

making Banks's splendid correspondence more readily accessible. Despite their limitations, these six volumes offer entertaining reading as well as a rich resource for future scholarship.

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Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston (eds), *The Cambridge history of science: vol. 3, Early modern science*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. xxvii, 865, illus., £90.00, \$160.00 (hardback 978-0-521-57244-6).

What are Cambridge Histories for? They go back to *The Cambridge modern history* planned and initially edited by Lord Acton (1834–1902) though he did not live to see the first volume published in 1902. It appeared at a time when most Anglophone historians believed that all the major facts of history could be encompassed within the boards of thirteen volumes and that they demonstrated the progressive triumph of liberalism. Times have changed; many multi-volume Cambridge Histories have since been published ranging from Christianity and Literary Criticism to Russia, Turkey, Libraries and now the History of Science in eight volumes. Placed neatly on the open access shelves of national and university libraries, such histories convey a sense of authority which means that they are consulted by scholars in other disciplines seeking apparently easy access to the subject.

In reality, in our post-modern world, these volumes of collective effort, like any other text, provide a selection that reflects the interests, knowledge, prejudices, etc. of the editors and individual contributors. And this volume, of course, cannot by any means represent the sum totality, *pace* Acton, of what is known about science in the early modern period defined as “from roughly 1490 to 1730” (p. 1), that is from the voyages of Christopher Columbus to the death of Isaac Newton. Although some of the contributors, such as

Steven Shapin, seek to rise above the Whig origins of the genre of the Cambridge Histories, there is nevertheless a sense in the volume of looking forward to what comes after, perhaps best encapsulated in the heading ‘The artist as scientist’ (p. 786) for the discussion of Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) by the art historians Carmen Niekrasz and Claudia Swan—this is surely something that the editors should have picked up following Shapin's critique earlier in the volume of such anachronistic usage.

The volume is divided into four parts, the first dealing with the ‘New nature’ followed by discussion of personalities and sites of natural knowledge. This part includes some of the most interesting chapters such as William Eamon on ‘Markets, piazzas, and villages’, Bruce Moran on ‘Courts and academies’, and an especially excellent piece by Adrian Johns on ‘Coffeehouses and print shops’. The third part is entitled ‘Dividing the study of nature’. Despite having some good pieces, the title immediately raises the (unanswered) question of whether it is historically appropriate to divide natural philosophy, astronomy and astrology into three separate chapters, or natural philosophy from mechanics. Such divisions do not lend themselves to the understanding of the place of natural knowledge in contemporary society and culture and may obscure links. What happens, and William Donahue's chapter on astronomy is a particularly good (i.e. bad) example, is that history becomes the study of the relations between texts across time, rather than the study of the relationships between practitioners across geographical, social and cultural space.

The tendency of this volume to split knowledge apart becomes most marked in the fourth and final section ‘Cultural meanings of natural knowledge’. I do have to wonder whether having a set of chapters at the end of the book entitled simply ‘Religion’, ‘Literature’, ‘Art’ (music is treated as part of acoustics), and ‘Gender’, ending up with a piece on European expansion is the best way of discussing the place of natural knowledge

in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Much scholarly work has been done over the past few decades showing how knowledge of nature, including mathematics (closely related to both art and music, not to mention accountancy), fitted in as part of overall culture. The approach adopted in this volume appears to be veering away from that fruitful path.

The neglect in this volume of such significant recent historical work, mostly undertaken in Europe, may well be a consequence of its being published by the New York office of Cambridge University Press and because both the editors and twenty-five out of the thirty-four contributors are American (other volumes in the series are more representative of the geography of scholars). This is not merely a nationalistic point, but one that is crucial to the development of the history of science in America which was, and still is, heavily influenced by the positivistic legacy of George Sarton (1884–1956), widely taken to be the founder of the discipline in America. Referred to approvingly in the General Preface, Sarton also planned an eight-volume history of science inspired by the Cambridge Histories. At one level the Whig notion of progressive improvement over time, embodied in *The Cambridge modern history*, and the positivist idea of the development of society through its three stages have much in common. Such commonalities may account for the way in which they are both combined in the structure of this volume and also in some of the contributions. Yet, as I have indicated, there are other ways of doing history of science, some of which are illustrated here. But, as a whole, the volume does not, in my view, provide a proper representation of where we are in the history of science in the early modern period and a non-specialist would be well advised also to consult other texts.

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Eilidh Garrett, Chris Galley, Nicola Shelton and Robert Woods (eds), *Infant mortality: a continuing social problem. A volume to mark the centenary of the 1906 publication of Infant mortality: a social problem by George Newman*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006, pp. xvii, 293, £55.00 (hardback 978-0-7546-4593-1).

As its sub-title states, this collection of essays is a cumulative reflection on the themes of George Newman, the first Chief Medical Officer to the Ministry of Health's 1906 seminal investigation into infant mortality. As the first part of the title suggests, however, it also aims to draw attention to how far his concerns as to the geographic and socio-economic differentials in infant mortality continue to be upheld with more detailed analysis. The contributions are uniformly high in quality, and form an admirably cohesive whole. Taken together, they provide a commentary on different aspects of Newman's work, contextualized by two chapters on Newman himself. Significant nuances are provided to his general conclusions, especially on the rural/urban division in infant mortality rates (IMRs). The book ends with several chapters with a modern and forward-looking stance, which highlight the need for ongoing concerns as to inequalities in infant health in modern Britain.

Newman's 1906 *Infant mortality: a social problem* was not a path-breaking analysis. Rather, as the first chapter by the editors and the second and third by Chris Galley and Robert Woods respectively point out, its strength came from its drawing together of writings and current thought on IMR. It was published at a time when infant mortality was becoming a high profile area of investigation, and it was immediately influential. Its main thrust was to identify ways in which infant mortality might be lowered; a pertinent concern given the persistently high death rate of the young compared with other age groups (although Newman's work actually appeared as it was beginning to enter its period of dramatic decline). He identified several