

## Book Reviews

Fracastoro was, like Leonardo, a universal man, and, perhaps for that very reason, has lacked an adequate biography. Rossi is jejune and outdated, and the harvest of Fracastoro's manuscripts is only just beginning. Hence, the old biography of W. P. Greswell, 1801, ed. 2, 1805, still has its uses, for it concentrates almost entirely on Fracastoro as a poet and philosopher and uses many primary texts. Dr Eatough speculates on possible contacts, including Copernicus, Fracastoro's contemporary at Padua (although no actual texts mention a meeting, and certainly not instruction), but fails to explore the ramifications of the group around Giberti in Verona. A closer study of Maddison's 1965 life of Marco Antonio Flaminio would have revealed long contacts between the poets, and attributed Fr. 2 to its rightful author, Flaminio himself.

Perhaps most serious in a work which aims to set Fracastoro in a literary context, there is little discussion of neo-Latin epic or its place in contemporary literary theory. Walter Ludwig has given us many hints, particularly in his study of Scaliger and Fracastoro (*Antike u. Abendland*, 1979, pp. 33–37) and his survey of renaissance didactic poetry (*Festschrift für Leonard Forster*, 1982, pp. 151–180), but these have not been exploited here. I would gladly have dispensed with the long computer index in favour of a more detailed and coherent introduction that integrated Fracastoro more fully into the mainstream of renaissance ideas. That is a task that needs to be done, and the material is there for any intrepid researcher. Within his own limits, Dr Eatough has produced an excellent edition and commentary, but he has not been bold enough to break with a traditional literary form.

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MICHAEL DRAKE (editor), *Population studies from parish registers. A selection of readings from Local Population Studies*, Matlock, Derbys., Local Population Studies, 1982, 8vo, pp. xxxiv, 220, £5.95 (paperback).

Michael Drake was wise to point out the pitfalls of using Parish Registers for population studies, but his long-winded discussion of omissions takes up valuable space in his introduction that could have been used to encourage the use of the registers with caution and in conjunction with other parish documents. His penultimate sentence entreats that "one should not despair of using Anglican parish registers" and it is to be hoped that students will not spend too many hours deciding that a particular register is useless for demography. All of the readings are from volumes of *Local Population Studies*, and one wonders why five of the contributions selected are from volume 24 of this journal. This selection has given the section on baptism in the book undue weight compared with marriage, burials, migration, and area studies. Many excellent articles based on parish registers are to be found in other journals, so that the notes, printed in full in this book, are useful and the index is excellent. The print is very poor in places and it is a pity that the Appendix 1 table had to be cut in two and appear on the back instead of facing page. If back copies of *Local Population Studies* are unobtainable, this book supplies a need for students concerned with historical demography, but it is of very little value for medical historians.

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JOHN K. CRELLIN, *Medical care in pioneer Illinois*, Springfield, The Pearson Museum, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, 1982, 8vo, pp. xi, 128, \$15.95.

Emerging from a study commissioned by the Department of Medical Humanities at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, this short volume is a chronicle of health and medicine in downstate Illinois (the author wisely omits Chicago and its vicinity). It is organized thematically – focusing in turn on such topics as health conditions, the diverse sources of medical care, and physicians' social and economic positions – and glides freely back and forth between Illinois statehood in 1818 and the end of the century, the study's chronological confines. Intended more for medical and lay audiences than for historians, much of the book resurveys the Illinois topography of nineteenth-century American medical terrain that has