

Norbert Marxer, *Praxis statt Theorie! Leben und Werk des Nürnberger Arztes, Alchemikers und Fachschriftstellers Johann Hiskia Cardilucius (1630–1697)*, Studien und Quellen zur Kulturgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit, vol. 1, Heidelberg, Palatina, 2000, pp. 285, DM 88.01, SFr 78.00, €45.00 (hardback 3-932608-07-0).

Among historians of medicine, the Nuremberg seventeenth-century physician Johann Hiskia Cardilucius (1630–97) is not widely known. Marxer's study of his life and writings, however, shows that this is perhaps unjustified. In his own time, Cardilucius was renowned not only because of his medicine and chemistry, but also for his "reforming" efforts. According to Marxer, these last efforts were centred on the notion of "*Nützlichkeit*" (usefulness) in medicine and education. He promoted the use of the vernacular and, in addition to the teaching of classical subjects, he promoted the nationwide education of "useful" topics, such as mathematics, the arts of building, medicine, waterworks, farming, etc. He published his own works in German and, moreover, translated important works in to the vernacular. Cardilucius, in other words, was for Nürnberg what the members of the Hartlib circle were for England. It is not surprising therefore, that Cardilucius was acquainted with Hartlib himself.

With respect to his medicine, Marxer calls Cardilucius an eclectic. He promoted a medicine based on the classical idea of the four humours, supplemented with elements of Paracelsian and Helmontian iatrochemistry. Marxer argues that although medicine at the time moved away from classical and Arabic-medieval sources, remedies continued to be based on the doctrine of the four humours. The work of Cardilucius illustrates this inclination, for his (spagyric) remedies do not show any awareness of the new mechanical philosophy, but are still rooted in classical and/or iatrochemical ideas.

The book is a good starting point for anyone wanting to know more about Cardilucius. It is well researched and richly footnoted. Unfortunately, however, as a biography it is not much more than a summing up of the life and

work of Cardilucius. There is little analysis and the author hardly ever attempts to pose, let alone answer, the question of why Cardilucius acted the way he did. Although historians of science and medicine have become increasingly aware of the philosophical and religious significance of early modern natural philosophy, not much of this awareness is visible in Marxer's *Praxis statt Theorie!* In other words, little is done to set Cardilucius' work in context. The title, for instance, hints at an association between Cardilucius and Leibniz. Indeed, we discover that Cardilucius moved in the philosophical circle around Leibniz and, according to Marxer, Cardilucius' motto "Practice not Theory" was a variation of Leibniz's motto *Theoria cum praxi*. Yet, no more is said on the matter and the reader is left wondering how much of the philosophy of Leibniz is visible in the ideas of Cardilucius. Similarly, the reason why Cardilucius was keen on reform in education is not explained. Moreover, stating that Cardilucius was an eclectic is an easy way out of difficult questions—the reader, still, wants to know why Cardilucius adopted certain ideas in his medicine and chemistry.

Still, perhaps one should not blame Marxer for not doing more than the subtitle of his book promises, i.e. to give an account of the life and work of the Nürnberg physician Cardilucius. As such the book is useful for anyone researching the Germanic "reform movement" in medicine and education. It also illustrates the adoption of iatrochemical ideas in medicine. Most notably, Marxer's annotated bibliography of Cardilucius' works invites further research.

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M J van Lieburg, *Nieuw licht op Hendrik van Deventer (1651–1724)*, Rotterdam, Erasmus Publishing, 2002, pp. 120, €17.50 (paperback 90-5235-163-5).

In medical historiography, Hendrik van Deventer was traditionally praised as the most important representative of early modern obstetrics in the Netherlands. His book *Manuale*