 2 vols., Alpha-Omega Reihe A: Lexica, Indizes, Konkordanzen zur klassischen Philologie, Hildesheim, Georg Olms, 1989, 8vo, pp. lxxviii, 824, DM 248.00.

This index, the first fruits of the THEOREMA project in Brussels, lists the substances recorded in Latin pharmacopoeias, from Celsus and Scribonius Largus in the first century to Walafrid Strabo in the ninth, and some anonymous collections in the tenth. It includes early translations of Greek authors into Latin, e.g., Rufus' *De podagra*, but not Western vernacular writings or those in Greek. Pliny's *Natural History* is, perhaps unfortunately, excluded, but the *Medicina Plinii* and the Bamberg Pliny are here; the index of substances in the Loeb edition of Pliny fills some of the gap, but is not comprehensive. This index will prove a valuable aid not only to tracing the uses of particular drugs, both mineral and herbal, but also to following the fortunes of particular blocks of recipes.

JOSEPH SHATZMILLER, *Médecine et justice en Provence médiévale: documents de Manosque, 1262–1348*, Aix-en-Provence, l'Université de Provence, 1989, pp. 285.

The author has combed the archives of Manosque, 40 miles northeast of Marseille, for references to medical activity there in the century before the Black Death. He here gives a précis of each of 84 Latin documents containing such material, offering as well a transcription of its medically most significant portion. In a brief introduction he comments on some striking features of the documentation: as many as eight practitioners (counting physicians, surgeons, and barbers, but excluding apothecaries; Jews as well as Christians) may have been active simultaneously in the medieval town of perhaps four thousand inhabitants. Two-thirds of the documents record testimony given by practitioners before a court, and are particularly interesting for their presentation of very early forensic testimony regarding wounds or post-mortem examinations. However, the introduction does not always square with the documentary evidence provided: in the former, "document no. 7" is quoted to show that, dating from 1280, it is nine years earlier than the oldest forensic testimony hitherto known (pp. 39–40); but the document in question (actually numbered "5") as edited carries the date "1290".

PARACELSUS, *Essential readings*, selected and transl. by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, Wellingborough, Northants, Crucible, 1990, 8vo, pp. 208, £7.99 (paperback).

This interesting selection of Paracelsus' writings, lucidly turned into English, can be given a qualified welcome. Its perspective is that of modern alternative medicine, and hence its extracts are less familiar. So sections of the *Paramirum* and *Astronomia magna* are here, rather than *On miner's diseases*. There is a useful introduction, setting out, perhaps too confidently, the life and ideas of Paracelsus. But the process of selection inevitably imposes problems. The passages are longer than in the Jacobi selection, but, even so, they are often wrenched from their context, and the whole strange melange of ideas that makes up the world of Paracelsus is thereby made far more coherent than, in all likelihood, it ever was. The bibliography is skewed heavily towards the mystical. There is no mention of the very useful biography, *The man who was Faust*, by Pachter, and the four English translations by Sigerist, Temkin, and Zilboorg are oddly absent. The two most valuable short introductions to Paracelsus, Pagel's article in the *D.S.B.* and Temkin's survey in his *The double face of Janus*, are also missing. But one can be grateful for what is here on offer, and wish for more.

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H. FLORIS COHEN (ed.), *Tractrix: yearbook for the history of science, medicine, technology, and mathematics*, vol. 1, Dutch Society for the History of Medicine and Science, 1989, 8vo, pp. 154, illus., dist. Rodopi, Amsterdam and Atlanta.

Historians of science and medicine will welcome the appearance of the first volume of this journal, designed to make the researches of Dutch scholars more readily available to wider audiences (all the articles are in English, French or German). Of special interest is a first-rate article by Frank Huisman, 'Itinerant medical practitioners in the Dutch Republic: the case of Groningen', which, in line with recent findings from Britain, indicates that there was less of a medical divide than hitherto believed between regular and irregular practitioners in the early modern period, while stressing the construction of the "itinerant" as a "deviant", excluded from Dutch urban culture.

OVE HAGELIN (comp.) *Rare and important medical books in the library of the Swedish Society of Medicine: a descriptive and annotated catalogue*, Svenska Läkaresällskapetets Handlingar 98, pt. 4, Stockholm, Svenska Läkaresällskapet (P.O. Box 558, S-10127 Stockholm, Sweden), 1989, 4to, pp. 176, illus., Skr. 395.00.

The Library of the Swedish Society of Medicine, formed in 1807, began as a lending library of professional literature, but the march of medical progress soon created problems. As early as 1820, its officers tried to deposit older volumes elsewhere, without great success, and like many similar medical institutions, the library declined into a graceful sleep, beloved of bibliophiles and rarely consulted. This beautifully produced catalogue, the first of a possible series, is aimed at awakening interest in this historic collection, which includes Linnaeus' own copy of his *Systema Naturae* (1735), with its very rare *Methodus* leaf. Each entry is accompanied by a plate, a detailed bibliographical description of the book or volume, and a sketch of its author and its significance. Pride of place must go to a 1628 Harvey (pp. 60–5), and the *Urtegaard* of Henrik Smith (1557), but almost every entry contains something of interest to the medical historian. Further such catalogues are eagerly awaited.

KNUT HAEGER, *The illustrated history of surgery*, London, Harold Starke, 1989, 8vo, pp. 288, illus., £25.00.

Prospective purchasers of this history could do worse than consult the bibliography before parting with their money. The work has the flavour of being carefully compiled from a small number of older and sometimes quite inadequate secondary sources and a bibliographical check seems to confirm this impression. Indeed some of the best, older, secondary sources, such as the works of Sir D'Arcy Power, are missing. The book therefore is as comprehensive as its sources allow and as limited as they force it to be. This is most unfortunate for this is an exceptionally well-produced volume. It is beautifully designed, typographically imaginative, and crammed with well-produced but sometimes ludicrous illustrations (connoisseurs of Ernest Board have a treat in store). It is a great shame to see this sort of lavish care squandered on such utterly second-rate history and unreflective popularization. The work is a mere shadow, by comparison, of *A history of surgery* by Daniel de Moulin which appeared in the previous year. I did, however, learn one thing of interest from this book. Roger Bacon (1214–92), the author tells us, "came close to inventing gunpowder" (p. 90) (How close can you get?)

JANET COLAIZZI, *Homicidal insanity, 1800–1985*, History of American Science and Technology Series, Tuscaloosa and London, University of Alabama Press, 1989, 8vo, pp. x, 182, illus., \$23.95.

The idea of tracing the history of homicidal insanity is promising, intriguing, and original. Janet Colaizzi has written a workmanlike survey of psychiatric principles and practice in respect of dangerous lunatics and the treatment of homicidal maniacs in Britain and the United

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States since the close of the eighteenth century. She rightly emphasizes the seminal thinking of Pinel and Esquirol on the monomanias, and of Prichard on moral insanity. Nevertheless, in the end her subject proves somewhat artificial (because murderous madness was never a major problem area of psychiatry, at least before degenerationism), and her treatment tends to fall between several stools. Not least, the examination of two centuries of psychiatric ideas, court cases, legal theory, and public opinion in just 130 pages of text makes for a certain superficiality. There are many gaps (no discussion, for example, of the Hadfield or McNaghten cases), numerous mistakes (*Michael* Foucault, for instance), and the text overall lacks the close focus on key questions that distinguishes Roger Smith's *Trial by medicine* (1981).

FRANÇOISE TILKIN, *Quand la folie se racontait. Récit et antipsychiatrie*, Faux Titre: Études de langue et littérature françaises, Amsterdam and Atlanta, Rodopi, 1990, 8vo, pp. 416, Dfl. 120.00, \$60.00 (paperback).

The history of the anti-psychiatry movement in Britain remains to be written. This volume, exploring the French contexts and participants, would provide an excellent model and basis for comparisons. Emphasizing the wider philosophical and belle lettristic currents in French culture which prepared the ground for critiques of orthodox psychiatry—Foucault, Derrida, Althusser, Lacan, the Tel Quel group, and, slightly further back, Sartre and Bataille, Tilkin above all stresses how French institutional psychiatry had already, for many generations, been deeply embroiled in political controversy (partly the legacy of the ambiguous alliance of anti-clerical psychiatric doctors with the secularized state), before becoming a prime target in the student counter-culture of the 1960s. Tilkin's account valuably demonstrates that French anti-psychiatry possessed a broader intellectual base than its British equivalent, and a bigger following amongst the community of analysts, but fewer vociferous supporters within institutional psychiatry itself.

DIANA ELIZABETH LONG and JANET GOLDEN (eds.), *The American general hospital: communities and social contexts*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1989, 8vo, pp. xvi, 217, illus., \$34.95, \$10.95 (paperback).

The essays in this book meet a high standard, and it is a pity that so many years have elapsed since the papers on which they are based were delivered, in 1984. Some chapters, like Joan E. Lynaugh's, on Kansas City hospitals between 1875 and 1920; Susan Reverby's, on the ambivalent relationship between "science" and nursing in the twentieth century; David Rosner's, on hospital administrators; and Brian Greenberg's, on the interconnections of the Civil Rights movement, third-party payment schemes, and hospital unionizers in New York City in the 1960s, now stand as introductions to larger projects that have since been published. Rima Apple has contributed an elementary presentation of photographs as source materials for hospital history; Vanessa Northington Gamble a history of the black hospital movement to 1945; and Joel Howell shows how much the changing uses of x-rays, electrocardiographs, and (perhaps most dramatically) printed record forms reveal about the history of the twentieth-century American hospital. Finally, Rosemary A. Stevens's conclusion looks forward to the future. The book is more coherent than most essay collections: the theme of "communities", both within and outside the hospital, proves durable. However, in spite of the editors' introductory protestations, only Charles Rosenberg's splendid overview of the history of American hospitals manages to convince the reader that hospital history really *is* relevant to the state of the institution today, not least because he takes the view that the historians' task is to understand and communicate that understanding, "not to forgive all".

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DAVID H. A. BOYD, *Leith Hospital 1848–1988*, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1990, 8vo, pp. x, 169, illus., £16.00.

Histories of local infirmaries are not that scarce but few institutions of this sort have been as well served as the Leith hospital. Christine Hoy's richly illustrated and anecdotal *A beacon in our town* appeared in 1988 and now Dr Boyd's more detailed study adds substance to the story. Quite conventional in its approach, Dr Boyd's meticulous history could well serve as a model for other aspiring chroniclers. He has been fortunate in his choice of subject. Founded in 1848 and closed in 1988, with the possibility of re-opening soon as a "community hospital", Leith infirmary has abundant documentary resources for writing its history. Dr Boyd has used this material carefully and informatively with full footnoting throughout. Although there are many local peculiarities in the infirmary's history, it must also be a story typical of many small voluntary hospitals which survived and changed during various epochal upheavals: two world wars, medical specialization in the nineteen-twenties and -thirties, the creation of the NHS. Dr Boyd's account illustrates the effect of these wider changes very well and the book is to be recommended as being both of local and general interest.

JOHN M. GIBSON, *Physician to the world: the life of General William C. Gorgas* (1950), repr. ed. with an introduction by Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins, Tuscaloosa and London, University of Alabama Press, 1990, 8vo, pp. xx, 315, illus., £13.95 (paperback).

This is a timely reprint edition of a biography of the man whose public health policy, in the teeth of ill-informed and obstructionist bureaucracy, made possible the building of the Panama Canal by the Americans, where the French had failed two decades earlier.

Gibson, who died in 1966, was by profession a journalist, and it shows, both in the style of writing, and in the regrettable absence of specific notes and references. The present reprint comes under the imprint of the University of Alabama, of which William Gorgas's father was once president, and with a critical introduction by one of that university's historians, who has attempted to trace some of the information provided to its proper sources.

On the other hand, Gibson's journalist's instinct makes his book a good read, and it deserves the easier availability of this paperback edition. The story of Gorgas's campaigns, on the Isthmus of Panama and elsewhere, also illustrates the importance of common-sense methods of epidemiology and public health in control of endemic disease. It was his untiring efforts to clean up the local environment, and to eradicate the vector, i.e. the mosquito, by depriving it of suitable breeding grounds, which in the end transformed "the white man's grave" into a canal zone in which men could live and work.

ALFRED W. CROSBY, *America's forgotten pandemic: the influenza of 1918*, a repr., with a new preface, of *Epidemic and peace, 1918* (1976), Cambridge University Press, 1990, 8vo, pp. xiv, 337, £30.00/\$39.50, £9.95/\$12.95 (paperback).

In 1978, *Medical History's* anonymous reviewer of *Epidemic and peace, 1918*, commended its "scholarly precision and thoroughness" in relating the history of the influenza pandemic in the United States. The reviewer could have added that Professor Crosby told the story with a fine narrative mastery of events that happened too fast for rational comprehension, and a diabolical ability to make the reader laugh. The reason for the title change is self-evident—as Crosby writes in his new preface, when the book was first published, the "loss of a twenty-year-old to communicable disease in the United States seemed as likely as his being hit by a falling tree"—but the book is as much about how a country moves into war, and out again, as it is about an epidemic.

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GEORGE TIEMANN & Co., *American armamentarium chirurgicum* (1889) repr. with an Introduction by James M. Edmondson and F. Terry Hambrecht, San Francisco, Norman Publishing, Boston, The Printers' Devil, 1989, 4to, pp. 60, xv, 846, illus., \$165.00.

George Tiemann, born in Lower Saxony in 1793, emigrated to America in 1826. Shortly after arriving he opened a cutlery shop in Lower Manhattan. By the end of the century the company, George Tiemann & Co., now run by two of Tiemann's relatives, had become the most distinguished manufacturer and retailer of surgical instruments in the United States. It is the company's mammoth catalogue of 1889 which is reprinted here. As in many other surgical-instrument catalogues of this period, the articles for sale include not only surgical devices but technological items pertaining to nearly all aspects of medical practice. The present reprint has a scholarly and helpful introduction describing the history of the company and the nineteenth-century surgical-instrument trade in America. Tiemann's catalogue merits interest as more than a convenient and picturesque record of the medical technology available in 1889. For the catalogue itself deserves attention as a state-of-the-art sales device. Sumptuously produced (as is the expensive and limited reprint), copiously illustrated, extensively annotated, perfectly indexed; how many medical men browsing through it could have resisted acquiring slices of modernity surplus to their requirements?

C. D. L. LYCETT, *Sir William Robert Smith 1850–1932: a short biography*, London, Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene, 1989, 8vo, pp. 131, £15.00.

Dr Lycett has rescued Smith's achievements from the near oblivion he shares with many eminent public health doctors. He has consulted numerous archives, including those of the Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene (of which Smith was a founder). His approach is purely descriptive but the material he has used offers the potential for further research on the debates surrounding preventive and state medicine from the 1880s to the 1920s.

DAVID SINCLAIR, *Not a proper doctor*, The Memoir Club, London, British Medical Journal, 1989, 8vo, pp. x, 329, illus., £14.95, abroad £18.50, including (air) postage.

Holden Caulfield's line about "all that David Copperfield kind of crap", the epigraph to the first chapter of this autobiography, is a pleasant foil to the acuteness and charity with which Sinclair describes his childhood, and in particular the difficult character of his father. Sinclair writes well, and has a nice line in inversions: I like the notion of the "defatigable" traveller. Defatigable or not, stories about travels, and friends along the way, dominate this account of a life spent in Scotland, England, and Australia. After a fascinating chapter on his war-time research on the chemical weapons of anthrax and mustard gas, the reader is a little disappointed not to hear more about the author's later work on sensation, and medical curricula. The index is a model for the genre.

### 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 Institute for the History of Medicine.)

E. B. ADAMS, *In search of truth: a portrait of Don Craib*, London and New York, Royal Society of Medicine Services, 1990, 8vo, pp. xi, 123, illus., £12.95, £7.95 (paperback).

LILIANE BODSON and ROLAND LIBOIS (eds.), *L'Histoire des connaissances zoologiques et ses rapports avec la zoologie, l'archéologie, la médecine vétérinaire, l'ethnologie*, Colloques d'histoire des connaissances zoologiques 1, Université de Liège, 1990, 8vo, pp. iv, 74, BFr. 275.00.