

Book Reviews

A. KORNBERG, B. L. HORECKER, L. CORNUDELLA and J. ORO (editors), *Reflections on biochemistry in honour of Severo Ochoa*, Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. ix, 465, illus., \$25.00 (\$9.00 paperback).

In September of 1975 students and colleagues of Ochoa (Nobel Laureate of 1959 in Physiology or Medicine, shared with A. Kornberg, the senior editor of this book, “. . . for their discovery of the mechanisms in the biological synthesis of ribonucleic acid and deoxyribonucleic acid.”) attended in Barcelona and Madrid an international symposium to celebrate his seventieth birthday. The papers were grouped into six colloquia, comprising the areas of biochemistry where Ochoa made his contributions: energy metabolism, lipids and saccharides, regulation, nucleic acids and the genetic code, protein bio-synthesis, and cell biology. They constitute the first six chapters of this *Festschrift*, which contains forty-one papers altogether. Although there is a considerable amount of technical material in them, most will be of the greatest value to historians evaluating the last five decades of what one author calls “the first golden age of biochemistry”. The personal account of research, which is always excluded from the impersonal scientific paper, is here in plenty, and will serve the same purpose as oral history to the future chronicler of twentieth-century biochemical advances. There is also a biographical introduction and a closing chapter on ‘Science in the time of Ochoa’.

Many of the household names of biochemistry are here, including Cori, Chain, and Krebs, and altogether there are ten Nobel Prizewinners. As a source-book of autobiographical material and historical data this book represents an important contribution to the history of the medical sciences. It should have wide appeal.

FRANCIS MADDISON, MARGARET PELLING and CHARLES WEBSTER (editors), *Linacre studies: Essays on the life and work of Thomas Linacre c. 1460–1524*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1977, 8vo, pp. liii, 416, illus., £12.00.

Sponsored by Linacre College Oxford, this excellent book has brought together eleven specialists from a variety of academic disciplines, united in their aim to expand the sadly defective body of knowledge concerning a great Renaissance physician and humanist. They achieve commendable success.

There is a fourteen-page editorial introduction, with twenty-one pages of notes, which discusses problems in Linacre’s biography and his reputation, and contains a Linacre chronology. There are papers on Linacre and humanistic studies at Oxford, his Latin grammar, his education at Padua, his place in medical humanism, his lands and lectureships, and his foundation of the College of Physicians. There is also a bibliography of his works, and of secondary sources on him written since the sixteenth century. An iconography and a final essay by Walter Pagel on ‘Medical humanism—a historical necessity in the era of the Renaissance’ complete the volume. The highest level of scholarship is maintained throughout, the index is comprehensive, and the twenty plates elegant. But, it is a pity that the dust-jacket “blurb” does not relate accurately to the contents.

Despite the title, there is no piece devoted entirely to Linacre’s life, but this is explained by the fact that published accounts cannot be improved on by present-day scholars. However, as this is the first in a series of Linacre studies perhaps future

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volumes will expand this topic and deal with others. They will no doubt be of the same lofty standard of scholarship so that medical historians will be further indebted to Linacre College and to its enlightened Principal, Mr. J. B. Bamborough.

E. ASHWORTH UNDERWOOD, *Boerhaave's men at Leyden and after*, Edinburgh University Press, 1977, 8vo, pp. vii, 227, illus., £8.00.

Herman Boerhaave (1688–1738) taught medicine at Leyden from 1701 until his death, and such was his success that he attracted students from all over Europe, especially from Britain where medical education was backward on account of devotion to ancient authority, religious barriers, and incompetent individuals. It is well known that his students helped to found the Edinburgh Medical School, but their influence elsewhere in Scotland, England, and Ireland has been much less appreciated.

Dr. Underwood, who, in his retirement, is still contributing importantly to the history of medicine, has studied carefully the careers of Boerhaave's 746 English-speaking students who matriculated at Leyden, with the result that our ideas of this great teacher's influence on medicine in these islands must now be considerably altered. Thus, by their membership of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of London, Edinburgh, and of Ireland, and of the Royal Society, and by several appointments in the universities and in the London hospitals, their effect on medicine, especially in the capitals, was considerable. No other teacher, except perhaps Johannes Müller and Osler, has contributed similarly to the development of medicine by way of his pupils.

The author first considers the students' Leyden period, then their subsequent careers. He has examined an enormous amount of material and presents new and important data which will demand a re-evaluation of medical practice and education in the eighteenth century. His text is fully annotated, the index is excellent, and the illustrations and book production are elegant. All historians of medicine will have to know of this work and they will find it a continual source of valuable and accurate information. The only pertinent criticism would be of the title, which does not specify that the book concerns only Boerhaave's British students.

MARKUS FIERZ, *Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576). Arzt, Naturphilosoph, Mathematiker, Astronom und Traumdeuter*, Basle and Stuttgart, Birkhäuser Verlag, 1977, 8vo, pp. 140, S.Fr.19.80.

This book, written originally for students, is an excellent introduction to the life and works of Cardano. In seven short chapters it describes his life and his activities as physician, philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, and interpreter of dreams. The language is clear and economical, there is no jargon, and the most abstruse ideas are set forth with a simplicity that makes them easily intelligible. Throughout the text, which is based on Cardano's own writings rather than on secondary sources, relevant passages from Cardano's books are incorporated, thus giving character and savour to the author's comments. Other studies dealing with the same subject have not been neglected and the footnotes bear ample witness to the care which Fierz has given to the elucidation of many topics. In so short a book it was not to be expected that a full discussion of Cardano's views on medicine would be included, but a fairly