

Book Reviews

from the sacred uses of tobacco in South America, through its introduction for medical and recreational use into Europe and other parts of the world, to the history of the tobacco trade and its opponents. Where previous histories of tobacco have been either specialized or anecdotal, Goodman endeavours to be both general and precise.

Tobacco's history has been studied from many perspectives, ranging from ethnopharmacology to business history. Goodman has encompassed as many aspects of tobacco as would fit between the covers of a single book, but he is inevitably limited by deficiencies in the secondary literature. His brave attempt to write a cultural history of tobacco's social meaning in Europe is the weakest part of the book, so little scholarly work having been done on the subject. Many of the early modern authors and social practices that he mentions lack context as a result. Seventeenth-century medical attacks on tobacco were motivated principally by moral theology. Dutch painters did not simply depict tobacco consumption; they employed it emblematically to convey moral messages that would please their patrons.

Tobacco was one of the classic international commodities which formed the basis of the Atlantic economy and Goodman is able to synthesize a great deal of work on the social and economic significance of growing the crop and selling it overseas, especially by Timothy Breen, Pete Daniel and Jacob Price. Its cultivation was central to the development of the Caribbean and North American colonies; its importation and processing played a significant role in the rise of Amsterdam and London as major trading centres. More recently, the consolidation of cultivation, manufacture, and marketing has created a group of multinational companies able to sway the decisions of governments throughout the world. Goodman provides a lucid account of these developments, insisting that tobacco's present is incomprehensible without an understanding of its past.

He is also interested in cross-cultural comparison, but the constraints of space limit this to discussions of native use in the Americas and the international spread of the tobacco trade. There is little sense in this book that every country has its own history of tobacco, shaped by moral attitudes, government involvement, and local patterns of production and consumption. There is brief coverage of France and Holland but Macedonia and Latakia are not mentioned. Goodman also ignores ethnographic studies on the cultural meanings of kava, betel, and tobacco among Pacific islanders, which might have stimulated fresh ideas on the reception of tobacco in Europe.

This book will be essential reading for social, medical, and economic historians. It is to be hoped that it will encourage fresh research into the significance of this extraordinary commodity. Any reader will learn much about tobacco, but there remains much to be done if the wide variation in the meaning of tobacco is to be explained.

David Harley, Oxford

HORACE W. DAVENPORT, *A history of gastric secretion and digestion: experimental studies to 1975*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press for the American Physiological Society, 1992, pp. xvii, 414, illus., £60.00 (0-19-507393-2).

Eighteenth-century physicians used to refer to the stomach as "that noble viscus". Whatever its claims to special status in the hierarchy of the different organs of the body, it has always had the advantage, compared with the brain or other internal structures, of being reasonably easy of access to the researcher desiring to know something of its functions. The introduction of tubes into the stomach to study its potential digestive properties has a long history, and the direct examination of the stomach lining as a result of its exposure by an unhealed gunshot wound, the famous investigation carried out by William Beaumont, dates from the early nineteenth century. Among physiologists, Pavlov was pre-eminent in using the stomach for his studies of sham feeding and of psychic stimulæ, work which led to the award of the Nobel Prize in 1904.

Horace Davenport is a distinguished American physiologist who has devoted a lifetime to the study of the stomach and its functions. For the general reader, his book is too technical to give pleasure, but for experts in gastroenterology it is a work of reference that will grace the shelves of medical libraries for many years to come. As scientific history, it provides admirable references, 1,097 in all, to a period that lasts from 1777 to 1975. There are chapters on the one secretion that

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everyone knows about, gastric acid, on ferments which may play a role in protein digestion, on the cells which provide the lining of the stomach, and on that remarkable substance still known only as the “intrinsic factor”, which is vital for the absorption from the intestine of the microgram quantities of the vitamin, B 12, which is necessary to prevent us developing Addisonian pernicious anaemia.

Horace Davenport’s book is a work of devotion and admirable scholarship. At the end of it all, however, I still do not know why the stomach secretes acid in such quantities. We do not really need it, as is shown by the many individuals who live to great ages without having any acid in their stomachs. Could it be that like the appendix, which we can all do without, stomach acid is vestigial in a biochemical sense? The answer to this question cannot be found in this book. Nevertheless, it does provide a fascinating insight into the ways of thought of generations of physiologists who have been, like Horace Davenport, committed to the ideal that “the proper aim of physiological research is to reach an understanding of normal and abnormal function in the human being”.

Christopher Booth, Royal College of Physicians of London

OVE HAGELIN (comp.), *Rare and important medical books in the library of the Karolinska Institute*, Stockholm, Karolinska Institutet Bibliotek, 1992, pp. 212, illus., SEK 400 (91–88194–027).

Third in a uniform series of catalogues compiled by Hagelin, this is the first to deal with the impressive rare book collection held by the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. Earlier volumes (noticed in this journal, 1990, 34: 470, and 1992, 36: 240) presented highlights from the library of the Swedish Society of Medicine, many of whose older books strayed to the Karolinska Institute after 1816, when the latter left the premises it had shared for its first six years with the Society and the Collegium Medicum. Further moves and some splendid donations apart, the subsequent history of the Karolinska collection is presented in Hagelin’s informative preface as one of more or less beneficent neglect; no catalogue has appeared since those of Anders Johan Hagströmer (1753–1830) in 1811 and 1825. Faced with two kilometres of pre-1960 books arranged only by subject, Hagelin has bestowed a bibliographical kiss of life on just 93 sleeping beauties, chosen for their historical importance and visual appeal—excellent illustrations accompany each record. Only works not previously catalogued for the Swedish Society of Medicine have been included, so the result is too unbalanced to stand alone as a survey of the literature, but here we find, amongst others, the well-established classics by Vesalius, Bidloo, Gautier d’Agoty, and Cruveilhier, and particularly fine copies of Charles Estienne’s anatomical atlas (1545), Hans Weigel the Elder’s Vesalian fugitive sheets (1556), and Georg Bartisch’s comprehensive ophthalmological treatise (1583). The arrangement is roughly chronological, ending with Fleming’s announcement of the discovery of penicillin in the *British Journal of experimental Pathology* (1929).

After giving the author and short title, each record has a brief pagination statement which occasionally alerts the careful reader to a copy-specific imperfection. Information about the author, his (or in the case of *Notes on nursing*, her) work, and the provenance of the Karolinska copy is then combined to produce a short essay supported by a list of references. Typographically challenged—even the commonest French and German accents are absent—and with a few harmless lapses in the English idiom, these essays are nevertheless reasonably informative and thoroughly entertaining. They convey the compiler’s enthusiasm for his subject. Even the most familiar territory is covered with a sharp eye for significant detail, and a fine balance is maintained between the grotesque or amusing anecdote, that necessary bane of so much popular literature on medical history, and the telling observation that preserves our sense of wonder at the human achievement each book represents.

Gerald Beasley, Wellcome Institute

JEREMY TAYLOR, *Hospital and asylum architecture in England 1840–1914: building for health care*, London, Mansell Publishing, 1991, pp. xiv, 274, illus., £60 (0–7201–2059–4).

The hospital building is a Cinderella to both medical and architectural history. Orthodox medical historians may be interested in, say, the finance of the institution and the therapy practised there; few architectural historians have yet looked at the architectural merit—or otherwise—of the buildings in which medicine is practised. Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, in his brief survey of hospital architecture which