

Book Reviews

need for a detailed study of a fascinating period, aimed at English readers. The present book has a good deal of German, in a text which, in any case, is not always easy to read. However, it should be widely known to medical historians, and can be warmly recommended to them. Moreover, its price is quite modest.

BEVERLEY M. BARROWS, *A county and its health, A history of the development of the West Riding health services 1889–1974*, [Wakefield], The Health Committee of the West Riding County Council, 1974, 8vo, pp. viii, 249, illus., [no price stated].

Little has been written on the history of medicine in the provinces of Britain, and when contrasted with certain continental countries this deficiency is pitiable and inexcusable. A book, therefore, dealing exclusively with the recent development of medicine in an important part of England is to be welcomed, and those who have sponsored and fostered it are to be congratulated on their enlightened attitude, as much as the author on the excellence of her history.

In view of the changes in local government and health services in April 1974, and because the West Riding was to suffer an especially severe degree of dispersion, it was thought essential that a record should be prepared of events over the last eighty-five years, beginning with the Local Government Act of 1888 which came into effect in April 1889. The author traces events chronologically, basing her history on the many available reports and on other primary source documents. It is not the sort of book that one can read consecutively, but it provides a wealth of information concerning all aspects of health care provision and will be of great value to historians of the future seeking details of twentieth-century medicine in provincial England. It is to be hoped that similar accounts of other areas will become available, and that local government fragmentation will not result in the loss or dispersion of precious documents necessary for the Pevsner-like, district-by-district local history of medicine which must ultimately be carried out in Britain.

F. KHOLEIF, *Avicenna on psychology, a study of his poem on the soul (al-qaṣīdah al-‘ayniyyah)*, Beirut, Arab University Press, 1974, pp. 186 (Arabic) + pp. 3–5 (foreword in English), [no price stated].

This book is in Arabic, with a short foreword in English, and it presents a digest of Avicenna's philosophy, intended for university students. Like Aristotle, Avicenna (d. A.D. 1037) considers psychology as a branch of physics, since the domain of psychology is "the soul and body as one unified thing, substantially brought together as form and matter are." Dr. Kholeif divides Avicenna's writings on philosophy into two groups: some, of a general nature, were meant to convey the tenets of Aristotelian theory to students; while the others were especially written for the intellectual élite. In the latter works, where he drifts away from Aristotle, Avicenna expresses his own attitude in philosophy.

In the Wellcome Collection of Arabic manuscripts there is a commentary by Al-Anbawardī on the poem dealing with the soul, which is attributed to Avicenna; it did not appear in the *Catalogue* of the Collection but will be listed in a forthcoming supplement. The poem is discussed by Kholeif, but neither he nor any other bibliographer mentions this commentator.