

### Book Reviews

for research on these problems. But obviously Brechka is not familiar with the medico-historical literature of the van Swieten era. The books of Hecker and Puschmann, which today are still indispensable, are not referred to, nor are A. v. Rosa's and Max Neuburger's important publications of original sources. Though Brechka quotes many times from van Swieten's letters to the Portuguese physician R. Sanchez, the standard work on Sanchez by David Willemse (*Janus, Suppl.*, Bd. 6, Leiden, 1966) is unknown to him. But that Brechka remained ignorant of the existence of the manuscript of Egydius van Swieten (474 pages) is the gravest insufficiency of this book. This manuscript is a complete biography of van Swieten ready for the printer, and is kept in the Haus Hof- und Staatsarchiv. Had the author found it, this work would have shown him all the various chapters of importance, even those which he himself did not recognize as such; and to some extent this manuscript would have been a substitute for the lost archive materials.

We regret that a modern biography of van Swieten is still to be written, but in view of the difficult situation with regard to the source materials it is understandable. Brechka's book cannot fill the gap, although we have to be thankful for many interesting facts of van Swieten's Dutch period. It must also be acknowledged that Brechka has appreciated the importance of van Swieten's role as an intermediary of western European science and culture as well as his intellectual position between traditionalism and progress, but by his incomplete command of the available sources Brechka has unfortunately failed to give us the outstanding biography of Gerard van Swieten.

ERNA LESKY

*Ein Mensch namens Dürer*, by R. F. TIMKEN-ZINKANN, West Berlin, Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1972, pp. 225, 88 plates DM29.

This very revealing study of the artist's mentality is based on thorough knowledge of the literary remains and correspondence of Dürer and his friend Pirckheimer and a wealth of secondary literature, together with a penetrating analysis of Dürer's artistic work.

Philological, statistical and medical methods are used, not to overpower the reader's judgement, but to complement Dürer's own written statements, or, if in contradiction to them, to elucidate the artist's personal attitude towards reality. The complexity of his character is analysed sympathetically. New observations are made on the connection between Dürer's religious development and his art theory, and on his self-identification in the many portraits made before a mirror and others which bear his general features. A fair assessment of his enigmatic married life is attempted and contradictory statements about his economic position are carefully balanced. In an appendix theories aiming at making a German of Dürer's Hungarian-born father are refuted.

In his article of 1969 ('Some aspects of epidemics and German art about 1500', *Med. Hist.*, 1969, 13, 359-62) Dr. Timken-Zinkann hinted at the possibility of a syphilis infection in Dürer's early journey to the West of Germany. The book adds a new sign for this hypothesis found in the self-portrait of 1498 in Madrid. If Dürer acquired the infection prior to 1494, perhaps through visits to bath-houses, he would have been one of the first victims during the early spread of the disease in Europe.

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This would in some way explain his sudden departure for the first Italian journey soon after his wedding in 1494 which by some biographers was attributed to the outbreak of plague in Nuremberg.

The engraving 'The Doctor's Dream' dated before 1500 is, together with some other graphic works, interpreted as a moralizing warning of syphilis, but it has received a different interpretation by Robert Eisler (see article in *Burlington Magazine*, 1943, 82/83, pp. 101–3), who sees in it a satirical allusion to gout and thought it might have been produced as an accompaniment to W. Pirckheimer's *Apologia seu podagrae laus*, but this book was not published until 1522. The generally accepted theory that Dürer contracted malaria during his stay in the Netherlands is supported by a quotation from Pirckheimer's description of his dying friend when 'he looked like a bundle of dried straw'. A detailed historical chart beginning 123 years before Dürer's death in 1528 quotes, among the many outbreaks of plague in Nuremberg, three later epidemics which may have been responsible for Dürer's periods of absence from the city.

The book is well produced and beautifully illustrated and should not be overlooked by those interested in the medical history of Dürer and his times.

R. BURGESS

*Perspectives in the History of Science and Technology*, ed. by DUANE H. D. ROLLER, Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1971, pp. x, 307, illus., \$9.95.

In 1969 a symposium in history and philosophy of science was arranged at the University of Oklahoma. Instead of grouping the contributions around one or more themes, the organizers invited eight historians to present papers on topics of their own choosing, and arranged for each paper to be the subject of two commentaries. These papers and commentaries, together with two named lectures given at the same time, make up the present volume.

Not surprisingly, a miscellaneous collection has resulted. Several scholars deal with topics they have discussed elsewhere: for example, Marshall Clagett summarizes his well-known researches into medieval knowledge of Archimedes; Richard S. Westfall deals with the development of Newton's dynamics (on which he has since published a major volume), and Martin Rudwick writes on geological theory in the age of Lyell. Other contributions range from philosophico-historical papers by Joseph T. Clark and by John C. Greene (who investigates the Kuhnian paradigm as a framework for the study of the development of natural history in the period ending with Darwin and concludes 'its adequacy as a conceptual model for that development seems doubtful'), through papers in the history of scientific ideas by Robert E. Schofield and Erwin N. Hiebert, to two essays in which technology plays a major role: 'The car and the road: highway technology and highway policy' by John B. Rae, and 'Art, science and technology: notes on their historical interaction' by Cyril Stanley Smith. In short, a volume with individual contributions of distinction and interest, but lacking coherence.

M. A. HOSKIN