

Book Reviews

material together skilfully, and the tone of the book is uniform. He is particularly good on the social diversity of American medicine: on numerous medical sects and proponents of unorthodox medicine; on the experiences of women and blacks; on the differences in health and medical provision between distinctive American habitats—the transient, the farm, the small town and the various components of the city.

This is a modest, modern account of its subject. There are no heroics, no Whiggish inferences. Cassedy emphasizes the contrasts and contradictions, the constantly shifting character, the mixed successes, the changing expectations, of American medicine. Dispassion does not waver in telling of the years since 1940: health remains an elusive commodity, and medical priorities are increasingly determined by economic considerations. For Cassedy, modern medical technology is a mask behind which the realities of social and racial inequality, poverty, and unnecessary suffering and death continue to beset America.

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INGO WILHELM MÜLLER, *Iatromechanische Theorie und ärztliche Praxis im Vergleich zur galenistischen Medizin*, Historische Forschungen, vol. 17, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991, pp. 320, DM 72.00 (3-515-05516-9).

This solid study takes up a theme briefly touched on by Temkin in his *Galenism*, the survival of Galenic ideas on therapy into the seventeenth century and beyond. Galenic anatomy had been overthrown by Vesalius, Galenic physiology by Harvey, yet Galenic therapeutics continued, at least in part, for at least two centuries. By comparing three authors, Friedrich Hoffmann (1660–1742), Pieter van Foreest (1521–1597), and Jan van Heurne (1543–1601), Prof. Müller throws light on the later career of Galenism in medical practice. He can thus show how Hoffmann's views on iatromechanism could incorporate many of the rules for diagnosis and therapy formulated by Galen, and vigorously promoted by his adherents in the Renaissance. If the Galenists were more interested in prognosis and in individualist therapy, Hoffmann preferred to interpret the same signs and symptoms to reveal a universal cause. In the range of treatments, both sides were almost united (and Foreest and Heurne were far from unusual in their cautions about bleeding); the major difference was the introduction by Hoffmann of therapies and explanations derived from scientific experimentation.

The book is well organized; sub-headings easily permit one to compare the attitudes of the three to a variety of diseases and therapies. There is an admirable appendix which reprints the Latin case-observations of Foreest and Hoffmann on pleurisy, and a useful bibliography of sources and secondary literature. But problems remain. It is not clear why Foreest and, still more, Heurne were chosen, for they represent the Galenism of a hundred years earlier than Hoffmann. True, both wrote at length on case-histories, but that genre did not end with the sixteenth century. Prof. Müller briefly considers the question of their typicality, but reaches no conclusion on their direct relevance to Hoffmann. A practical author of the mid-seventeenth century (Beverwijk or Willis?) might have served as a better comparison for contemporary Galenism.

The relationship between Galenism and Hippocratism also requires more thought. For Prof. Müller, Foreest's Hippocratism is but a façade for Galenism. But that was not how it seemed at the time, as Iain Lonie demonstrated for the Paris school at the end of the sixteenth century. Sydenham, who forms a nice point of comparison, receives but two passing mentions, and other Hippocratic, in France and Italy, are treated equally briefly. Iatrophysicists like Pitcairne are not mentioned, even though their attempts to explain and treat fever using the findings of science provide a bridge between the two sides of Prof. Müller's argument. Historical contextualisation is virtually absent, and the contrasts between the activities of a town physician and a university teacher are not brought out.

Without its limits, this is a valuable piece of work, firmly rooted in a detailed and careful comparison of neglected texts. But a wider vision and different limits would have made this a more accessible, and a more exciting, book.

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