

## Book Reviews

introduced the modern system of clinical instruction” (p. 62), her view that La Mettrie extensively employed the great man’s medicine seems well-founded (that Boerhaave encouraged sexual reproduction as her text on p. 62 suggests seems less plausible). The fundamental problem with this book, however, is that it is an exercise in rational reconstruction. Lacking any account by La Mettrie of the purpose of his work and the reason for the sequence of it, and any evidence for its employment by contemporaries other than to dismiss it, Wellman constructs a hypothetical tale of what La Mettrie intended to do, what he really meant, how his research led him to this or that conclusion, what he thought and why, what tradition led La Mettrie to what and so forth. Wellman constructs a picture of La Mettrie rationally exploring the issues confronting the intelligent eighteenth-century medical man and creates a hypothetical account of how he came to enlightened but misunderstood conclusions. Actually, as far as knowing why La Mettrie said and did what he said and did, we have scarcely a clue.

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BRUCE T. MORAN (ed.), *Patronage and institutions: science, technology and medicine at the European court, 1500–1750*, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 1991, pp. 262, illus., £35.00 (0–85115–285–6).

This collection of essays derives from the symposium on ‘Science, technology, and medicine at the European court’ held as part of the Eighteenth International Congress for the History of Science, at Munich in 1989. The eight papers delivered at the symposium have been supplemented with four others. The list of contributors is a roll call of some of the best younger scholars working in the field of Renaissance and early modern science and medicine, and the standard of scholarship is uniformly high. The strong themes of patronage and the effect of the institutional setting give unity to a collection which ranges from theories of impact to geography, from Paracelsianism to optics, from Denmark to Italy, and from Britain to Austria.

Not all the papers are directly relevant to the history of medicine, but because this is such an excellent collection it is worth briefly indicating the riches on offer. Paula Findlen opens the proceedings with an excellent survey of the ways in which the exchange of gifts of natural objects or written works served to disseminate information, forge intellectual links, establish reputations and authority, and to win patronage. William Eamon follows with a survey of some of the ways in which “scientific careers” were affected by their “institutional locus”, whether in princely courts, academies or printing houses. W. R. Laird looks at the history of theories of impact before the development of the mechanical philosophy. He introduces the reader to a group of mathematicians and mechanics with occupational and professional interests in impact as a result of their relations with patrons and employers. Lesley B. Cormack describes a network of “geographically-minded” intellectuals (concerned with navigation, map-making, and colonization) associated with the court of Henry, Prince of Wales, in the early years of the seventeenth century. William B. Ashworth Jr shows how work in geometrical optics and mathematics was presented by a group of thinkers in a way calculated to flatter the Hapsburg monarchs. Ashworth draws particularly upon the evidence provided by engraved title-pages. The editor provides an overview of how the interests of German princes affected scientific activity in courts, universities and academies. This paper has much to interest the historian of medicine, dealing amongst other things with Paracelsianism and chemiatria. David Lux, in a thoughtful piece, points out that recent historical studies on early modern science have given rise to the need for a general reassessment of the institutional setting of science, medicine and technology. Alice Stroup shows how political theorists in the France of Louis XIV resisted the mercantilist policies of the government in which natural philosophy and technology played an increasingly important role. A. J. G. Cummings and Larry Stewart move into the eighteenth century with an examination of how the new philosophy was used by entrepreneurs to give legitimacy to their schemes.

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In addition there are three papers which are directly concerned with the history of medicine in the period. Jole Shackelford gives a succinct but superb account of the fortunes of Paracelsianism in Denmark as a result of the work of Petrus Severinus, Johannes Pratensis and Tycho Brahe and their support by Frederick II. Harold J. Cook's paper succeeds in showing the ways in which "changes in the political direction of a nation" might affect medicine, by looking at the changes brought about in England after the Glorious Revolution. Apart from a suggestion that the ontological theory of disease received a boost at this time, Cook concentrates on the institutional changes in medicine wrought by the political scene. Finally, Pamela H. Smith shows how Johann Joachim Becher tried to use his knowledge of medicine and natural philosophy to give him authority to treat the "body politic" of Bavaria, where he was court physician and mathematician to the Elector. Becher's task was to convince the prince and his more conservative advisers that commerce was a natural and productive means of producing wealth. He did so by drawing an analogy between the workings of commerce and the cycle of nourishment and consumption in the human body.

Historical studies of the role of patronage in the history of science and medicine are in vogue and the most significant of these studies show how the conceptual content of science and medicine is directly affected by the nature of the patronage it receives. Not all of these studies succeed in this regard but they all make important contributions to our understanding of the historical background.

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DANIELLE GOUREVITCH (ed.), *Maladie et maladies: histoire et conceptualisation. Mélanges en l'honneur de Mirko Grmek*, Hautes Études Médiévales et Modernes 70, Geneva, Librairie Droz, 1992, pp. lxxii, 473.

The retirement of Mirko Grmek from his chair in the history of medicine at the Ecole pratique des Hautes Études in Paris has been marked by this collection of essays by his friends and pupils. Croat by birth and French by naturalisation, he has always displayed a formidable range of knowledge of all aspects of medical history to go with his equally wide linguistic competence. From palaeopathology and the ancient Greeks to Claude Bernard and modern AIDS, there is little on which he has not touched or on which he has not had something of value and importance to contribute. Whether in personal communication, on international committees (including five years on the Wellcome Trust's History of Medicine Panel), by his endeavours to reach out as a medical historian to a wider public, or by his teaching in Paris and at the International Summer School on Ischia, he has sought to inform and to bring together all those whose interest and expertise might be profitably conjoined for the greater understanding of medicine and its history.

It is fitting that the contributors have all considered one of Grmek's favourite themes, disease, its incidence, characterisation, and history. They range from problems in palaeopathology (including leprosy), through aspects of Egyptian, Islamic, and Tibetan medicine, to concepts of disease and cure in Slav poetry and in modern molecular biology. There are two essays on the French renaissance, and three on the eighteenth century, but the bulk of the contributors deal with classical antiquity or the nineteenth century. Wounds, intestinal incontinence, poisoning, the diseases of maritime communities, and the complex story of how the "disease of Hercules" came to be identified as epilepsy are but some of the classical themes; tuberculosis, meningitis, and yellow fever some of the later topics. All display, directly or indirectly, the effects of their author's links with the honorand, and all show that high standard of research and insight that we have come to associate with him.

Mirko Grmek is a prolific writer, as his bibliography reveals, and we hope that he will continue to stimulate and inform for many years more. He has also been a tireless advocate, for medical history and, not at least, for the inhabitants of his own Croatia in these dark times. His friends have given him an appropriate tribute.

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