

Book Reviews

way to a further divergence between medical researchers, such as comparative anatomists, and clinical practitioners during the era of university reform after the breakup of the Holy Roman Empire and the *Reichsdeputationshauptschluß* of 1803. The competing cultural politics of the German states provided another public sphere for this theory-practice division.

In his conclusions Broman notes that it is remarkable that the German medical profession “retained a veneer of professional unity at all”, yet he insists that with the “discourse of theory and practice” it had acquired “a crucial characteristic of modern professionalism”. These statements point to some rather neglected aspects in his otherwise very instructive historical account. The formation of professional identity, as any identity, requires similarity as well as difference and demarcation. It would therefore have been helpful if the identity of eighteenth-century academically educated physicians had been contrasted with that of surgeons and of apothecaries, and if doctors’ complaints about *Kurpfuscherei*, i.e. transgressions of competence and unlicensed practice, had been examined more closely. The academic rise of surgeons towards the end of the eighteenth century might have provided another interesting case for the study of a changing professional identity. In this way physicians’ sense of unity despite internal theory-practice divides might have become clearer.

Moreover, Broman’s account tends to overrate the historical importance of Brunonianism as an attempt to ground medical practice on scientific principles. Iatrochemistry, iatromechanics, and Stahlianism can be seen as having made similar claims earlier—claims for which medical inaugural dissertations (usually reflecting the professors’ opinions) provided an academic sphere. Also “empirical” practices in the eighteenth-century, such as the trying out of new treatments and record-keeping in case histories, aimed via inductive reasoning at improved therapeutic concepts.

I agree, however, with Broman’s argument that the public sphere created by the general

review periodicals was something qualitatively new, and that doctors’ public claims of scientific practice must have been central to their professional development. Broman sees a problem in the fact that in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, i.e. the main period for medical professionalization, scientific knowledge has become less accessible to the general reader, and he tries to save his argument by stating that it has still remained “accessible in principle”, though “recondite in practice”. Yet, his point can also be supported in another way. In the second half of the nineteenth century German academic medicine began to be confronted with a number of critical lay-movements under the banners of nature healing, homeopathy, anti-vaccination, anti-vivisection, and anti-psychiatry—movements that created a public sphere in which doctors’ “defining power” in matters of health and disease was challenged (see Martin Dinges [ed.], *Medizinkritische Bewegungen im Deutschen Reich*, Stuttgart, 1996). It could be argued that the professional identity of doctors was further shaped in the public controversies with these movements and in the medical profession’s disciplinary actions against its own dissenting members. Again, this would also involve identity formation through difference and demarcation.

With its emphasis on public discourse, Broman’s book thus makes a valuable conceptual contribution to the historiography of professionalization. Apart from this, it gives a very readable analysis of German university medicine in the Enlightenment.

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Jacques Tenon, *Memoirs on Paris hospitals*, ed. Dora B Weiner, Canton, MA, Science History Publications/USA, 1997, pp. xxxiii, 407, illus., \$39.95 (0-88135-074-5).

Jacques Tenon was a remarkable man whose humanity and dedication to improving the conditions faced by hospital patients was

combined with an extraordinary energy and passion to apply knowledge to achieve this. His opening statement in the first of his 'Memoirs' is worthy of a true disciple of the enlightenment: "Hospitals are a measure of civilisation: they are more appropriate to a nation's needs and better kept when the people are more united, more humane and better educated". Such reflections make his hugely detailed reports on the actual design and administration of the hospitals all the more fascinating.

Dora Weiner's translation of Tenon's major study of Paris hospitals (published as a series of five *Memoirs*, 1786–1788, at the suggestion of the Academy of Sciences) should contribute not only to a greater appreciation of Tenon's role, but also facilitate study of many other issues being debated in France on the eve of the Revolution. His work was wide-ranging, touching on topics such as medical and nursing care, attitudes to contagion and hygiene, hospital administration, design and architecture, urban planning and topography: in fact, the whole gamut of political, economic and social activity.

Tenon called his investigations "memoirs" rather than a treatise or essay on hospitals, "because they are only memoirs", but this is misleading. The first memoir consists of a brief description of the forty-eight Paris institutions. The second summarizes the most impressive features of twenty-eight of these. The third discusses the location of the ideal hospital, being concerned with numerous environmental issues, and analyses the problems faced by the Hôtel-Dieu. The fourth is a detailed description of the Hôtel-Dieu, its buildings, furnishings, patients (fever, contagious diseases, insane, injured, maternity, convalescents), staff and regulations. The final memoir deals with the establishment and layout of institutions to replace the Hôtel-Dieu, proposing practical solutions and the controversial suggestion that the hospital be divided into six institutions. Whilst the Hôtel-Dieu was not replaced until 1860, Tenon's suggestions became a basic text for hospital reformers and architects in France for over half a century. It should be noted that

Tenon also visited England at this time and whilst a full report appeared as his *Journal d'observations sur les principaux hôpitaux et sur quelques prisons d'Angleterre* (reprinted by Clermont-Ferrand, Publications de la Faculté de Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université Blaise-Pascal, 1992) he used some examples from the recently built Plymouth (Haslar) Hospital (whose pavilion design he admired and thus helped promote on the Continent), and the Bethlem and St Luke's hospitals for the insane.

Daniel Hickey and others have pointed out that it would be wrong to conclude, from Tenon's memoirs, that all French hospitals were like the Hôtel-Dieu, which, even in its day, was recognized as a phenomenon. Tenon damningly claimed that "few services . . . collaborate to support one another: most increase the confusion and spread disease"; "the mortality of women in childbed is appalling . . . in the ratio of one to 15²/₃ or thereabouts"; "overall mortality recently calculated at 4¹/₂"; and that the hospital had "lost sight of its principal obligation . . . numerous reasons necessitate that it be moved elsewhere. Contagious diseases alone establish this necessity and the laws of the kingdom render it mandatory". The statistics and observations certainly make a powerful impression. The size of the Hôtel-Dieu was comparable to that of a small town with 3,418 patients (desperately overcrowded in twenty-five wards in 1,219 beds), 661 staff living in the hospital too, with 4³/₄ patients per staff. There are vivid descriptions of the layout of the wards, down to the colours of the curtains, the food, the designs of the beds and even the bed charts, the type of utensils, the noise, the filth and the foul smells (inspecting the latrines was "a disagreeable and disgusting task"). It is the next best thing to a documentary film.

Tenon and his colleagues from the Academy of Sciences were well received by all the hospitals bar the Hôtel-Dieu, where they were initially denied access and only obtained some information from inside contacts; he had to rely on some out-of-date records, such as twenty-year-old accounts. Disagreements,

indecision and resistance to change all hindered plans set out so hopefully in Tenon's fifth memoir, with his vision of 'How splendid hospitals can be'. It is tempting to see parallels in some of the problems faced by Tenon in drawing up his reports and in the politics of the finance, administration and location of hospitals today. The recent Tomlinson Report on hospitals throws the same shadows of the debates within the medical and political professions as were seen in the late eighteenth century. And many people today would agree with Tenon that "hospitals are a measure of civilisation" and that a country's ability to give adequate care to its citizens is a crucial yardstick.

This publication is made all the more useful with a helpful introduction discussing the 1772 fire in the Hôtel-Dieu which started the debate about its future, the background to the production of the *Memoirs*, and Tenon's career itself. In addition, reproductions of plans, elevations and sections of a number of hospitals, biographical sketches, a glossary of technical terms, and a bibliography of Tenon's work round off the translation. This is an excellent reasonably priced study.

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Jean Théodoridès, Pierre Rayer
(1793–1867): *un demi-siècle de médecine française*, Paris, Éditions Louis Parente, 1997, pp. 266, illus., no price given (2-84059-011-5).

To the historian of infectious diseases, the name of Pierre Rayer at first sight brings to mind the casual observation of the rod-shaped bodies in anthrax blood in 1850, made with Casimir Davaine, who in the 1860s was to make further contributions to the understanding of the aetiology of anthrax. Now Professor Théodoridès, who thirty years ago wrote a definitive biography of Davaine, has added an attractively produced volume on Rayer, which reminds us forcefully of all his more pressing claims to our admiration for his contributions

to comparative anatomy, pathology, teratology, dermatology, and not least nephrology. In this biography, Théodoridès, with his keen insight into the development of French nineteenth-century medical science, displays his talent for an engaging and enlightening mixture of the personal and the scientific history of his subject, during a period which was particularly rich in both social, political, and medico-scientific developments in France.

Rayer's life and work are here set in the context of his times, from his birth in the "year of terror" of 1793, until his death in 1867, during the "Second Empire" of Napoleon III and only three years short of the outbreak of the disastrous Franco-German war of 1870–71. Through the work of Rayer and his contemporaries, this account demonstrates very clearly that far from being merely a "frivolous interval when 'tout Paris' hummed to the tunes of Offenbach" this was, more importantly, a period of inspired advance in the biological and medical sciences in France. The roll call of illustrious colleagues making their mark in the 1850s and 1860s here include Pasteur, Claude Bernard, Brown-Séquard, J M Charcot, Charles Robin, and Casimir Davaine, who all in one way or another influenced, or were influenced by, Rayer. They also all played their respective rôles in the Société de Biologie, founded in 1848, otherwise the year of revolution, four years before Louis-Napoleon became Napoleon III.

On the personal side we learn of Rayer's early life in Normandy and his family background. His birth certificate is quoted in full, as are later marriage certificates of both Rayer himself and his wife, and of the one daughter who lived (her elder sister had died at the age of 16) to make a satisfactory, though childless, marriage to Count d'Escayrac. The list of those present to witness the signing of the marriage contract is impressive. In addition to the family, the fifty-odd guests included several ministers of state and other important politicians, as well as no less than thirty members of the Académie des Sciences and other Academies of the Institut de France. Apart from many such original documents and