

Book Reviews

H. W. SCHREIBER and G. CARSTENSEN (editors), *Chirurgie im Wandel der Zeit 1945–1983*, Berlin, Heidelberg, and New York, Springer-Verlag, 1983, 8vo, pp. xviii, 419, illus., \$55.20/DM.128.00

This heavy hardback of 419 pages records the proceedings of the 100th Congress of the German Surgical Association founded in 1872 by the surgeons Billroth and von Langenbeck. In addition to the two editors, there are fifty-three contributors, all from professorial units and all German-speaking, including Switzerland, Austria, and East Germany. There is only one woman. She comes from Munich. Each contributor is responsible for one of the forty-seven chapters. An East German from Halle recounts the history of the Association in the first chapter, ending with an enigmatic quote from William Faulkner that “the past is not yet dead: it is not yet time to pass”. The next chapter is concerned with the legal obligations of surgeons, but not unexpectedly ignores the Nazi eras. The remaining chapters are largely based on advances in the various organ-systems. There are also contributions on plastic surgery, anaesthesia, and experimental surgery, where there is the only scant reference to the shock-wave treatment of renal calculi—not in urology as might be expected. There are some evocative photographs in the first chapter, but only a few tables, line-drawings, and other illustrations throughout the text. There is, of course, the usual table of contents, a general index and one of proper names.

In their epilogue, the editors stress the stormy passage that German surgery has experienced since the end of World War II and thank their colleagues in other parts of the world for extending the hand of friendship to them.

In his opening address to the first Congress in 1872, von Langenbeck spoke words that are still appropriate today—namely, that modern surgeons strive to preserve rather than to destroy, and have perceived that it is less important to find new operations than to find means to avoid them; but if they are unavoidable then one must use the most successful method available.

For German-speaking readers, this book will give an interesting insight into the changes that have occurred in Germany West and East since 1945. Unfortunately, as it ends in 1983 it is already dated.

The production is of the reasonable standard that is to be expected of Springer-Verlag.

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DAVID PINGREE (editor), *Picatrix. The Latin version of the Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*, (Studies of the Warburg Institute, vol. 39), London, Warburg Institute, 1986, 8vo, pp. lxxxi, 326 + 7 microfiche, illus., £40.00.

The *Picatrix*, a Latin version of a Spanish translation of an Arabic text, was arguably the most influential book on astrology in the later Middle Ages. It was translated into many other languages, and was consulted and used well into the eighteenth century. Professor Pingree's edition, the first satisfactory publication of this important text, is the fruit of several decades of scholarship, by Wilhelm Prinz, Elsbeth Jaffé, and Pingree himself, under the auspices of Aby Warburg and the Institute that bears his name. This volume, to be followed by a second on the other versions, contains details of the extant manuscripts (and their former owners, including physicians such as Guy de la Brosse and astrologers like Simon Forman and Richard Napier), transcripts of ten series of extracts, and discussions of their affiliations. The apparatus criticus is presented separately on microfiche, a procedure that has kept down the costs while adding only a little to the difficulties of consultation. The quality of the scholarship is extremely high; in checking the extracts in Wellcome 128, I found only two trivial errors, at lxiii 31 and lxiv 3 read “augumento” for “augmento”, and important corrections to Moorat's transcriptions in the Wellcome catalogue.

Professor Pingree, in his introduction, claims that what is most needed to understand this text is a good edition and studies of its influence. In his first aim he has succeeded admirably, and has shown the way to an equally successful fulfilment of the second.

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