

## Book Reviews

commercial, and technical traditions in which it was so deeply embedded.

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**Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English students in Italy, 1485–1603*, Cambridge, James Clarke, 1999, pp. xii, 322, £40.00 (0-2276-7942-3).**

Given the importance of Padua in the English renaissance of the sixteenth century, it is surprising that there has been no detailed study of just what English students, travellers, and spies learned when they were there, or of their impact once back in England. Medical historians have long been familiar with “Linacre tradition” and “the lure of Padua”, but Jonathan Woolfson puts their conclusions into a wider context. He shows that more lawyers than intending physicians studied at Padua, and makes out a strong case for the influence of Paduan legal thought on English law, especially at the end of the sixteenth century. He also explores, more suggestively, the various ways in which the returning students interpreted to their fellow Englishmen the lessons they had gained from Italy about state organization or simply the latest in literary trends. The book concludes with a very valuable listing of all Englishmen known to have been in Padua in the sixteenth century. It deliberately excludes English travellers known only from records of stays in Venice, although most would have passed through Padua, and names only doubtfully associated with Padua. Here one might feel that the line has been too narrowly drawn. Thomas Vavasour and George Turner, Catholic exiles who took a medical degree from the Studio in Venice, will almost certainly have studied in Padua, and Edmund Fornell, or Tornell, of Salisbury, graduated in philosophy in Venice in 1593 and in theology at Padua in 1594,

see Richard Palmer, *The studio of Venice*, 1983.

The role of Padua in the development of English medicine is generally well covered, although interesting details are missed, and the name of J J Bylebyl disappears completely on page 178. The Italian bias imparted to the College of Physicians by Linacre, Chambers, and many early members is rightly noted, but the increased support given to the College by Cardinal Pole under Mary Tudor is passed over. Given how many of the College’s leading members had been Pole’s friends in Padua, it is not surprising that he took the College’s side in its attempts to impose its will on the recalcitrant English universities. Reference to Sir George Clark’s *History of the College* or to Christopher Brooke’s *History of Caius College* would have helped to explain the influence of Padua and medical teachers like Da Monte, while at the same time also pointing out what was not brought back. John Friar’s Greek library may also have included an important volume (or two) of Galen, the mysterious Codex Adelfhi.

One major theme hardly discussed is religion. Numbers of Englishmen at Padua fluctuated considerably, a fact not entirely explicable by a definition of the English Nation that might include Bretons, Burgundians, and Piedmontese. Several Marian exiles, like William Turner, made their way briefly to Padua, but many of those who studied there in the 1560s onwards were Catholic exiles or had Catholic sympathies. William Harvey in 1602 took the oath of Catholic faith while obtaining his degree from the count palatine, but the notary deliberately left that incriminating detail off his official degree certificate. But apart from a passing reference to the 1560s and 1570s as an age of religious Cold War, Woolfson does not expressly look at the religious affiliations of Paduan students, or seek to explain the increase in numbers of Englishmen from 1580 onwards (including Edward Jordan,

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Sir Henry Savile, and Harvey) as the result of Venetian attitudes towards the Inquisition. This is an opportunity missed, for it is clear that the reputation of the university was not by itself always sufficient to attract students all the way from England. Nor was a Paduan degree in medicine always as attractive as most medical historians have assumed, for several years might elapse without the presence of an English medical student.

Such wider considerations rarely surface in this carefully written and well-researched book, which sets out in great detail what is known about the English in Tudor Padua. If more is sometimes claimed for some of its teachers, e.g. Leonico Tomeo, or its humanistically inclined graduates than is warranted by the meagre evidence, that is a small price to pay for this extremely valuable book, which makes clear why Shakespeare had his Lucentio arrive at "Fair Padua, nursery of the arts" for "a course of learning and ingenious studies".

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**Andreas-Holger Maehle, *Drugs on trial: experimental pharmacology and therapeutic innovation in the eighteenth century*, Clio Medica 53, Wellcome Institute Series in the History of Medicine, Amsterdam and Atlanta, Rodopi, 1999, pp. 378, £65.00, \$110.00, Hfl. 200.00 (hardback 90-420-0793-1), £18.00, \$30.50, Hfl. 55.00 (paperback 90-420-0783-4).**

The author's research into eighteenth-century pharmacotherapy, which forms the subject of this book, adds to the knowledge of the early history of pharmacology. Half a century ago experimental pharmacology was

regarded as a development of the early nineteenth century with the physiologist François Magendie the acknowledged "father" of the science. In the 1960s historians traced the experimental tradition in pharmacology to the eighteenth century drawing attention to early methods of animal experimentation, dose-effect relationships and theories of the mode of action of drugs and poisons, all aspects significant to modern scientific pharmacology. In this book the author places these early studies in a wider context, examining and elucidating the relations between the experimental approach, pharmacological theories and therapeutic principles.

In an introductory review of features of eighteenth-century pharmacology, attention is drawn to the numerous articles on materia medica, pharmacotherapy and poisons published in journals between 1700 and 1799. There are three case studies: 'Dissolving the stone', which describes the search for lithontriptics, 'Opium', which the author calls an ambiguous drug, and 'Peruvian bark', the quinine containing cinchona bark used as a specific febrifuge. In the first of these reference is made to Joanna Stephens who, in 1736, offered to reveal the secret of her remedy for the stone for a sum of £5,000. The full details of this incident have been fully documented elsewhere, here the author concentrates on how evidence to test her claims was produced and how this further shaped the methodology for the study of lithontriptics. This study also provides an early illustration of chemistry as one of the constituent sciences of pharmacology. The rigorous investigation of the therapeutic use of opium and the experiments to determine its effects is a valuable contribution to the already extensive literature on the drug. Peruvian bark was regarded as a specific, a term which Dr Maehle carefully examines and concludes that there was a change in its definition towards the end of the eighteenth century.