

Book Notices

Jean Garrabé (ed.), *Philippe Pinel*, Collection Les Empêcheurs de Penser en Rond, Le Plessis-Robinson, Synthelabo, 1994, pp. 156, FFr 94.00 (2-908602-50-4).

“Tous les points que je vais évoquer, je le fais sans souci de vérité” (p. 34). This candid, if more than a little depressing admission by S D Kipman sets the tone of this slim volume of essays, which turns out to have a shortage of historical analysis and an overload of ahistorical antiquarianism, personal obsessions and rather embarrassingly narcissistic rambblings. In some ways this may be appropriate, since the volume commemorates the 200th anniversary of Pinel’s “liberation” of the insane—which, as most (though not all) contributors accept never actually happened. In this context, Michel Foucault—who is made to play the role of uninvited guest at the Pinellian lovefest—appears a historical giant. Among the wreckage, one does glimpse one or two worthwhile passages, in particular a characteristically fine essay by Dora Weiner on the intellectual context of Pinel’s early career; some (conflicting) analyses of Pinel’s hospital days (by Jack Juchet and Jacques Postel); a bracing conspectus on moral psychiatry and the ontological theory of illness (by D Wiloher); and an interesting essay (largely tangential to the theme of the book) on Pinel’s contemporary Chiarugi (by G Lantéri-Laura).

Ronald Rompkey, *Grenfell of Labrador: a biography*, University of Toronto Press, 1994, pp. 448, illus., £12.50 (0-8020-7788-9).

Almost everyone who regularly visits a second-hand bookshop will have seen a copy of one of the many editions of Wilfred Grenfell’s autobiography, *A Labrador doctor*, first published in 1919. Few will have opened it, still less read it. Its ubiquity, however, is testimony to the fame its author once enjoyed. In the 1920s Grenfell was practically a

household name in the English speaking world. Few had not heard of the doctor, missionary, explorer, adventurer who had survived by killing his dogs as he floated for days, helpless, on an ice-pan off the freezing Labrador coast. Grenfell was an authentic, Victorian muscular Christian. Driven by evangelism and a sense of fair play, he worked for most of his life among the impoverished settlers and seamen of Newfoundland and Labrador. Medicine and preaching went hand-in-hand as he sledged and sailed thousands of miles round his self-created parish. By the 1920s this prolific author was one of the highest paid lecturers on the American circuit (his lectures were fund-raising exercises). He was deeply involved in local Newfoundland politics.

Ronald Rompkey has written a thoroughly readable biography of this extraordinary figure. It is extremely well researched and sets out the broader context clearly. Interpretively, it offers few surprises. There is not a great deal of medicine here and the material on Grenfell’s medical education at the London Hospital might have been helped by the use of more modern sources such as the work of Jeanne Peterson. Note too that the King’s physician was Sir Maurice, not Michael Cassidy (p. 272). These blemishes aside, this is a good read and excellent material for any one working on the rise of the surgical hero.

Marie-Hélène Marganne, *L’Ophtalmologie dans l’Égypte gréco-romaine d’après les papyrus littéraires grecs*, Studies in Ancient Medicine, vol. 8, Leiden and New York, E H Brill, 1994, pp. xii, 209, Nlg. 140.00, \$80.00 (90-04-09907-7).

Dr Marganne is well known as an expert on ancient papyri and on ophthalmology. In this book she provides the reader with an re-edition of six substantial papyri dealing with Greek ophthalmology, translated into French and accompanied by an elegant commentary. The

introduction gives a succinct survey of ancient ideas on the eye, its diseases, and treatment, and a brief chapter lists the ingredients recommended on Greek papyri for use in treating eye diseases. (It is a pity that the author could not have made use of Durling's recent listing of drugs recommended in general by Galen.) The specialist will gain considerable benefit from this scholarly work, and those who want to know something about ancient ophthalmology would do far worse than begin here.

Charles Burnett, Keiji Yamamoto and Michio Yano (eds and transl.), *Abū Maʿṣar The abbreviation of the introduction to astrology together with the medieval Latin translation of Adelard of Bath*, Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science Texts and Studies, vol. 15, Leiden and New York, E J Brill, 1994, pp. viii, 170, Nlg. 100.00, \$57.50 (90-04-09997-2).

The works of the ninth-century Arab astrologer Abū Maʿṣar (Albumasar) enjoyed great popularity and were very influential in medieval Western Europe by means of Latin translations. Their influence even extended to the field of medicine. The most popular medieval explanation for epidemics was that promulgated by Abū Maʿṣar, namely, the theory of the Great Conjunctions. On this theory particular planetary conjunctions cause major political and natural disasters. One of the major disasters to which this theory was applied by fourteenth-century physicians was that of the Black Death.

His major astrological work is his still unedited *Great introduction to astrology* which was translated twice into Latin in the twelfth century and was consulted by many of his colleagues. It was the primary source for al-Bīrūnī's *Tafhīm*, a popular eleventh-century summary of astrology. One of Abū Maʿṣar's minor works is *The abbreviation of the introduction to astrology*, which is an abridgement of his *Great introduction* for the convenience of the reader, and which was

influential through the Latin translation by Adelard of Bath in the twelfth century. *The abbreviation* consists of seven chapters familiarizing the reader with major aspects of medieval astrology, such as the signs of the zodiac, their nature, conditions and indications; the planets, their conditions, natures, good and bad features; the Lords of the days and hours; and the lots.

The present critical edition of *The abbreviation* comprises the Arabic text, based on MS British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, Add. 7490; an English translation of the Arabic text with explanatory notes; the Latin translation by Adelard of Bath and an English translation of the Latin text with notes; a collation of *The abbreviation* with the *Great introduction* and with al-Bīrūnī's *Tafhīm*; and a glossary of technical terms and indices. The editors have thus informed us about the immediate source of *The abbreviation*, its influence in Islamic circles and in the West. They have admirably succeeded in their goal to enrich our knowledge of medieval astrology.

Some examples of errors occurring in the text are: page 12, line 11: The problematic reading "al-ḥuqq al-kullī" (the entire cavity <of the universe>) should be emended to "al-jaww al-kullī" (the entire atmosphere). This last reading is confirmed by that of MS Paris, as provided in the Appendix (page 84, line 12). Ibidem, lines 11–12: "mā nafʿun bi-ʿadami l-ʿilm" is indeed obscure when translated as: "There is no benefit in the absence of knowledge . . .". A more sensible translation would be: "What use is there [to what you do] without knowledge . . .". Page 24, line 4: "kathīr al-talawwun" does not mean "always delaying" but "assuming many forms". Page 54, line 9: "al-bayt al-tāsi" is not "the ninth place", but "the ninth house". Page 62, line 4: "wa-wafāʾ bi l-ʿahd" does not mean "trust in his promise" but "keeping one's promise". Ibidem, line 7: "wa-l-naqbu" does not mean "digging" in this context but "burglary". Ibidem, line 8: "wa-l-ʿadhāb" is rather "punishment" than "suffering". Page 64, line 11: "wa-l-ashriba al-muskira" is not

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“sugared drinks” but “intoxicating drinks”. Page 66, lines 3–4: “wa-l-afsād ll-māl” (corruptions to wealth) should be emended to “wa-l-ifsād ll-māl” (destroying of wealth). Ibidem lines 4–5: The emendation “wa-rifqu l-*kaf’i” is needless and problematic; the reading provided by MSS BP “wa-rifqu l-kaffi” (gentleness of the hand, i.e. friendliness) makes better sense. Page 86, line 11: “mā nanhā ilaynā” is problematic; a better reading would be “mā nuhiya ilaynā” or “mā nanhā ilayhi”.

Michael J Newstead, *Cumulative index to the Quekett journals of microscopy, volumes 1 to 36, 1868–1992*, The Quekett Microscopical Club, 1994, pp. ix, 243, £18.00 (0-9514441-2-3) (distributed by: Savona Books, 9 Wilton Road, Hornsea, N. Humberside HU18 1QU, UK).

Historians of biomedical science can be grateful to Michael J Newstead for his patient work in preparing this cumulative index of the Quekett Microscopical Club’s journals of microscopy, from 1860–1992. He provides comprehensive author and subject indexes as well as separate listings of the presidents and honorary members of the club, and obituary and book notices which the journal (under various titles) has carried. Two of the Club’s presidents, E M Nelson and H A Dade, are among the most prolific contributors to the journal. On the other hand, the Club’s most famous president, T H Huxley, did not make regular use of its publications to report on his own microscopical work.

Hilary Marland (ed.), *The art of midwifery: early modern midwives in Europe*. Wellcome Series in the History of Medicine, London and New York, Routledge, 1994 (paperback), pp. xvi, 234, £13.99 (0-415-11675-9).

The hardback edition of this book was reviewed in the January 1995 issue of *Medical History* by Andrew Wear who recommended it for “correcting the historical distortion of an anglo-centric view of early modern midwifery”,

and for the sophisticated analysis that positions midwives within larger historical debates.

História, Ciências, Saúde—Manguinhos, edited by Sergio Goes de Paula, published by the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, three times a year, subscription (1994): institutions \$60.00; individuals \$35.00. Orders should be sent with payment to: *História, Ciências, Saúde—Manguinhos*, Prédio do Relógio, Av. Brasil 4365—Maguinhos, Rio de Janeiro—RJ, Brazil ZC 21040-360.

Launched in 1994 by the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (formerly the Maguinhos Institute) the title of this journal expresses the aim of its founders not to restrict it to a narrow field of specialization. In the words of the editor, *Maguinhos* is “intended to address the history of knowledge and learning, with special emphasis on biomedical knowledge”. Well produced, with black and white, and colour illustrations, it publishes original articles in Portuguese, English, French, and Spanish, reproduces historical documents, reports of debates and interviews, and presents summaries of theses, as well as publishing book reviews. Contributions submitted for publication should be sent to: Sergio Goes de Paula, Editor, at the address given above.

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.)

Franco Arosio, *Carlo Besta, 1876–1940*, Milan, Istituto Nazionale Neurologico “Carlo Besta”, 1993, pp. 112, illus., no price given.

Andrew Cunningham and **Tamara Hug**, *Focus on the frontispiece of the Fabrica of Vesalius, 1543: an exhibition*, Cambridge, Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine,