

Book Reviews

In addition there are three papers which are directly concerned with the history of medicine in the period. Jole Shackelford gives a succinct but superb account of the fortunes of Paracelsianism in Denmark as a result of the work of Petrus Severinus, Johannes Pratensis and Tycho Brahe and their support by Frederick II. Harold J. Cook's paper succeeds in showing the ways in which "changes in the political direction of a nation" might affect medicine, by looking at the changes brought about in England after the Glorious Revolution. Apart from a suggestion that the ontological theory of disease received a boost at this time, Cook concentrates on the institutional changes in medicine wrought by the political scene. Finally, Pamela H. Smith shows how Johann Joachim Becher tried to use his knowledge of medicine and natural philosophy to give him authority to treat the "body politic" of Bavaria, where he was court physician and mathematician to the Elector. Becher's task was to convince the prince and his more conservative advisers that commerce was a natural and productive means of producing wealth. He did so by drawing an analogy between the workings of commerce and the cycle of nourishment and consumption in the human body.

Historical studies of the role of patronage in the history of science and medicine are in vogue and the most significant of these studies show how the conceptual content of science and medicine is directly affected by the nature of the patronage it receives. Not all of these studies succeed in this regard but they all make important contributions to our understanding of the historical background.

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DANIELLE GOUREVITCH (ed.), *Maladie et maladies: histoire et conceptualisation. Mélanges en l'honneur de Mirko Grmek*, Hautes Études Médiévales et Modernes 70, Geneva, Librairie Droz, 1992, pp. lxxii, 473.

The retirement of Mirko Grmek from his chair in the history of medicine at the Ecole pratique des Hautes Études in Paris has been marked by this collection of essays by his friends and pupils. Croat by birth and French by naturalisation, he has always displayed a formidable range of knowledge of all aspects of medical history to go with his equally wide linguistic competence. From palaeopathology and the ancient Greeks to Claude Bernard and modern AIDS, there is little on which he has not touched or on which he has not had something of value and importance to contribute. Whether in personal communication, on international committees (including five years on the Wellcome Trust's History of Medicine Panel), by his endeavours to reach out as a medical historian to a wider public, or by his teaching in Paris and at the International Summer School on Ischia, he has sought to inform and to bring together all those whose interest and expertise might be profitably conjoined for the greater understanding of medicine and its history.

It is fitting that the contributors have all considered one of Grmek's favourite themes, disease, its incidence, characterisation, and history. They range from problems in palaeopathology (including leprosy), through aspects of Egyptian, Islamic, and Tibetan medicine, to concepts of disease and cure in Slav poetry and in modern molecular biology. There are two essays on the French renaissance, and three on the eighteenth century, but the bulk of the contributors deal with classical antiquity or the nineteenth century. Wounds, intestinal incontinence, poisoning, the diseases of maritime communities, and the complex story of how the "disease of Hercules" came to be identified as epilepsy are but some of the classical themes; tuberculosis, meningitis, and yellow fever some of the later topics. All display, directly or indirectly, the effects of their author's links with the honorand, and all show that high standard of research and insight that we have come to associate with him.

Mirko Grmek is a prolific writer, as his bibliography reveals, and we hope that he will continue to stimulate and inform for many years more. He has also been a tireless advocate, for medical history and, not at least, for the inhabitants of his own Croatia in these dark times. His friends have given him an appropriate tribute.

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