

Book Reviews

A few of the articles are concerned with scientific or medical topics such as magic, the pre-Adamite theory, the soul, mathematics, the nova of 1572, and love and sex in the *Decameron*. There are also pieces on Kepler, and on three Renaissance physicians: Niccolò Leonicensi (1428–1524), Alessandro Achillini (1463–1512) and Giovanni Garzoni (1419–1505). References to the works of Aristotle and Galen also occur in several of the essays, but it is a pity that a writer has not contributed more specifically to their role in the Renaissance, a subject of interest to Kristeller and one that he has encouraged scholars to pursue.

Nevertheless, the rich variety of learning demonstrated in this adulatory volume will be of the greatest interest to all students of the Renaissance and it forms an appropriate tribute to a remarkably productive and influential man. There is included an account of him and his work, together with a list of his writings (1929 to 1974), of which 149 are styled “major publications”.

MAURIZIO SANTINI (editor), *Golgi Centennial Symposium: perspectives in neurobiology*, New York, Raven Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xvii, 668, illus., \$60.00.

The Golgi Centennial Symposium was held in Pavia and Milan in 1973 to commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary of the discovery by Camillo Golgi (1844–1926) of the histological technique which revolutionized the microscopical examination of nervous tissue. The papers presented at the symposium, and others solicited, number sixty, and are collected here into groups: ‘Geometry of the neuron’, ‘Inter-neuronal organization’, etc. Thus most of the book deals with the results of modern research on the nervous system, but historians of medicine will be particularly interested in the first portion, ‘Golgi commemoration’, and the last, ‘Perspectives of neurobiology’. The former consists of three essays on what the Golgi technique has given us, the discovery of the Golgi apparatus, and a history of the synapse. Although they are excellent surveys they tell little about the history of histology *per se* and their technicalities will defeat many, and this is also the case with the articles on ‘Perspectives’. The remainder of the articles are also specialized and although a certain amount of history is referred to they are the data for tomorrow’s history books not for today’s.

Throughout, the book is lavishly illustrated and has full documentation. It is a pity, however, that no serious attempt is made to place Golgi’s work in true historical perspective, so that its relations with research elsewhere in the medical sciences can be assessed. Moreover, it is curious that in a commemorative volume of this kind no reasonable biography of the central figure, Camillo Golgi, is to be found. In an appendix there is, however, a translation of his report of 1873 ‘On the structure of the gray matter of the brain’. But this paper gives no details of Golgi’s staining method which seems odd in a book celebrating it! (For an English translation of the best description, published in 1875, see E. Clarke and C. D. O’Malley, *The human brain and spinal cord*, Berkeley, Cal., University of California Press, 1968, pp. 842–845). There is also a very brief account of the Golgian memorabilia at the Museum for the History of the University of Pavia and a one-page account of Golgi and the Istituto Lombardo.