

Book Reviews

attention to Cullen's metaphysics, shared to a great extent with David Hume and Adam Smith, reveals a larger project, the endorsement of learning, enquiry, and progress. Cullen, it might be said, was creating the role of the philosophical doctor as well as that of the philosophical chemist. Günter Risse is interesting on Cullen as a clinician. Risse shows there were significant differences between Cullen's practice as evidenced by his clinical lectures in the infirmary and his consultation by letter. At first sight this might be expected. Cullen was dealing with quite different clientele: the poor in the hospital and the wealthy writing from their homes. But clinical lectures cannot be taken as a mirror of regular infirmary practice. And, equally important, clinical lectures on the poor could have been devices for teaching aspiring doctors to practise on the rich. W. F. Bynum's paper contains an important insight, which, with hindsight, seems obvious. The meaning of nervous system for Cullen comprehended the now separate muscular system. This insight, Bynum shows, opens a variety of new perspectives on Cullen's work. Noteworthy too is Roger Emerson's reminder that Edinburgh University was in many respects not unique in the eighteenth century. It was locked, like Glasgow, into a dense local and national patronage network. Other papers in the volume deal with Cullen's place in eighteenth-century medicine, general practice in Hamilton, Cullen and dietetics, his nosology, his influence on American medicine, and his place in the founding of the Royal Medical Society.

Christopher Lawrence, Wellcome Institute

W. F. BYNUM and ROY PORTER (eds), *Medicine and the five senses*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. xvii, 331, illus., £40.00, \$59.95 (0-521-36114-1).

Sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell; the five senses were gifts of God and the subject of philosophical speculation: gateways to the mind, the basis of all knowledge. They were also, of course, the subject of physiological and anatomical speculation. What was, for instance, the organ of smell? Was it the nose, or as Vesalius believed, the olfactory lobes of the brain to which smells passed directly through the holes in the cribriform plate of the skull? What of the sensations themselves? Sights, sounds, tastes could be delightful or disturbing; so could smells, but bad smells might be dangerous. Were stinks or bad odours, immaterial qualities or substances—smoky vapours or miasmas—capable of producing disease?

These are some of the subjects discussed in this wide-ranging and enthralling series of essays. Sensory physiology, however, is only touched on in passing, and then mainly in a classical context. In so far as there are central themes in these essays they are the role of the senses in the development of clinical diagnosis, and the role of iconography in medicine. The three essays by art historians, Sears, Kemp, and Jordanova, are memorable explorations of the layers of meaning and purpose which lie behind anatomical and other illustrations. The genius of Leonardo da Vinci, incidentally, never ceases to amaze; nor, to my mind, does the extraordinary skill of the unsung engravers of the eighteenth century who reproduced drawings and appearances with incredible exactitude, satisfying William Hunter's belief that the object must be reproduced exactly as seen, even showing irrelevancies such as post-mortem staining, if it happened to be there. For to Hunter and others, illustrations could be—should be—the whole truth and substitute for the real thing down to the smallest detail. I have one microscopic criticism. In fig. 29, p. 99, an illustration by Vesalius, the skin is supposed to have been stripped entirely from the right thigh but only partially from the left (p. 97). I cannot see it for the life of me. Was the wrong illustration chosen?

Elsewhere, Nutton on Galen at the bedside, and Palmer on smells, are models of clarity. Brockliss introduces us to the French Galenists of the seventeenth century. The augmentation of the senses by percussion and stethoscopy is the subject of Nicholson's essay. Lawrence deals with the training of the senses of medical students in eighteenth-century London. Porter describes the rise of physical examination in the nineteenth century to the embarrassment of women. Gilman deals with touch, sexuality and disease, ending his essay with a penetrating analysis of the images of AIDS produced by American public health authorities.

Brieger centres his discussion of surgery in the USA between 1875 and 1899 on the two famous paintings by Thomas Eakins: *The Gross Clinic* and *The Agnew Clinic*. Borrell and Reiser produce excellent essays concerned largely with the effect of the rise of medical technology on the art of diagnosis.

Book Reviews

Cambridge University Press has done the authors proud. The book is superbly produced: beautiful print, high-grade paper, and seventy-six illustrations of outstanding quality which are an essential, an integral, part of the work as a whole. By today's standards £40 is a moderate price for an academic book of such high quality.

Irvine Loudon, Wantage

WILLEM F. DAEMS, *Nomina simplicium medicinarum ex synonymariis medii aevi collecta. Semantische Untersuchungen zum Fachwortschatz hoch- und spätmittelalterlicher Drogenkunde*, Studies in Ancient Medicine, vol. 6, Leiden and New York, E. J. Brill, 1993, pp. 563, Gld. 250.00, \$143.00 (90-04-09672-8).

Here is a book that gives both more and less than its title suggests. This is neither a study of medieval plant names (the introduction, pp. 1-23, reprinted with slight changes from *Ber. Physico-Medica* 1981/83, is a sketch of the difficulties involved in identifying medieval herbs) nor a proper semantic and lexicographical investigation of the ways in which plants were named. Nor is it a complete listing of medieval plant names, with all their variants, an almost impossible task, although one now facilitated by Daems' comprehensive indexes of Latin and vernacular names that form part III of the book.

Instead, Daems has chosen to use as his base two largely complementary manuscript lists of synonyms, Basel, Universitätsbibliothek D II 13, fols 2r-9r, 1402, and Kassel, Landesbibliothek 4° med. 10, fols 81r-83r, early fifteenth century, the first with 488 plant names, the second 270. Each plant name is followed by a list of the synonyms found in a variety of other manuscripts and editions, and concludes with modern plant identifications. An appendix of 61 pages adds a further series of synonyms for the plants listed earlier, a confusing procedure for which it is hard to see a convincing justification in an age of computer typesetting. Access to the material is helped by a good index of sources and of modern botanical names.

Checking Daem's listings of Wellcome manuscripts 332, 625, 642, and 708 confirms the general accuracy of the transcriptions (p. 91 has a rare error: *artemisia* in Wellcome 642 is glossed as *biboß vel buck*), but throws up other problems. Not all the synonyms in these manuscripts are included by Daems, e.g., p. 101, s.v. *aristologia*, add Wellcome 708, 43r, and many of them are included in the Wellcome glossaries under different headings, e.g., p. 109, WMS 708 glosses the word "urtica", not "acantum" as the reader might expect; p. 113, WMS 708, 43v has a variety of synonyms but divided between *ambrosia minor* and *maior*. The editor's silence should thus not be taken to indicate that a particular plant is not included in a named manuscript or that there may not be other synonyms used for the plant. But, equally, the full indexes make cross-checking from an entry in a Wellcome glossary to a series of other entries very easy indeed. No longer will an editor have to puzzle out what a synonym or word might mean, and whether this is a unique attestation. This book will be of considerable utility for medieval scholars, and for historians of botany, keen to end the confusion of centuries in botanical nomenclature.

Vivian Nutton, Wellcome Institute

IRENE and WALTER JACOB (eds), *The healing past: pharmaceuticals in the Biblical and Rabbinic World*, Studies in Ancient Medicine, vol. 7, Leiden and New York, E. J. Brill, 1993, pp. xv, 126, illus., Gld. 84.00, \$48.75 (90-01-09643-4).

This publication comprises six papers presented at an international symposium, organized by the Rodef Shalom Biblical Botanical Garden in the autumn of 1989, devoted to medicaments used in the Biblical and Rabbinical world and the civilizations that impinged upon it. A further paper delivered the following year is also included. The collection of essays is prefaced by an introduction by Professor John Riddle, in which he describes the hitherto accepted view of Jewish medicine of the Biblical period as a "valley of humility between the two mountains of conceit, Egyptian and Mesopotamian medicine" with later Jewish medicine overshadowed by "the Olympian tower of