

## Book Notices

**John H Taylor**, *Unwrapping a mummy*, Egyptian Bookshelf, London, British Museum Press, 1995, pp. 111, illus., £9.99 (0-7141-0978-9).

Since 1900, only four mummies have been unwrapped under controlled conditions in the British Isles. The last of these was the priest Horemknesi who died in his fifties around 1030 BC in Upper Egypt and was autopsied in Bristol in 1981.

This beautifully illustrated small book gives an up-to-date resumé of the known history of the turbulent 21st Dynasty when mummification had been practised regularly in Egypt for at least 1,500 years and had reached the peak of its technical sophistication.

But today it is technical sophistication in the forensic field, rather than that which was available in 1981 to the original team of anatomist, archaeologist, chemist, dentist, entomologist, pathologist and radiographer, which may yet provide an exciting climax to the still open "Coroner's verdict" on Horemknesi.

Apart from the original pathological findings of obesity, Diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis, post traumatic nasal problems and appalling dental attrition and abscesses, very little else could be discovered due to the absence of the internal organs (presumed to be due to the body lying dead for some time before the embalmers received it). However, work in the 1990s on reserved tissue demonstrates that antigens to the schistosome and *P. falciparum* are both present in the corpse of this ancient Egyptian. Pushing back the frontiers on the history of infectious diseases, speculation can at last bow to scientific evidence.

**Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer** (eds), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie, Band 9: Se–Sp*, Basel, Schwabe, 1995, pp. 790, Fr 300.00, DM 360.00 (3-7965-0700-X).

The *Historisches Wörterbuch* continues apace. Historians of medicine should note the long entries on sensation (Sinne), "sensus communis", and soul (Seele), as well as the variety of Self (Selbst-) formulations. Those with an interest in more philosophical debates will gain from reading about Being (Sein) and speech (Sprache), while the merely curious can wonder at the juxtaposition of 'Skotismus' and 'Snobismus'. The entries on 'Sozialgeschichte' and 'Sozialhygiene/Sozialmedizin', although useful, merely demonstrate how relatively little interest these topics have evoked among the German historical profession, for both essays and bibliography are greatly deficient in any understanding of non-German developments. No anglophone social historian is cited in the text save Trevelyan, and an article by Rosen in 1976 and an *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article of 1961 represent British and American ideas on social medicine. Social medicine in Russia from 1850 to 1945, however, gets a whole page to itself, mainly compiled from standard Soviet encyclopaedias.

**Joseph S Fruton**, *A bio-bibliography for the history of the biochemical sciences since 1800*, 2nd ed., Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 1992, pp. xxiv, 425, \$25.00.

Joseph Fruton's many contributions to the history of biochemistry are well-known and widely respected. His impressive bio-bibliography, a guide to biographical, autobiographical and obituary material, first appeared in 1982, a supplement being added in 1985, these being consolidated and updated yet again in 1992. In it Fruton provides biographical references to those individuals whose work he considers "forms the background of advance in biochemical knowledge". That broad interpretation allows for the inclusion of physicists, botanists, surgeons and physicians in addition to chemists, pharmacologists and physiologists.

## Book Notices

The chronology ranges widely, from 1800 to the present day and includes living scientists.

A work of this nature is always vulnerable to criticism of omission—some pet subject ignored, an obscure reference missed. Fruton has laboured hard to evade these accusations; over 300 reference works, and 800 serial publications are listed as sources, although obituaries in national newspapers seem not to be included. But that is a tiny lapse, and this work remains an invaluable source for anyone interested in the history of the biochemical sciences.

### BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review. Items received, other than those assigned for review, are ultimately incorporated into the collection of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.)

**A Crook**, *Barbed-wire doctor: memoirs of Brigadier Crook (Retd) MC MRCS LRCP: one doctor's war*, Durham, The Pentland Press, 1996, pp. x, 152, illus., £14.50 (1-85821-383-5).

**Allen G Debus**, *Paracelso e la tradizione paracelsiana*, Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, Il Pensiero e la Storia, No. 19, Napoles, La Città del Sole, 1996, pp. 126 (88-86521-10-3).

**Terry Gould and David Uttley**, *A history of the Atkinson Morley's Hospital, 1895–1995*, London and Atlantic Highlands, Athlone Press, 1996, £14.95 (hardback 0-485-11505-0); £6.95 (paperback 0-485-12125-5).

**M J van Lieburg**, 'Collegialiteit moet hier ons wachtwoord zijn'. *De geschiedenis van de Onderlinge Verzekering-Maatschappij van Geneeskundigen tegen de geldelijke gevolgen van invaliditeit: Artsen-Onderlinge 1896–1996*, Rotterdam, Erasmus Publishing, 1996, pp. 135, illus., Hfl. 35.00 (90-5235-095-7).

*The long days of slavery: Fellows and Members of the RACP who were prisoners-of-war in South East Asia, an exhibition prepared by Brenda Heagney with the assistance of Dr Roy Mills and Dr Richard Mulhearn*, Sydney, The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, 1996, pp. 44, A\$9.00 (0-909783-36-5).

**Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, Julia Sheppard and Geoffrey Yeo**, *Hospital patient case records: a guide to their retention and disposal*, London, St Bartholomew's Hospital, Royal Hospital NHS Trust, on behalf of the Health Archive Group, 1996, pp. 28 (0-9503868-5-5). (Copies can be obtained from Tracy Tillotson, Wellcome Institute Library, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE; or from Andrew Griffin, Health Archives Group, St Bartholomew's Hospital, west Smithfield, London EC1A 7BE.)

**D R Röell**, *De wereld van instinct: Niko Tinbergen en het ontstaan van de ethologie in Nederland (1920–1950)*, Rotterdam, Erasmus Publishing, 1996, pp. 289, illus., Hfl. 59.50 (90-5235-100-7).

**J M D de Waart**, *Voedselvoorschriften in boeteboeken: Motieven voor het hanteren van voedselvoorschriften in vroeg-middeleeuwse Ierse boeteboeken, 500–1100*, Rotterdam, Erasmus Publishing, 1996, pp. 229, Hfl. 49.50 (90-5235-090-6).

**James W Walters** (ed.), *Choosing who's to live: ethics and aging*, Urbana and Chicago, University Illinois Press, 1996, pp. xiii, 165, no price given (0-252-06541-7).

**Lilla Wechsler, Christopher Hoolihan, Mark F Weimer** (comps), *The Bernard Becker collection in ophthalmology: an annotated catalog*, 3rd edn, St Louis, Missouri, The Bernard Becker Medical Library, Washington University School of Medicine, 1996, pp. xxiv, 180, illus., \$45.00 (0-912260-13-0).