

Book Reviews

ALFRED GRAFE, *A history of experimental virology*, transl. Elvira Rechendorf, Berlin, New York and London, Springer-Verlag, 1991, pp. xi, 343, DM 98.00 (3–540–51925–4).

This is a virologist's book more than a historian's. Perhaps a better description would be "an introductory historical text for students of virology". As such it is very thorough, very factual, and highly technical, and would be an invaluable source of reference. For the non-specialist, this makes for a hard read; on the other hand, it is a handy collection of information, clearly organized in short sections, again in the manner of textbooks or reference works, all of it accessible through a helpful index.

Two introductory chapters covering what the author calls "2000 years [which] preceded the emergence of experimental virology" are unremarkable, except perhaps for the gratuitous statement on p. 34 that "Manson had characterised the typical intracellular malaria tropica-halfmoon in 1893"—which seems to be rather a cavalier rendering of a Manson-Bahr anecdote concerning a demonstration by Manson in the wards of UCH at the end of that year.

The rest of the book is all that it claims to be: an account of the progress of experimental virology in the twentieth century. The contents, the very chapter headings even, demonstrate the way in which such progress in the latter half of the century is in danger of obscuring the delimitations between a growing number of ramifications, and of straying into other emerging new disciplines, notably immunology, development of vaccines and, above all, molecular biology and genetics. Thirty-five years ago one of the formative personalities of modern virology, Macfarlane Burnet (1899–1985), wrote a short essay with the title 'Men or molecules?'. Twenty-five years later, his French counterpart André Lwoff, happily still with us, wrote: "Today virology is in danger of losing its soul, since viruses now show a strong tendency to become sequences. . . . Moreover, and it is the direct result of an abundance of discoveries, the very concept of virus wavers on its foundations. Our problem today and in future is to keep abreast of its whereabouts". Any such more philosophical reflections by some of the most influential of twentieth-century virologists find no place in Grafe's text.

The inclusion of a glossary is helpful to the non-specialist although, at a total length of barely three pages, some inclusions and exclusions seem open to question: do we really need "acronym" explained (except perhaps to enable the compiler to explain "sigla" as "identical to acronym")? On the other hand, the definition of "allergy" as "overshouting [sic] hypersensitivity reaction" must charm any reader, and stimulate a search for a German adjective which could have given rise to this puzzling neologism.

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ANDREW WEAR (ed.), *Medicine in society: historical essays*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. x, 397, illus., £45.00, \$69.95 (hardback, 0–521–33351–2), £14.95, \$19.95 (paperback, 0–521–33639–2).

The aim of this collection of essays is to give the reader some of the results of the new social history of medicine. Andrew Wear of the Wellcome Institute has collected a dozen essays, almost all of them written especially for this volume, and has thereby filled one of the greatest voids in our field by providing a very useful text for teaching general courses in the history of medicine. Available immediately in both hard- and paperback, this book should find wide adoption in the increasing number of medical history courses on both sides of the Atlantic.

What is more, we finally have a book in which the period from 1870 to the present does not predominate. Half of this book of nearly 400 pages is devoted to the history of medicine prior to 1800.

The newer work in the history of medicine has paid attention to both doctors and their patients, to medical ideas and institutions, as well as to their role in western society from antiquity to the present day. The authors, for the most part, have taken sufficient space to cover broadly, to give some detail, and above all, to provide us with many references to the increasingly rich literature of the work that is now being published.

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Vivian Nutton, in the first chapter, wrote a 43 page essay on the social history of medicine in ancient Greece and Rome that is the best introduction to this vast topic I have seen. Katharine Park's description of medicine and society in medieval Europe, a society more diverse than our own, she claims, tells us about a universe of disease and the various attempts to cope with the effects of such widespread illness.

Roy Porter nicely summarizes his own extensive work on patients, doctors, and illness in the long eighteenth century when there was much self-medication and lay healing. Guenter Risse has provided an outstanding chapter on the medical institutions and their role in the practice of medicine in the age of the Enlightenment, a time when the health of nations became an increasingly important and practical issue.

Lindsay Granshaw shows that hospitals developed in the context of increasing urbanization, expansion of trade, and increasing geographic mobility. Irvine Loudon discusses the medical reforms of the early nineteenth century and the growing role of the general practitioner in Britain. Elizabeth Fee and Dorothy Porter compare developments in public health in Britain and the U.S., while Jane Lewis covers the story of state medicine in Britain during this century. Paul Weindling, in a short essay on a large subject, nicely summarizes the changing patterns of disease in the last two centuries. Unfortunately, in contrast to his fellow authors in this volume, he uses the minimalist approach toward his sources. The references are spare. Arthur Imhoff, in the final chapter, provides his usual thoughtful and wide-ranging analysis of the implications of the changes in life expectancy.

Psychiatry is represented in the book in the essay by Porter on the eighteenth century but more specifically in a second Porter essay on madness. As is evident from the much too brief descriptions of these rich essays, most of them in the second half of the book pertain to medicine in Britain. For developments on the Continent or in North America, Asia, and Latin America, separate monographs will have to supplement this collection, but those of us who teach history of medicine or those who merely want some excellent reading are all in Andrew Wear's and his collaborators' debt. The essays that he has collected for this volume make for not only good reading, but will also, I predict, provide the basis for many good classroom discussions.

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JOSEP LLUIS BARONA VILAR, *La doctrina y el laboratorio: fisiología y experimentación en la sociedad española del siglo XIX*, Estudios sobre la ciencia 16, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992, pp. xii, 323 (84-00-07221-9).

Following the enormous effort made by Spain during the Enlightenment to gain access to the fields of scientific activity being developed in other parts of Europe, the country, which refused to abandon the Old Regime, showed, in the years following the war with the France of Napoleon (1808-1812), a completely devastated scientific panorama; a disastrous beginning to a century in which the protracted socio-economic crisis would be a constant restraint on intellectual development. Nevertheless, at the end of a path strewn with difficulties over a period of more than a hundred years, Spain succeeded in joining, in the second and third decades of the twentieth century, the mainstream of European science and culture, and then began what some writers have called the "Age of Silver" of Spanish cultural history—after the sixteenth-century "Golden Age"—which was tragically interrupted by the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).

This difficult development of Spanish science is analysed in Josep Lluís Barona's book which deals with the specific case of physiology. The work, the result of more than a decade of research into the subject, uses a thought-provoking model of analysis to discover the particular circumstances which surrounded the beginnings of the development of biological experimentation in Spain, showing how through a good part of the nineteenth century Spanish society was unable to create suitable conditions to assimilate the conceptual and institutional changes brought about by the introduction of the experimental method of analysis of biological