Dora B Weiner, *The citizen-patient in revolutionary and imperial Paris*, Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, pp. xvi, 444, illus., £40.00 (0–8018–4483–5).

In this fine book, Dora Weiner places at the disposal of her readership an unrivalled knowledge of French medical and hospital archives in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, the product of a life-time of indefatigable and committed study. The volume is a goldmine of valuable information and interesting insights into a pivotal period (as well as a place, namely Paris) which saw—as historians as varied as Ackerknecht and Foucault have observed—the emergence of many crucial features of modern medicine. Unlike these predecessors, however, Professor Weiner's focus is not on the medical world so much as on the experience of the medical patient. This is a domain of experience to which she has to bring a powerful and inventive imagination, for there is very little first-hand evidence at her disposal about patient attitudes. It is entirely to her credit that she is able to utilize the arid wasteland of governmental legislation, administrative reports, committee minutes, admissions registers and the like to produce a work so rich in colour and character. The Bibliographic Essay she appends testifies to how deeply and widely she has ranged.

The broad coverage illuminates numerous neglected areas of historical concern—there are valuable chapters, for example, on care of abandoned children, the deaf and the blind, as well as the insane (one of Weiner's specialities), and sections on pharmacy provision, lying-in and childbirth arrangements, military medicine and much else besides. A particularly striking feature of the work is an emphasis on what she calls the "out-patient": the Revolutionary assemblies and Napoleonic bureaucrats tended, she argues, to place greater emphasis on alternatives to hospital provision than historians have recognized. Professor Weiner is also especially good on highlighting conflicts and tensions within the developing schema of health care arrangements: between doctors and administrators, between midwives and accoucheurs, between quacks and pharmacists and so on.

At the centre of Weiner's fresco are the reports of the Poverty Committee (Comité de mendicité) of the Constituent Assembly whose reports from 1790–1, largely penned by the Committee's egregious chairman, the duke de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, provided a charter for patient care. She follows in close detail the failure of the Revolutionary assemblies, then Napoleon, to live up to the standards for full, humane and democratic care for the patient.

Weiner's tendency to see in the Poverty Committee reports the germs of future democratic health care occasionally mars her judgement, a tendency which is compounded by her practice of referring to medicine in terms of today's specialities (geriatric medicine, neonatology, etc.), which gives the work a "whiggish" feel at times. It seems questionable whether the notion of the "citizen-patient" developed in the Poverty Committee's reports—though immensely fruitful as an heuristic device—was ever an effective category of historical change over this period. The reports seem to have been largely forgotten by the late 1790s; even La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt showed little taste for comprehensive remodelling of poor relief and medical education on his return to France after 1800; and the field in the early nineteenth century would be more marked by piecemeal "improvement" than by grand schemes. Over-emphasis on the "citizen-patient" as an historical category seems particularly problematic as regards "citizen-patients" themselves. The term "citizen" after all, was one of the most vigorously contested political notions throughout the period covered, yet there is little sense of this conflict of interpretation in Professor Weiner's treatment. There is little evidence that the sick and the poor ever saw themselves as "citizen-patients"—indeed there is much evidence to the contrary.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025727300059895 Published online by Cambridge University Press

There are then, some knotty problems of overall interpretation in this work. They do not, however, detract from the immenseness of Dora Weiner's achievement, nor the debt in which she leaves us all.

Colin Jones, Exeter University

Ann F La Berge, *Mission and method: the early-nineteenth-century French public health movement*, Cambridge History of Medicine, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. xviii, 376, illus., £45.00, $69.95 (0–521–40406–1).

Following a trail blazed by Erwin Ackerknecht and later illuminated by William Coleman, Ann La Berge provides a full-scale analysis of the public health movement in post-Revolutionary France, and especially in the 1830s and 1840s. Her coverage of public health interest is exceptionally broad and researched with commendable intensity. The public and private hygiene of early nineteenth-century Paris, that laboratory of public health experimentation, as well as the city's water-supply, sewerage and waste disposal, hospitals and poor relief, food quality, patent medicines, epidemic controls, vaccination schemes, housing regulations, prostitution and wet-nursing all and more come under her microscope. The main focus of her interest is the ideology of what she calls "hygienism", and her way into this is largely prosopographical: the main actors in her story are the motley crew of physicians, administrators, enlightened philanthropists, scientists and engineers who dominated the Paris health council and who, from 1829, wrote in the pages of the *Annales d'hygiène publique et de médecine légale*. This was a high-profile and self-conscious group—self-regarding too, with a strong sense of social mission. Largely shunning efforts at mobilizing public opinion, they operated in a way which evoked the enlightened "medical police" and social medicine traditions which had evolved before 1789. Compared with similar groups in western Europe at the time, Professor La Berge shows, the Paris hygienists were highly statist in their approach and tended to concentrate their efforts on influencing the administrative and legislative efforts of government. Their sense of mission was crucial, for throughout the period, they had an uphill fight against the dominant non-interventionist policies associated with laisser-faire liberalism.

Professor La Berge is exceptionally thorough and helpful in showing how this group went about its task, and how they developed and elaborated the "scientific" discipline of hygienism. She is perhaps less successful in providing a broader explanatory framework to highlight their successes and their failures. For such a high-profile group with a strongly statist orientation, it is chastening to learn that by mid-century, their only real legislative success was a (largely unenforced) child labour law. Though it is true that Napoleon III implemented many of the policies with which their names had been associated, La Berge is not so effective in showing us how that influence worked. Indeed, there is a decided whiff of "post hoc, ergo propter hoc" floating about some of her arguments. At times too, she seems rather to overplay the unity of the hygienists as a group: the ideology of hygienism was seemingly espoused by individuals right across the political spectrum, and one wonders whether, just as their loquaciousness may have helped them establish hygienism's reputation as a scientific discipline, their diversity may not have limited their overall effectiveness. It is disappointing too that she does not really develop an analysis which comprehends how the state itself was changing in this period: it is noticeable, for example, that Michel Foucault, whose writings one would have assumed would figure large in this story, is confined to a few passing footnotes. Still, one must not cavil: La Berge has provided us with an impressive piece of scholarly rock on which later scholars will take pleasure in chiselling.

Colin Jones, Exeter University

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025727300059895 Published online by Cambridge University Press