

No group took greater interest in the new venture, nor played a larger role, than medical men. "It is on the Medical Branch of the New University", wrote Henry Warburton, the indispensable figure of these early years, "that its success or failure . . . hinges" (p. 86). Some friends of the University even warned of the danger that it might become "exclusively medical" (p. 138). Throughout the 1840s and early 1850s the movement to grant medical graduates a licence to practice was stymied by the medical corporations, by preoccupied or indifferent government ministers, and by the wish of other universities to be included in the privilege. Not until 1854 were London graduates victorious in the fight to win equality with Oxbridge graduates. Four years later came the Medical Registration Act that ended a half-century of effort to bring some measure of order into the chaos of British practice.

One can only admire the diligence and extraordinary detail which the author brings to this account. Only the most interested reader will follow closely the almost day-to-day recounting of forgotten academic squabbles, including the records of attendance and votes at meetings, the agendas of committee meetings, and the detailed biographies of scores of players in the ongoing debates. But for the concerned scholar, the work offers an important, closely researched, retelling of the origins of the University of London.

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Wolfgang U Eckhart and Christoph Gradmann (eds), *Ärztlexikon: Von der Antike bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich, C H Beck, 1995, pp. 439, DM/SFr 29.80 (3-406-37485-9).

Eckhart and Gradmann's book is the latest in a series of encyclopedias, covering various subjects (for instance the social structure of medieval societies or the history of craftsmanship), published by C H Beck. These encyclopedias aim to give a clear, informative overview, for the educated reader, not only for

specialized scientists. The *Ärztlexikon* fits very well into this general frame. The editors stress that they offer a quick approach to the contemporary state of knowledge and they justly identify biographies as an important part of the history of medicine in general. The criteria for adopting a certain person's biography are always difficult to define, particularly when there is only relatively limited space available. Eckhart and Gradmann focus on the main stream of academic physicians as far as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are concerned, for earlier periods (they go back to antiquity) they tried to select people who made significant contributions to the development of medicine, because modern standards of scholarship can not be applied there. They also included persons who achieved excellence outside medicine, but whose biographies are influenced by their medical education (for instance Arthur Conan Doyle or Alfred Döblin). The encyclopedia geographically covers all parts of the world, although most of the articles deal with the western hemisphere and culture. (This includes also the Near East, with the ancient centres of western culture, especially Greece, Egypt and the countries of the medieval Arab empire.) The selection process was done in co-operation with the seventy-one contributing authors, a very large group as far as editorial management and organization are concerned. Most of the authors are from Germany, two from Switzerland, one from Austria and one from Argentina and they constitute a very suitable set of already distinguished elder historians of medicine and younger scientists. All are academic scholars themselves. The biographies are generally very well written and the authors managed to include all basic and important facts in their texts, which are signed and never exceed two pages. Each entry contains a short bibliography of the more important writings of the person concerned as well as listing the literature dealing with him or her. The book also includes two appendices, one is a register of all the names mentioned in the articles, the other gives the entries in chronological order.

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Furthermore, the editors also provide short biographical data on each contributor. The book is finely printed and the fact that no plates are included is fully justified by the very modest price. The *Ärztelexikon* makes a useful tool for historians, as well as very informative reading for all others interested in the history of medicine.

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Danielle Gourevitch (ed.), *Médecins érudits de Coray à Sigerist. Actes du colloque de Saint-Julien-en-Beaujolais (juin 1994)*, De l'Archéologie à l'Histoire, Paris, De Boccard, 1995, pp. 230, no price given (2-7018-0095-1).

The historiography of the history of medicine is still in its infancy, and these essays can thus all be commended for the new information they bring to bear on the lives of their subjects. They form a varied collection. Laennec, Sudhoff and Sigerist are familiar names to modern medical historians; Sprengel, de Renzi, Daremberg, and Haeser wrote major works, once standard and not entirely superseded today; Korais, Ermerins, Bussemaker, and Petrequin are still required reading for the specialist in ancient Greek medicine; but of Broecx and Rosenbaum the glory has long departed. The volume centres upon the Parisian scholar-librarian Charles Victor Daremberg and his circle, and on the period from 1820 to 1870, which is said to mark the transition of classical Greek medicine from a living medical tradition to an object of academic erudition. But this claim is never properly explored, largely because the authors are distinguished philologists, not historians of medicine. There are hints at what might have been achieved in the essays on Sprengel and Laennec, but the significance of Petrequin's work on Hippocratic surgery, for instance, cannot be appreciated without an understanding of debates at the time among French surgeons.

This classicist bias might be justified, if the authors could then show just why these long-dead writers continue to be read.

Unfortunately, only Professor Jouanna, in a typically lucid piece on Korais, and M Touwaide, on Sprengel, explain to the non-classicist the significance of the methods and achievements of their subjects within their own field of classical philology. For the rest, a list of works, biographical data, and academic gossip suffice. The individual scholars of the past are not discussed within a context of the development of philology, ancient medicine, history, or modern medicine. Antiquarian personal detail, albeit interesting, takes the place of historiographical argument.

Only the final two papers, by Dr Rütten on Sudhoff and Professor von Staden on Sigerist, really engage with wider intellectual challenges. Rütten vigorously assaults the image of Sudhoff as the genial Nestor of German medical history, an image carefully fostered and enforced by the great man himself. But his somewhat naive horror at Sudhoff's Nazi last years—given all that had gone before, it would have been surprising if Sudhoff had not joined the party in 1933—is no real substitute for an examination of why and how Sudhoff achieved his primacy as a medical historian. Von Staden's piece, the best in the volume, is also the only one to try to set his theme, Sigerist's engagement with the Greeks, in its intellectual context. He rightly notes the curious self-identification of Germans with the classical Greeks, and Sigerist's typical idealization of the Greek achievement, but I missed a comparison with Jaeger's *Paideia*, and with other Germans who turned away in the 1920s and 1930s from the "heavy industry" approach to history and philology to the purer world of eternal ideas.

Above all, there is no sense in this volume of medical history being written at a time of major changes in both classics and, especially, history. The work of Haeser, Daremberg and de Renzi needs to be considered alongside the explosion of documentary collection and editing represented for instance by the *Monumenta Germaniae*. It is no coincidence that Greenhill, the friend and collaborator of Daremberg, was also a favourite pupil of Thomas Arnold, and acquainted with many of