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texts of Salerno, and smacks of the study. A contrast is provided in one manuscript by the inclusion of questions and answers on similar topics by Albert of Trebizond, "the great philosopher", here reproduced as Annexe 3, which show links with Salerno and the writings of Guillaume de Conches. There is also in it a rare reference to a pseudo-Galenic work, *On the secrets of women*.

Professor Thomasset deserves our thanks for bringing these texts again to our attention, and for devoting to them a clear and detailed commentary. His discussion of medieval ideas on contagion, spontaneous generation, the power of semen, and on human physiology in general provides an elegant synopsis which should prove of great assistance and value to all interested in these topics. To his comments on the *mola uteri* (text, paras. 316–319; commentary, pp. 141–143) should be added a reference to Y. V. O'Neill, 'Michele Savonarola and the *fera* or blighted twin phenomenon', *Med. Hist.*, 1974, 18: 222–239; and the whole section on ideas of conception should be compared with M. A. Hewson, *Giles of Rome and the medieval theory of conception* (1975).

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MARIE-HELENE MARGANNE, *Inventaire analytique des papyrus grecs de médecine*, Geneva, Librairie Droz, 1981, 8vo, pp. x, 409, [no price stated], (paperback).

This valuable book collects details of all the Greek medical texts found on Egyptian papyri, lists them according to the collections from which they come, and provides a detailed bibliography of corrections and secondary references to them. Enough is given of the original Greek and in a French translation to enable the reader to find his way among the fragments of drug recipes and literary texts, especially with the aid of the detailed indexes. It is a pity that the names of authors are not given also in the French list of proper names on p. 354, but are to be found only in the diffuse table of papyri on pp. 391–400.

Dr Marganne specifically excludes magical papyri of medical content as well as documentary papyri referring to the activities of medical men in Egypt. This is unfortunate since no good work has been done on their interpretation, and a similar checklist would be very useful. Her list is otherwise complete up to 1981 (including the important catechism of P. Turner 14), with the possible exception of P. Petersburg 13, a reference in a library catalogue to a work of Theodas of Laodicea, a leading Empiric physician. The secondary bibliography is less satisfactory, since it fails to distinguish adequately between corrections, major discussions, and passing references. This is particularly necessary for n. 102, the famous "Anonymous Londoner", where the three separate sections of this papyrus are put indiscriminately together, and the list of secondary references seems to consist entirely in comments, often *en passant*, on the most famous section of the papyrus, the so-called history of early Greek medicine by Menon, the pupil of Aristotle.

Such minor deficiencies will, I hope, be remedied in a series of supplements in the form of articles, for this project is too valuable to be left to stagnate. To that end, I add three comments: nn. 77–78, P. Catal. Corcoran needs proper bibliographical citation; nn. 30 (P. Johnson) and 138 (P. Oxy. 2547) are both to be found in the library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine; nn. 41–69 (P. Antin.) should not be regarded as forming the products of a "medical school at Antinoopolis", for they could come from the library of a single physician. The presence of doctors does not indicate the existence of either a teaching establishment or of a unified body of doctrine, and medical schools, with their modern implications, should not be multiplied *praeter necessitatem*.

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P. WRIGHT and A. TREACHER (editors), *The problem of medical knowledge. Examining the social construction of medicine*, Edinburgh University Press, 1982, 8vo, pp. viii, 232, £12.00 (paperback).

It might be fairest to consider this collection of essays as nothing more than the sum of its parts. From that point of view, the reader gets a pleasing diversity, held together by the

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common framework of the English-speaking world over the last two centuries. Two essays centre upon historical approaches to particular diseases – John Gabbay’s on asthma and Karl Figlio’s on miners’ nystagmus. Two concentrate upon disease categories – David Ingleby on mental illness and Edward Yoxen on genetic diseases. One essentially comprises historiographical analysis – Roger Cooter’s sharp and constructive juxtaposition of Erwin Ackerknecht’s and Margaret Pelling’s contrasting evaluations of anti-contagionism. Two are essays in the history of ideas: Anne Marcovich’s rather intellectualist account of continuities between images of society and images of the body in the writings of J. C. Lettson, and David Armstrong’s brisk demonstration of how official medicine’s construal of “the patient” was transformed after the 1930s. And two operate on a more theoretical plane. Howard Berliner draws upon Marxist economic and social theory to posit a four-stage development of drug manufacture in America, from the “home mode” to the “monopoly capitalist mode” of production, and Jean Comaroff deploys post-Durkheimian social anthropology to postulate that illness experiences are in some sense symbolic and ideological playings-out of social alienation.

Taken as a unity, however, the volume has higher aspirations. In a substantial introduction, the editors deplore the scientism and Whiggishness of “virtually all” history of medicine written till recently (the charge seems somewhat old hat, and may not do justice to Sigerist, Shryock, Rosen, Temkin, and others), lobby for the methodology of seeing medical knowledge as a social construct, and offer the following essays as examples of this “social constructionist approach”, privileging society as an explanatory category. The proof of the pudding is in the eating and it’s not wholly satisfactory. The nub of the problem lies in being able to fashion structured analyses of social situations, of medical ideas, practices, and information, and above all of the concrete relations linking the two. Several of the essays don’t get to grips with this problem. Anne Marcovich never looks beyond Lettson’s texts, and rests content with drawing homologies between Lettson’s social opinions and his medical formulations (the editors themselves remark on the limitations of this practice). Even these extremely generalized parallels are not very convincing, because the categories they employ (freedom, structure, and interdependence, etc.) are Marcovich’s not Lettson’s, and the analysis is a little hard to follow, as when she writes in the same paragraph that “Lettson makes no statement condemning poverty” but “feels it is urgent to eliminate indigence”. Howard Berliner’s essay hardly meets the editors’ prescriptions, because it doesn’t deal with medical *knowledge*. He offers certain stimulating off-the-cuff verdicts, e.g. that homoeopathy appealed to the rich because it was a form of conspicuous consumption – paying for almost nothing – but makes no attempt to substantiate with evidence. Jean Comaroff’s essay, likewise, for its part, talks in fluent generalities about how “the healing process in our society emphasizes our alienation from ourselves as bio-physical beings”, without raising the absolutely crucial issue of the mechanisms of mediation (are the categories of medicine *all* false consciousness?). Roger Cooter’s fine essay also ducks the problem: he writes, he has “not attempted to deal here with concrete material reality nor attempted to deal over an extended time period with the problem of the ideational in relation to material social change”. Edward Yoxen’s discussion of modern genetic science is a workmanlike attempt to situate it in its social contexts (funding, relations to other sciences, response to human problems, etc.), showing the interpenetration of medicine, science and social requirements in such areas as genetic counselling. But it is not clear how far he believes specific biogenetic ideas, or indeed the whole notion of inheritance, are significantly dependent products of specific social formations.

Doing “social constructionism” is hard. In his essay on asthma John Gabbay proclaims the “social origins of medical knowledge”, succeeds very well in demolition (the historian nowhere discovers “real asthma”); but finds himself suffering from “historical paralysis” (p. 42) when it comes to demonstrating how particular historical renderings of asthma were socially constructed. With his main texts, those of Sir John Floyer, he offers a potted biography of the author, but doesn’t even try to relate that to the texts. Pessimistically, he decides that though medical accounts of asthma seem objective, “they inevitably enshrine their authors’ subjective cultural views, which are in turn part of the society they live in”; yet “it is infuriatingly impossible to establish exactly how that inevitable process occurs” (p. 23).

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The way ahead is shown by the last essay in the book, Karl Figlio's meaty piece of social history, 'How does illness mediate social relations? Workmen's compensation and medico-legal practice, 1890–1940'. The title is spot-on, and highlights the paper's concerns and approaches. Taking the eye malfunction, nystagmus, Figlio shows that late nineteenth-century medical interest in its exact specification, symptoms, aetiology, duration, and severity arose specifically because it was one of the compensatable industrial diseases under the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1897. Moreover, the vast ensuing controversy concerning the reality and discovery of malingering amongst miners then helped to constitute the socio-scientific framework within which the very field of psychosomatic and psychiatric medicine could be defined in the twentieth century (shell-shock treatment after World War I is a parallel example). Figlio's social-historical skill in tracing the dialectic of the construction of knowledge forms, their social use, the emergence of new problems, and the negotiation of matching new intellectual formulations, scores a last-minute winner for the social constructionist approach, and vindicates the project of the book.

If the Edinburgh University Press must charge £12.00 for a paperback, they should take more care over the proof-reading (e.g. *Michael Foucault* crops up disconcertingly often).

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FRANCIS SCHILLER, *A Möbius strip. Fin-de-siècle neuropsychiatry and Paul Möbius*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, University of California Press, 1982, 8vo, pp. [viii], 134, front., £12.00.

This charming little book introduces Paul Möbius (1853–1907) to an English-speaking audience. Grandson of the inventor of the one-sided surface (hence the book's title), Paul Möbius achieved some fame in his life, particularly for the series of "pathographies" – an early form of psychohistory – he wrote on Rousseau, Goethe, Nietzsche, and other historical figures. He also published widely on neurological and psychiatric disorders, including hysteria, on the relative merits of physical and psychological therapies, on degenerationism, alcoholism, sexuality, and women. His work touched many strands of late nineteenth-century neuropsychiatry, a fact which makes Schiller's monograph much more than a simple biography. Rather, he uses these core concerns of Möbius as an entrée into the rich world of nervous diseases and neurological ideas in the period. He is particularly enlightening about the historical relationships between neurology and psychiatry, and the impact of philosophical traditions on German neuroscience. An occasional discursiveness adds to the book's interest: for instance, a brief discussion (pp. 17–18) on the use of the word "surgery" to describe the place where the doctor sees his patients, or the etymological analysis of "asylum". Schiller's humour is also evident: "To this day the neurotic patient visits his analyst the way he would go to a weekly lesson with his piano teacher; by contrast, his visits to the cardiologist or dentist yield far less insight or opportunity for self-expression." (p. 21). Indeed, so gentle is Schiller's humour that the assumption must be that slips such as attributing non-restraint to William Tuke (p. 63), or calling Philippe Pinel "P. Quince" (p. 116) were put there to keep the reader alert.

Möbius was more a reflector than a creator of the neuro-psychiatric thought of his time. As such, he is the ideal surface for Schiller's historical torch, which illuminates Möbius and much else besides.

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La médecine hospitalière française au XVIII^e siècle, (Colloque de l'Institut d'Histoire de la Médecine et de la Pharmacie de l'Université René Descartes, Paris, 5 octobre 1977), Strasbourg, Université Louis Pasteur, 1980, 4to, pp. [iv], 213, [no price stated].

On the eve of the Revolution, French hospitals appeared to Jacques Tenon, the leading authority on the subject, as vast "healing machines" poised to release their potential for the benefit of mankind once the medical profession could occupy and transform the premises in the name of the clinical enterprise. Historians of medicine have generally followed Tenon's vision.