

Book Reviews

The value of these essays is further enhanced by a careful index of names. Less convenient is the placing of the notes at the end of the book, which makes for a constant turning of the pages. This small complaint may also show how little in general the reviewer had to find fault with in such an important book.

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CHRISTOPHER BROOKE, *A history of Gonville and Caius College*, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 1985, 8vo, pp. xvi, 354, illus., £19.50.

Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, has been fortunate in its historians. The mighty volumes of Venn's *Biographical history*, Venn's slighter college history of 1901, and more recent studies of its early admissions register (1559 onwards), have all contributed to making the College crucial to our modern understanding of the development of Cambridge over the centuries. Professor Brooke's new history is more than an offering of academic (and, indeed, filial) piety, for his survey always seeks to place the College in a broad intellectual and social context. Only with this century and the growth of University and, still more, government control over Cambridge education does the history become more parochial, even if that parochiality does take us from ancient China and medieval numismatics to the economics of aid to the Third World, and beyond, to black holes in space. Professor Brooke's account is further enlivened by his own reminiscences as the child of a Caius fellow, by sidelights on some generations of eccentrics and oddities, like the leave of absence given to Edward Wright for purposes of piracy, and by judicious comment on the present academic situation.

Much attention is given to the development of the Caius medical tradition, from Thomas Wendy and John Caius to the 1970s, when the percentage of its members reading medicine was by far the highest in Cambridge. At a time when Masters were usually clerics, Caius several times elected medical men, most notably Caius himself, and Matthew Brady, and, in this century, Hugh Anderson and Joseph Needham. Although Professor Brooke emphasizes the College's long links with medicine, the evidence for a strong tradition of medical instruction within the College is not substantial before the second half of the last century, and in this both Paget and Allbutt may have had a greater role than is here allowed them.

The great value of the book, for the general historian, however, resides in its earlier chapters. The author's deep acquaintance with medieval habits of thought enables him to give a coherent account of the first founding of the College, and his Anglican sympathies enable him to understand, if not entirely to pardon, the vigorous controversies that affected the College in the century after its refoundation by John Caius. He is surprisingly generous to Caius (although he underestimates his scholarship, on which see *Med.-hist. Journal*, 1985), and his description of Perse, Legge, and Gostlin is a brilliant vignette.

Occasionally, though, the outsider would like more information on the Caius arcana. Only a passing sentence notes the great wealth of the College (perhaps the third or fourth richest in Cambridge), but no figures are given, and one is left to guess at the consequences of this bounty in the provision of scholarships and fellowships. Occasionally, also, there are signs of hasty revision, most notably over the marital status of R. D. Willis (cf. 203 and 224), but Professor Brooke has successfully picked his way through the minutiae of identifying long-forgotten Caius and their progeny.

To a Cambridge man, not at Caius, this history is refreshingly free from most faults of the genre, and Professor Brooke has shown himself a worthy successor to the inimitable Venn.

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