

Book Reviews

Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. So eminent and authoritative is the stature of the Arabic-Islamic world that no credit is sought to be gained by bestowing the title "Arabic-Islamic" on the "traditional medicine (or science) of the Middle East".

The Editors have spent lavishly on printing this volume, which is richly enhanced by photographic plates, some of which are in colour. These appear in a paper by al-Hassan, being a representative section of his forthcoming edition (based on four Arabic manuscripts) of al-Jazari's book *al-Jāmi' bayn al-'ilm wa' l-'amal al-nāfi' ft šinā'at al-ḥiyal* (A compendium on the theory and practice of the mechanical arts). Other photographic plates on medicine and pharmacy appear in Hamarneh's paper on 'Arabic manuscripts of the National Library of Medicine, Washington, D.C.'. An edition of the Arabic text of Ibn al-Haytham's 'Treatise on the marks seen on the surface of the moon' is published by Professor A. I. Sabra from the hitherto unique manuscript of the City Library of Alexandria. Summaries are provided in English at the end of three Arabic papers, and of the fourth an abstract is given in French, in order to acquaint Western scholars with current research in Arabic science.

It is hoped that the *JHAS* will supply each contributor with the usual two sets of galley and page-proofs for revision. When in 1961 I published al-Rāzi's book *The guide or aphorisms in Revue de l'Institut des manuscrits arabes* (vol. 7, no. 1) the convention was not to print any pages unless they were approved and signed by the contributor. It was surprising indeed when in 1977 the same periodical (vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 24–56) confronted me with the printed text of the Arabic version of my paper 'An attempted reconstruction of the late Alexandrian medical curriculum' (see *Med. Hist.* 1976, 20: 235–258), without sending any proofs in spite of my repeated requests for revision. Two proper names "Wellcome" and "Chester Beatty" are printed wrongly, in addition to a few misprints in the Arabic text and two omissions of page references, all of which could have been avoided with proper revision procedures.

The English and Arabic sections of this volume are separated by 'Book Reviews' which, one hopes, will occupy a larger space in future, 'Notes on Contributors', 'Suggestions for Contributors' and a list of 'Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic Science.'

To the Editors of *JHAS* we offer our hearty congratulations for a successful academic achievement and look forward to equally high standards of the forthcoming issues.

SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR, *Islamic science. An illustrated study*, [London], World of Islam Festival Publishing Co. (distributors: Thorsons, Northants), 1976, 4to, pp. xiv, 273, illus., £12.50.

As part of the Festival of the World of Islam, held in London in 1977, this elegant book complements the remarkable exhibition mounted at the Science Museum. It is the first work on Islamic science to combine the study and analysis of texts with illustrations, of which there are 135 in colour and 94 in black and white. The illustrations are beautifully produced, and make the book unique. After a general account of the rise of Islamic sciences and of the Islamic educational system, there are chapters dealing in turn with mathematics, the pure and the applied sciences. There is a chapter on 'Medicine and pharmacology' (pp. 153–192), which unfortunately contains a

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number of errors, especially relating to Greek medical theory, indicating that Professor Nasr is not familiar with all of the recent literature. Thus on p. 161 the faulty diagram of Galen's cardio-vascular system, first used by Charles Singer, is reproduced. Also in this section, and elsewhere, although the illustrations are numerous and dramatic, they are not described adequately nor keyed into the text. Perhaps a better plan would have been to adopt multiple rather than single authorship for such a large and complex field.

Professor Nasr is contrasting the Golden Age of Islam with modern technological civilization, which can be a hazardous and unhistorical approach. He also credits the Arabs with more inventions than they actually made. However, there is a great deal of valuable data presented with full documentation. There is also a useful 'Glossary' of Arabic terms, a 'Select bibliography in European languages', and an excellent index.

DONALD L. PADGITT, *A short history of the early American microscopes*, London, Microscope Publications, 1975, 8vo, pp. xi, 147, illus., £3.75.

The development of microscope-making in America is described here for the first time, with an illustrated chronology of stands, accompanied by all known information on their designers and makers. The survey begins with C. A. Spencer (1813–1881) who began selling microscopes in 1838, and it ends in the 1880s. The microscopes are well described and illustrated and there is helpful documentation, but, as with most catalogues of this kind, little is said about the capabilities of the instruments or their practical uses. The author is a lawyer with no scientific training and so is understandably handicapped.

However, his book, as far as it goes, is a useful addition to the literature of the microscope's history, and it is especially interesting to note the European influences which inspired and moulded the American microscope industry.

D. V. GLASS and ROGER REVELLE (editors), *Population and social change*, London, Edward Arnold, 1972, 8vo, pp. viii, 520, £12.00.

When first published this book was greeted as a work of intellectual significance because it showed that historical demography had entered its heroic age. There has been no reason since then to challenge this opinion and the twenty-six contributions are as valuable now as they were then. By exploring the past, our views on the future of populations can be more meaningful. Thus knowledge of events during European industrialization may help us with current problems in developing communities. The papers deal with several countries in addition to Britain, and each is a well-documented study. They remain relevant and their data useful, so that the anthology can still be recommended as an outstanding addition to the literature of historical demography.