

Book Notices

Samuel S White, *Samuel S. White catalogue of dental instruments and equipment*, Introduction by Audrey B Davis, San Francisco, Norman Publishing in association with Smithsonian Institution Libraries, 1995, pp. xxxviii, 408, illus., \$150.00 (0-930405-63-3). Copies may be ordered from: Norman Publishing, 720 Market Street, 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94102-2502, USA (tel: 1-800-544-9359).

This book comprises a facsimile reprint of S S White's 1876 catalogue preceded by a short but well-referenced introduction by Audrey B Davis of the National Museum of Dentistry, Baltimore.

The catalogue presents a vivid snapshot of techniques of the period, since, in addition to its essay on porcelain teeth, the advertising copy needed to extol the virtues of the thousands of products inevitably describes those small points of detail not to be gleaned from contemporary clinical papers, written as they were for those already in the know. The range of products is comprehensive, embracing materials, instruments, equipment for operative and mechanical dentistry, furniture, anatomical models, textbooks and stationery.

The amount of space allotted for Davis's introduction (34 pages including notes) to this already somewhat weighty publication, necessarily limits the range of her observations. She nevertheless deals briefly with Samuel White's origins, the nature of his success as a manufacturer and his close involvement with the controversial issue of the patenting of vulcanite by Goodyear. Less fully examined are the nature and influence of *Dental Cosmos* as a scientific journal and just how S S White became an international supplier in the third quarter of the nineteenth century commanding two-thirds of the world market in artificial teeth by 1876.

Least it should be thought that the *raison d'être* of this reprint lies mainly in its curiosity value, it should be pointed out that there can be

few of the 155 dental museums in America, Europe and elsewhere listed by the American Academy of the History of Dentistry which do not hold S S White artefacts in need of accurate identification and cataloguing; unfortunately, it is probably also true that few are sufficiently well-funded to be able to afford \$150 for this catalogue.

Duncan Salkeld, *Madness and drama in the age of Shakespeare*, Manchester University Press, 1994, pp. vi, 168, £12.99 (paperback 0-7190-4586-6).

In examining the interplay between madness and drama in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries including Kyd, Webster, Middleton and Ford, Duncan Salkeld focuses upon madness as a metaphor for political sedition and unrest. Using dramatic, political and medical literature from the Renaissance, nineteenth-century psychiatric writings, and twentieth-century theorists such as Foucault, Derrida and Irigaray, he explores the dynamics of reason and madness, control and subversion, mind and body, and state and individual. The declared aim of the work is to reveal the historical specificity of dramatic representations of madness in the English Renaissance, by examining the political, ideological, cultural and social conditions which underlay such depictions.

Salkeld discusses psychological, aesthetic and poststructural interpretations of Shakespeare's "mad" characters from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, comparing these with the corporeal, humoral, and poetic notions of madness which were current in the Renaissance. The political and sexual dimensions of madness are examined in two chapters which deal with the emblematic use of insanity as an expression of political unrest, and with the abuse and confinement of mad women in the work of Shakespeare's

contemporaries.

The book's main strength lies in its extensive use of primary sources, particularly medical texts, to elucidate Renaissance ideas on madness as a corporeal state. Its flaw lies in a disjuncture at certain points between the discussion of theory and the interpretation and analysis of the dramatic texts, where the author does not convincingly integrate the two. However, this work remains a thoughtful, well-argued and carefully researched study which will prove helpful both to students of Renaissance literature and to cultural historians with an interest in madness or medicine in the early modern period.

Shirley Burgoyne Black, *An 18th century mad-doctor: William Perfect of West Malling*, Sevenoaks, Darenth Valley Publications, 1995, pp. 85, illus., £3.95 (0-950-7334-7-4).

William Perfect is chiefly known to medical historians as the proprietor, in West Malling, Kent, of one of the new private lunatic asylums springing up in the last third of the eighteenth century, and as the author of *Select cases in the different species of insanity* (Rochester, Gillman, 1787), a work pioneering the case-history method of presentation of insanity. In an entertaining booklet, Shirley Burgoyne Black has put some flesh on these bare bones. Providing additional biographical material, she has shown how Perfect fits the model of the aspiring new "general practitioner" as depicted by Irvine Loudon—his surgical apprenticeship included, for example, training in man-midwifery, in which he built a sizeable (and successful) practice, while he was also an industrious inoculator, advertising his services in the newspapers. Perfect was furthermore, like a minor Erasmus Darwin, a "poor Parnassian scribe" (his self-description), publishing his light, occasional verse in various magazines. Not least he was a big cheese in the new freemason movement, rising to become Provincial Grand Master for Kent. In short, anyone seeking further confirmation of the existence of a lively entrepreneurial spirit in

the eighteenth-century medical trade will find much supporting evidence in this highly readable publication.

Jürgen Hartwig Ibs, *Die Pest in Schleswig-Holstein von 1350 bis 1547/48*, Kieler Werkstücke: Reihe A: Beiträge zur schleswig-holsteinischen und skandinavischen Geschichte, Band 12, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 1994, pp. 244, DM 27.00 (3-631-47600-0).

This revised dissertation provides the first serious study of the long term incidence and impact of plague in the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein covering the medieval and early modern period. Considering that it is more than a hundred years since the last scholarly work dealing with plague in this part of Germany was published, this study forms a most welcome addition to our knowledge about epidemic disease in this area of early modern, northern Europe. The author provides not only a detailed account of the incidence of plague in the duchies within a 200 year period, where possible offering assessments of the local, demographic impact, but he also includes an interesting chapter on the social and economic effects of plague in the major Hanseatic cities of Lübeck and Hamburg. Furthermore, he concludes his work with an illustrative chapter dealing with the popular and governmental responses to outbreaks of plague.

It is however unfortunate that the revisions of the original dissertation did not extend to a shortening of that third of the book which is concerned with the historiography of plague, especially the Norwegian material, including the recent publications of Ole Benedictow, which are dealt with in excessive and unnecessary detail.

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