

Book Reviews

companion volumes could be prepared for other countries. Some of the sources available for France may not exist elsewhere, but it would be worth exploring the possibilities. For example, an analysis is included of 85 letters written by patients to a doctor over the period 1780 to 1830 (p. 19). An indication is given of the tone of the letters, of which parts of the body they mention, and of the kind of pain described. Comparable sources certainly exist in countries other than France. Of course, the precise figures are unimportant, but the overall patterns of such correspondence are highly significant.

It is not surprising that “medicalization”, in the sense of numbers of health professionals, is an important issue in the book, since the French sources lend themselves to explorations of this theme, and much work on it has been undertaken by French scholars. The huge amount of information on those who practised medicine in France is made possible by sources like the *Cahiers de doléances*, on the basis of which an indication of political attitudes is offered (pp. 30–1). Naturally, the limitations of such sources have to be recognized, but they are nonetheless valuable, especially when presented in the forms adopted here.

An interpretation of the relations between medicine and revolution is given in the introduction (pp. 7–9). This is a useful statement, which presents the Revolution as a crystallization of trends already present in the *ancien régime*, trends that were moving towards reform. It is argued that the health of the citizen became of concern to the state, thereby providing a specific instance in which politics and medicine came together. Thus the question of the balance between continuity and change is dealt with in a helpful way. Much of the material presented in the *Atlas* bears somewhat loosely on the more direct interactions between medicine and the French Revolution. Taken as a whole the book provides both a sense of the larger context and an account of the links between politics and medicine—it is an extremely valuable addition to the secondary literature.

Ludmilla Jordanova, University of York

W. G. HARTLEY, *The light microscope: its use and development*, Oxford, Senecio, 1993, pp. viii, 360, illus., £40.00 (0–906931–05–9).

“The microscope has proved for a century and a half perfectly adequate to engage continuous study of itself”. This quotation from the first chapter provides the theme for Hartley’s book, which traces the evolution of the light microscope and of its components from the sixteenth century to the present day. It sets the various stages of the development of the instrument and its accessories in the technical, social, economic, and geographic context of the time; what the author describes as the palaeontology of the microscope. An understanding of the science of optics and of the working of the light microscope is assumed and is essential for the full appreciation of this very detailed, technical, yet most readable book.

Hartley paints an interesting picture of the discovery of the microscope, highlighting what was fortuitous, what convenient, and how the compound microscope appeared at the right psychological moment. The fossilization of the instrument as a fashionable toy, and its subsequent study sponsored by wealthy amateurs is recounted. A useful table showing its sequential development leads the reader to the emergence of microscopy as a study in itself.

The dichotomy of interest in the mid-nineteenth century, which isolated the British, with their concern for optical technique rather than what was revealed, from the Continental microscopist, introduces the post-1840 era. “It was at this point that English microscopy took an idiosyncratic swerve into an area of fascinating optical effects totally unrelated to any practical opportunities which they represented.” Even so, a description of early projects to produce inexpensive instruments and a good review of contemporary textbooks illustrate the increasing interest in the microscope and its applications.

The general pattern of development in Victorian England, after the foundation of the Microscopical Society of London, is set out and is followed by a background chapter on English, Continental, and American microscope makers, against which ensuing chapters on the evolution of the instrument and of its various accessories are developed. The ascendancy of the German industry from 1870 onwards, with its firmly practical manufacturing philosophy, is highlighted. “The development of scientific medicine and scientific industries led to a demand for scientific microscopes like the Germans used, and this ultimately led to the adoption by the English trade of a basically Continental design of both instruments and optical components.”

Book Reviews

The later chapters include the evolution to the present day of the various methods of illumination, the binocular microscope and optical systems, and are packed with detail, including sufficiently clear information to enable a practising microscopist to understand an instrument, of whatever age, and so achieve optimum working conditions. The occasional use of bold type and the wealth of well reproduced illustrations and diagrams help to guide the less technical reader, although their usefulness could have been much enhanced had more detailed captions and labels been included. Details of the source of the illustrations, too, would have clarified their purpose and added another dimension to the narrative. Similarly, numerous typographical errors detract from the interesting style. Each chapter has a valuable list of references which offer both microscopist and historian a great deal of additional material.

Hartley does not merely catalogue events or describe objects, he explains them, and in so doing enhances the understanding of their significance. This remarkable book does not set out to be just another history of the microscope, it is very much more. It deserves a place on the shelves of historians, collectors, and practical microscopists, not simply as an adornment but as an important working volume.

Pat Bracegirdle, Cheltenham

ROBERT BAKER, DOROTHY PORTER and ROY PORTER (eds), *The codification of medical morality: historical and philosophical studies of the formalization of western medical morality in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries*, vol. 1, *Medical ethics and etiquette in the eighteenth century*, Philosophy and Medicine vol. 45, Dordrecht, Boston, and London, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993, pp. viii, 230 (0–7923–1921–4).

In the face of the moral dilemmas of modern medicine the history of medical ethics has often been consulted as a source of traditional Hippocratic wisdom. A consequence of this approach was a concentration on ethical principles of the doctor-patient relationship, such as non-maleficence and confidentiality, which appeared to be almost timeless. The present volume, by contrast, constitutes a successful effort to make medical ethics a subject of meticulous historical research by putting them into the socio-economic, political, and philosophical contexts of a given period. Consisting of eight essays, which, through the editors' introductions, have gained a remarkable coherence, this book studies in three parts the preconditions, backgrounds, and circumstances of the codification of medical morality in the eighteenth century, particularly in Britain.

In the first part historical case studies by Mary E. Fissell, David Harley, and Roy Porter look into the problems and moral criticisms of medical and surgical practice in the competitive medical marketplace of the period. A recurrent theme, brought out by all three authors, was the contemporary demand that the ethical physician or surgeon had to transcend the commercial ethos of a tradesman by following the conduct and manners of a gentleman. In situations of conflict the practitioner's character and internal code of honour counted, not the precepts of the Hippocratic oath, reference to which was conspicuously absent in the eighteenth century. Moreover, correct practice was supposed to flow from scientific medical knowledge.

The philosophical backgrounds to such views are explored in the second part. Focusing on Prussia-Brandenburg, Johanna Geyer-Kordesch argues that the enlightened natural law theory of Christian Thomasius prepared the ground for the secular ethics of professional men, such as doctors and lawyers, substantiating her point with the example of responsible, empirically informed decision-making in eighteenth-century medical jurisprudence. For Britain, Tom Beauchamp gives an account of the development of the Scottish moral sense school from Francis Hutcheson, via David Hume, to Adam Smith. Its central concept of sympathy underlay—in its Humean formulation—John Gregory's influential *Lectures on the duties and qualifications of a physician* (1772), as Laurence B. McCullough shows in the third part, which deals with the formal codifications of proper medical conduct.

The genesis and meaning of the other major formalized text of the period, Thomas Percival's *Medical ethics* of 1803, drafted and circulated as *Medical jurisprudence* in 1794, is the topic of the remaining two essays of this part. John Pickstone investigates the origins of Percival's work in the