

## Book Reviews

the work of H.M. Collins, Bruno Latour, Karin Knorr, Augustine Brannigan, Andrew Pickering, Steve Woolgar, *et al.*).

What this enterprise most notably lacks is clear evidence of editorial vision and grip. There is no very obvious sense of what the book was intended to do, what criteria of inclusion and exclusion were imposed, what audience it was designed for. Why was technology systematically treated in one chapter only, when the wisest strategy might have been to do the job properly or not at all? Why were the earth sciences given such short shrift? More fundamentally, the editors do not seem unambiguously to have told their authors whether their task was prescriptive (this is what the history of science ought to be) or descriptive (this is how, in fact, it is). Nor do they seem to have decided whether the book was to concentrate on the subject-matter of the history of science, or on its historiography. Some of the chapters focus on the first; some on the second; and some reflect confusion about the nature of their brief.

It is hard to imagine that Corsi and Weindling's book will become the standard reference guide to the field; it is too quirky and uneven. For that purpose a combination of W.F. Bynum *et al.* (editors), *Dictionary of the history of science*, and Paul T. Durbin (editor), *A guide to the culture of science, technology, and medicine* would be far better. Nevertheless, many of the chapters can be read with benefit, and even though few historians will feel the necessity of having their own copy, it will be useful to have access to one.

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G. A. LINDEBOOM, *Dutch medical biography. A biographical dictionary of Dutch physicians and surgeons 1475–1975*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1984, 8vo, pp. xiii, 2243, xxxi, [no price stated].

This work presents brief biographies of some 2,800 physicians and surgeons who worked in the Netherlands and the Dutch Empire over the last five centuries. The author gives for each of his subjects the date and place of birth and death, a summary of his or her career, details of more notable (or only) publications and references to sources of further information. In some cases, personal observations are taken over from obituaries, while in others, the author gives his estimation of the subject's contribution to his field. The entries are clearly set out with the aid of some admirable conventions used in the *Dictionary of scientific biography*.

The fact that this is essentially a compilation of obituaries should not be held to diminish either the book's value or the author's efforts, for certain decisions made by the author ensure that it will be an invaluable and perhaps never to be superseded point of reference for an international readership. First the book is in English; second, it includes Dutch medical men and women who practised outside the Netherlands, particularly in the Dutch colonies in the East and West Indies; third, it includes non-Dutch doctors who practised in the Netherlands, of whom the largest group is that of Spanish and Portuguese Jews.

Any ambitious biographical dictionary is open to criticism for minor errors and inconsistent inclusions. In this one, for example, Rembrandt's 'Anatomy of Dr Deyman' is said to be in the Amsterdam Historical Museum (*recte* Rijksmuseum), and R.W. Darwin is included because he studied at Leiden but many others in the same position are omitted, and the exclusion of O. Borrichius is all the more unfortunate because his letters provide such vivid information about medicine at Leiden. However, those who know Professor Lindeboom's other works will need no assurance that a high level of accuracy is maintained, though consistency in what is said about each subject is often frustrated by the vagaries of the evidence.

The author's English is usually adequate, but it may be helpful to point out here the often-neglected difference between "the lecture has not been published", which implies that the manuscript still exists, and "The lecture was not published", which makes no such suggestion.

As well as using the volume as a source of reliable information, the reader can use it for

## Book Reviews

*sortes lindeboomianae*, which will introduce the non-Dutch monoglot to a new cast of characters, from Albert, a sixteenth-century barber-surgeon who drew up a death-certificate, to the cancer pseudo-therapist Jules Samuel (1888–1975), and including many doctors whose international careers are far from predictable, such as A.G. van Onsenoort (1782–1841) and Peter Pincoffs (1815–72). The latter was born in Rotterdam, worked in Brussels, Dresden, Manchester, and Chorlton (not Charlton)-upon-Medlock, founded the Medical Association of Constantinople, established a vaccination centre in Beirut, settled in Naples, and died in a shooting accident (?) in Germany. Again, we learn that one doctor wrote plays, another was taxed at so much, and a third never attended conferences. Thus, Lindeboom's fully rounded portrayal of the profession will assist in the frustration of partisan writers who try to fob off their readers with stereotypes or caricatures.

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ROBERT JOLY (editor, translator and commentator), *Hippocratis De diaeta*, Corpus medicorum graecorum, I.2.4, Berlin DDR, Akademie Verlag, 1984, 8vo, pp. 332, M.98.00.

For almost a quarter of a century, Professor Joly has worked on problems concerned with the text and interpretation of a work in the Hippocratic Corpus, *On regimen*. His first major study appeared in 1960, and he published an annotated edition in the Bude series in 1967. His CMG edition, in which he acknowledges the considerable assistance given him by Dr Simon Byl, is thus in more than one sense the fruit of mature reflection. The actual Greek text shows little change from that of 1967, but elsewhere there are many improvements. The apparatus criticus is avowedly fuller and more accurate, the discussion of the various Latin versions, some of which go back to late antiquity, is more extensive, and the discussion of influences and dating somewhat more subtle than before. The Hippocratic connoisseur will find much to his liking; an elegant French translation, a mass of valuable information on dialectal and stylistic usage, an excellent index, and valuable remarks on the *recentiores* of Book IV. For all this one can but express profound gratitude.

Yet much still remains to be done. The commentary, with its excessively philological bias, says almost nothing about the medicine of the treatise; the importance of dreams in Greek medicine, for which this treatise is our earliest substantial witness, is scarcely discussed; and the whole social and intellectual context of the treatise disappears from view. Far too often, too, the discussions of date and influences end with a dogmatic conclusion that is not warranted by the fragility of the evidence put forward. The ease with which generally sound scholars can reach diametrically opposed positions on such matters suggests a need for a fundamental re-examination of many of the pre-suppositions of Hippocratic studies. In this context it is regrettable that more space was not given to a discussion of the most daring of modern hypotheses about this treatise, that of W.D. Smith, who in 1979 proposed that this was the very work of Hippocrates that elicited Plato's approval. Even if this theory is wrong - and few have since been found to support it -, Smith's arguments raise more basic questions about our criteria for "genuine" Hippocratic treatises than is apparent here. Given the space allocated to the refutation of the views of others, it is sad that, in this instance, the reader is merely referred to another journal for arguments on such a central issue.

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CHARLES LICHTENTHAELER, *Der Eid des Hippokrates, Ursprung und Bedeutung*, Cologne, Deutscher Ärzte-Verlag, 1984, 8vo, pp. 392, illus., DM148.00.

The Hippocratic *Oath* is the most famous of all medical documents. It is regularly cited in modern discussions of medical ethics, and has served as one of the foundations of the Western tradition of medical deontology. Yet its complexities have often escaped those who have