

Book Notices

J. RUFFIE and J.-C. SOURNIA, *Les épidémies dans l'histoire de l'homme*, Paris, Flammarion, 1984, 8vo, pp. 280, Fr. 89.00 (paperback).

While not in any respect superseding the more original and penetrating work of William H. McNeill, this new book is well worth reading alongside, as a wide-ranging synthesis which pays more attention than McNeill did to strictly scientific and medical questions of epidemiology. The coverage of the history of French epidemics will be welcome to the English-speaking reader, embracing as it does much recent *Annales*-school research. But the authors' claim to offer an "anthropology of epidemics" is hardly borne out in the text, which is relatively uninterested – unlike McNeill – in the national and political significance of pandemics, and which, from a medical point of view, can be quite Whiggish.

K.-D. FISCHER and D. NAJOCK, *In Pelagonii Artem Veterinariam Concordantiae*, Hildesheim, Olms-Weidmann, 1983, pp. xiv, 482, DM. 78.00.

This concordance to Fischer's 1980 Teubner edition of Pelagonius' veterinary treatise also contains an updated bibliography of the treatise, and a list of corrections and emendations made by reviewers. It will be a useful tool, particularly for those interested in the development of a late Latin technical language.

G. VAN ITERSON, L. E. DEN DOOREN DE JONG, and A. J. KLUYVER, *Martinus Willem Beijerinck. His life and his work*, Madison, Wisconsin, Science Tech, 1983, 8vo, pp. xxix, 181, illus., \$45.00.

This is a handsomely produced and illustrated facsimile edition of the classic Beijerinck biography first published in 1940 by three of his former students and collaborators. It benefits by a new "forward" – a reprint of a previously published (1949) lecture – by C. B. van Niel, himself at one remove an exponent of the Beijerinck tradition. Niel gives a lucid account of the importance of the "Delft School" for the development of microbiology from its distant beginnings in the back room of Leeuwenhoek's draper's shop to the new comparative biochemistry of the Kluyver school. A welcome addition to the shelf of anyone sufficiently interested in Beijerinck and the development of microbiology to pay a price which appears to be totally unrelated to the volume of the work.

B. F. BROOKS (editor), *Controversies in pediatric surgery*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1984, 8vo, pp. xxiii, 232, [no price stated].

Readers of *Medical History* will be interested in the introductory chapter, 'Pediatric surgery – yesterday, today and tomorrow'. In this, Dr Harvey Beardmore traces the earliest reference to paediatric surgery in North America, and records the foundation of associations in that speciality in the Americas, Europe (including Britain), and Asia. The future will see the effect of better methods of birth control, cytogenetic counselling and engineering, foetal surgery, and organ transplantation.

Catalog of the Bernard Becker, M.D. Collection in Ophthalmology, 2nd ed., compiled by Christopher Hoolihan and Mark F. Weimer, St Louis, Mo., Washington University School of Medicine Library, 1983, 4to, pp. 112, illus., \$30.00.

The personal collection of Bernard Becker, one of America's leading ophthalmologists, forms the core of this precious library, which is now taken care of and being developed further by the Washington University School of Medicine. The present catalogue describes 426 books and pamphlets related to ophthalmology and published to 1900, characterizing each of them in Garrison-Morton style, but often in a slightly more detailed way and adding references to bibliographic and historical works. Thanks to the Becker Collection, St Louis is now obviously an important US centre for studies in ophthalmic history, and the *Catalogue* is in itself a useful tool for those interested in this field.