

Book Reviews

absence of any restraint upon the author's curiosity by the need to attend to a specific problem. This author is indeed inquisitive: he exploits analogies from all the natural world to explain physiological processes, and he is probably the first person known to have modified an existing object to make an apparatus for use in demonstration. Analogical reasoning and experiment loom large in these works, and Lonie's cautious formulations of the author's scientific method are wise and illuminating, particularly in their stress on the self-confirmatory function of a coherent description. There are also valuable appendices on the author's date, c. 410 B.C., and on vascular systems in the Hippocratic corpus and Aristotle.

The book's long gestation has, however, introduced a tension between the old and the new Lonie on one important point, the links between the author, the so-called school of Cnidos, and earlier philosophical and medical thought. In place of the old dichotomy between Cos and Cnidos (cf. p. 311 on the weakness of arguments linking Egyptian and Cnidian medicine), the new Lonie gives us a much more fluid picture of interrelationships. There are many medical ideas in the air, and individual authors choose what best suits their purpose. Similarity of doctrine on one point need not indicate total agreement on all. This very complexity reveals the weakness of any theory simply opposing a specifically Coan to a specifically Cnidian medicine, and of asserting that this author had links with either school. Some traces of the old conventional belief still remain to contrast with the new demonstration of the richness of the bank of ideas open to the author and his audience. Anaxagoras and Democritus (on whom see H. De Ley, *L'Antiquité classique*, 1981, pp. 192–197) are perhaps more significant than any mythical choregus of the Cnidians.

I end with two criticisms and a word of praise. No Greek text is printed here: consequently, much space is wasted on the dutiful citation of the page and line in the editions of Joly and Littré, and, more seriously, the Greek lemmata correspond inconsistently to one or the other, and occasionally to Lonie's own working text, and much space is then needed to explain what reading has in fact been adopted. This passion for plenitude extends to the bibliography, where the first names of authors are given in full, even when they were never generally used by their possessors. Misprints are commendably few in this long book, and none is significant: that at p. xxvii, line 42, is especially piquant to the reviewer.

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R. F. HUNNISETT (ed.), *Wiltshire Coroners' Bills 1752–1796*, Devizes, Wiltshire Record Society, 1981, 8vo, pp. liv, 239, £10.00 + postage. (Obtainable from M. J. Lansdown, 53 Clarendon Road, Trowbridge, Wilts.)

The relative rarity of eighteenth-century provincial coroners' records, with their striking details of death and disaster, makes this a welcome volume to medical historians. Apart from the obvious interest of local names and personalities, these 2,779 inquests held during four decades give a remarkable and vivid picture of how hazardous everyday life was for all classes. The county coroners were surgeons and apothecaries, travelling across Wiltshire at 9d. a mile to investigate sudden or suspicious deaths. Fatal accidents associated with animals were particularly commonplace; cows crushed herdsmen, horses threw, kicked, and trampled their riders, so that even one of the coroners in 1771 "fell from his horse and died". A large number of deaths were by drowning, in quarries, pools, and streams, while fatal scalds and burns, especially of children, typified domestic mishaps. The variety of injuries the coroners inspected was considerable, most beyond eighteenth-century medical intervention; fractures, contusions, and amputations abound in these entries, many recorded in the characteristically unemotional tones of the period for events of unmistakable horror. In some instances the deceased was the victim of others' incompetence, particularly with tools or firearms, but a proportion of deaths resulted from an individual's own violent behaviour, and explains the predominance of men among those on whom inquests were held. Apart from misadventures, coroners also acted in cases of natural death, suicide, and murder: Although the causes of natural death were not specified in the majority of cases, those that the coroners could name provide, after 200 years, a

Book Reviews

disastrous roll-call of physical suffering. These cases, more than any formal statistics, give some indication of medical conditions from which recovery was unlikely, and illustrate the frail hold on life and the immediacy of death for many people, apparently fit and well, to whom an accident became a gangrenous wound or for whom diarrhoea was fatal. The inclement weather, vermin, and lack of food or clothes were common reasons for death, while the activities that preceded death, and were thought contributory, included bell-ringing, intemperate eating or drinking, quarrelling, fighting, and sports.

Recently, suicide has become of greater interest to social historians, and the Wiltshire examples, most of whom were said to be lunatic, reinforce other evidence, so that hanging, drowning, and cutting their own throats were the commonest methods used. More inventive suicides jumped into deep wells, out of windows; poisoned, shot, or stabbed themselves. Murder inquests show the greatest variety; all social classes were victims, perpetrators were frequently relatives, and the acquittal rate was high. Of those found guilty, the added punishment of being dissected and anatomized was specified in a dozen instances, and one coroner was himself the recipient of corpses. Infanticide particularly concerned contemporaries as a means of concealing bastardy, and historians will welcome firm evidence for the practice. In Wiltshire, some fifty cases were investigated and the majority of guilty mothers acquitted, but a small group, for reasons not apparent at the inquest, were executed and subsequently dissected. The coroners themselves emerge from their records with distinct personalities, with brief or wordy comments that often read as direct speech; some were appointed from the same medical families across several decades.

Natives of Wiltshire will have their own reasons for buying this volume, but for readers outside the county it is to be warmly recommended. The indexes, especially that of subjects, are well organized and accurate; the main text is clearly laid out chronologically. It in no way detracts from the Editor's achievement to describe this book as a very useful tool; for those working on the later eighteenth century generally, it contains much material not easily available in print, and medical historians of the period will appreciate the accessibility of some splendid new sources.

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DAVID BEARMAN and JOHN T. EDSALL (editors), *Archival sources for the history of biochemistry and molecular biology. A reference guide and report*, Boston, Mass., American Academy of Arts and Sciences, in conjunction with the American Philosophical Society, 1980, 4to, pp. xii, 338, \$28.00.

In 1975, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society set up a Survey of Sources for the History of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. The intention was to locate as many archival sources of historical material, to publish the results of that survey, to disseminate among scientists and historians knowledge of what kinds of material exist, and to stimulate the formation of well-ordered archives of scientific rewards and papers. This volume, edited by David Bearman and John Edsall, with other contributions by Margaret Miller and Matthew Konopka, is the fruit of those labours of some five years. This volume and the accompanying microfiche guide will undoubtedly be enormously useful to many historians of science and medicine, not only those interested in biochemistry and molecular biology. The mass of primary and secondary material listed here is very impressive; as is the evidence that great care has gone into trying to produce indexes of the material that can be searched in a number of ways, either by computer or without that technological assistance. Basically, two kinds of material have been located, personal papers and institutional records, and the files which list brief descriptions of such material can be searched, by looking up a scientist's name in the index, or using a subject heading, such as "Research, ATP" or beginning with the name of an institution.

Just how easy it is to use efficiently I am not sure. I found the book, which is prefaced by several essays on the origins, relevance, aims and history of the project, somewhat difficult to