

Book Reviews

are translated, and works in Russian, Hungarian, Turkish, etc., are given in English transliteration.

Mr. Ebied's industry (400 periodicals were consulted together with all major sources, Festschriften, congress proceedings, etc.) and the generosity of the Wellcome Trust have given medieval historians an indispensable reference work.

COHEN OF BIRKENHEAD

Boerhaave and his Time, ed. by G. A. LINDEBOOM (Acta Boerhaaviana, No. 6), Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1970, pp. ix, 174, illus., 40 guilders.

In 1968 the tercentenary of Herman Boerhaave's birth was commemorated at Leyden with an International Symposium. This has now found permanency under the distinguished editorship of Dr. Lindeboom. The thirteen published contributions—nine in English, three in German and one in French—cast much helpful light upon one of the most paradoxical figures in the history of medicine. For although Boerhaave made no notable discoveries in any field, he had an enormous and lasting influence on medicine, chemistry, botany and general philosophy.

During his lifetime Boerhaave was revered throughout the Western World and received pilgrimages from many of the leading cognoscenti of his day (including the Emperor of all the Russias). Yet this humble, self-effacing physician apparently only once made a journey outside the Leyden area—an expedition to defend his doctoral thesis at Harderwijk, less than sixty miles away. His evident determination to remain in one place was, however, the only major circumstance in which he differed from a modern professor of medicine. Boerhaave was indeed the first of this breed, and his eternal fame in medicine will rest upon his inauguration of modern clinical teaching at the bedside extending where necessary to post-mortem examination, together with his construction of a new medical science which embodied all that seemed best in the physical and biological sciences of the day.

Boerhaave's great skill as a systematist is fully dealt with in this book by historians of chemistry and botany as well as medicine. In each of these fields Boerhaave's definitive textbooks had remarkably long active careers. His influence on botanical thought is probably least well known, and is delightfully presented by Dr. William Stearn. Apart from Boerhaave's own impressive *Index alter Plantarum* we learn of a small book by Sébastien Vaillant for which Boerhaave provided the impetus. This book revealed the hidden sexuality of the plant world so vividly that Uittien has complained 'ses comparaisons soient parfois un peu risquées', while at the time it fired the imagination of the adolescent Carl Linnaeus. Linnaeus's subsequent visit to Boerhaave led among other things to the young botanist securing his all-important Anglo-Dutch patron, George Clifford.

The influence of Boerhaave on medicine is dealt with by many of the contributors, but, understandably, little attention is paid to his tremendous impact on British medicine. As Charles Singer has said 'through his pupils he is the real founder of the Edinburgh Medical School, and through it of the best medical teaching in the English-speaking countries of the World'. It is interesting to trace the progress of medical teaching in the universities of Leyden and Edinburgh both of which were founded within a period of eight years in the second half of the sixteenth century.

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In turn, pre-eminence passed from Padua to Leyden in the seventeenth century and then on to Edinburgh in the early eighteenth century. The intellectual current from Holland to Britain did not, however, flow in only one direction. Some of the principal influences on Boerhaave were British: Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton in physical science, Francis Bacon in general philosophy, John Ray in Botany, his Scottish teacher Archibald Pitcairne as well as Thomas Willis, William Harvey and of course Thomas Sydenham in medicine.

Continental precursors of Boerhaave receive more attention in the book. For example, Lester King compares in fascinating detail Boerhaave's *Institutiones medicae* with that of Lazarus Riverius and with the *Fundamentae medicinae* of Friedrich Hoffmann.

The book is handsomely produced. Its English texts are excellent and contain only a handful of minor spelling mistakes. However, it is still not possible to choose the 'correct' spelling for the place where Boerhaave lived and worked: the publishers and most of the contributors in English or German use the local form 'Leiden', the Italian scholar Dr. Belloni writing in French uses 'Leyde', but the editor himself and one other contributor use the familiar 'Leyden'.

In no other respect does the book fail to satisfy the inquisitive reader, and it forms a most worthy companion to Dr. Lindeboom's splendid biography of Boerhaave.

SYDNEY SELWYN

Herman Boerhaave (1668–1738): His Life, Thought and Influence upon Japanese Medicine in the Period of Dutch Learning, by GORO ACHIWA, Tokyo, Ogata Bookstore, 1969, pp. 206, illus., no price stated.

The history of medicine is studied with enthusiasm in Japan and Dr. Achiwa is one of its ablest exponents. He has travelled widely in Europe and America in pursuit of his researches and now gives us a valuable monograph on the crucial influence of Herman Boerhaave in the development of Japanese medicine.

The only communication between Japan and the world at large between the years 1639 and 1868 was with Holland, through the port of Nagasaki. European medicine first reached Japan through books printed in Holland and the books of Boerhaave first arrived in Japan around the year 1800. Before 1850 more than thirty European medical works, Boerhaave's and van Swieten's among them, were translated into Japanese and helped to frame the Japanese modes of scientific thought in a western mould. As one of Europe's leading clinicians and medical teachers Boerhaave is seen as paramount by Dr. Achiwa at that crucial period.

The book is in Japanese, with a brief English summary and a foreword in English by that authority on Boerhaave, Professor Lindeboom. It is well produced in hardback, with index, portraits and other illustrations.

F. N. L. POYNTER

The Discovery of the Unconscious. The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry, by HENRY F. ELLENBERGER, London, Allen Lane (The Penguin Press), 1970, pp. xiv, 932, £6.50.

This really magnificent book must become one of the classics of medical, let alone of psychiatric, history. From Zilboorg onwards an unfortunate bias has marred