

Book Reviews

Örneholm deals with linguistic characteristics such as orthography, morphology, choice of words, and especially the medical word-stock. Of greatest value for medical historians are, however, the translated texts. *De variolis praecavendis* (Roland Martin, 1751) and *De variolis curandis* (Petrus Jonas Bergius, 1754) both deal with the most feared disease of the century, smallpox. Between 1750 and 1800, 300,000 Swedish children died from smallpox, in a population of two million people. The first text discusses the prevention of smallpox in dialogue with the medical élite of eighteenth-century Europe. With references to, for example, Herman Boerhaave and Thomas Sydenham, the conclusion is drawn that there are good possibilities to prevent the disease. It is interesting to note that inoculation is not mentioned at all. The method was not introduced into Sweden until a few years later, and it seems that mercury and anti-inflammatory remedies were regarded as more important at the time. Nils Rosén later became a great promoter of inoculation, despite the fact that he lost two daughters due to that preventive method.

The dissertations concerning smallpox are illustrative examples of the confusion concerning miasma and contagion. The conclusion is that they are both valid explanations of the disease; the former in the early stages of an epidemic, while the latter was preferred when understanding the infections that followed. Several cases are discussed where the different stages of the disease are described carefully. This provides a good insight into the working manners of an eighteenth-century physician, and his attitude towards the speckled monster.

In *De epilepsia infantili* (Petrus Sundius, 1754) seven different forms of infant epilepsy are defined. They are related to constipated bowels, colic, teething, scabies, exanthemic fevers, and worms. Warm linen and bloodletting are suggested as the best cures for the disease. The fourth text, *De morbis infantum* (Johannes Schröder, 1752) is concerned with a very relevant topic, infant mortality. The infant mortality rate in Sweden during the 1750s was more than 200 per 1,000 live births, and in Stockholm it was almost twice as high. Contemporary

physicians did not know much about the causes behind these deaths. Consequently the most common cause of death in the so-called Tabellverket (population statistics of Sweden beginning in 1749) was unknown childhood disease. In *De morbis infantum* it is stated that mothers, nurses and servants are those mostly to blame. The dissertation describes various methods of preventing or defeating such diseases. It should be seen as an interesting forerunner to the articles on the same topic that Nils Rosén published during the following years. They were later collected in his famous textbook, *The diseases of children and their remedies*, published in 1764 and translated into English in 1776.

Urban Örneholm has compiled and translated four medical dissertations that shed new light on the history of medicine, not only in the Swedish context but also in an international perspective. There is, however, no discussion or conclusions in the context of historical science, although an extensive list of commentaries is attached to each text. Hopefully the book will be used by those scrutinizing the medical world of the eighteenth century, and they should be able to find valuable references within these texts.

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Kim Sloan (ed.), *Enlightenment: discovering the world in the eighteenth century*, London, British Museum Press, 2003, pp. 304, colour plates 245, black and white illus. 25, £29.95 (hardback 0-7141-2765-5).

This is a very beautiful book, stylishly presented, lavishly illustrated and beautifully crafted. The editors and the Press need to be congratulated for producing such a work of art.

The book was published at the end of 2003 to coincide with the opening of the newly restored King's Library at the British Museum, as the home of the permanent Enlightenment Gallery. It is not a guide to the gallery. The book has twenty-five chapters organized into five

parts, each of which considers the material component of the Enlightenment, roughly taken as the period from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth century, as represented by the museum's holdings. The museum's curators, past and present, have written all of the contributions.

The first part, "The "Universal Museum"", discusses the spatiality, design and contents of the original room, which now houses the Enlightenment Gallery. Readers are introduced to the museum's greatest benefactors, Sir Hans Sloane and Sir Joseph Banks, as well as to other collectors whose donations and benefactions form the core of the holdings. This part not only provides a context for the later parts but it also, successfully, invites the reader to consider the meanings of museums and libraries in this period, to their owners as well as their guests.

Parts Two and Three concentrate on the private collections of the eighteenth century that eventually came to form the museum's own. In common with the organization of enlightenment cabinets of curiosity, these respective parts consider first the natural world—natural history, medical botany and fossils—and then the artificial world—coins, engraved gems, vases, scientific instruments and maps.

These collections were the result of travel and this act, perhaps more than any other, was central to the idea of the Enlightenment. The travelled world, which in the eighteenth century became increasingly wider, confronted and challenged the collector with visual contact. Reliance on classical and religious texts, the source for much information about other cultures before the eighteenth century, could no longer be taken for granted. Antiquity, whether it be the classical world, Babylon, or Britain itself, was now being reinterpreted because of travel and its products. Part Four of the book discusses how a new and sometimes uncomfortable understanding of the ancient world began to emerge.

Part Five, the final section of the book, is the most dynamic in the sense that it examines the fruits of the kind of travel which is perhaps most emblematic of the Enlightenment: the organized, state- or institutional-supported maritime expeditions to other continents and seas. Cook's three voyages are given prominence, not only

because they are best known, but also because, thanks to Sir Joseph Banks, the collections made on these, and even later voyages, found their way directly to the museum. The Americas and the Pacific, regions where Cook spent a good deal of time and where extensive collections were made, are the subjects of two chapters. Notwithstanding Cook's pre-eminence, it is important to remember that other parts of the world were being re-discovered by Europeans during this period, namely the Far East and Africa, both of which receive attention.

As stated, this is a beautiful book. Its aim is to explain to the reader the nature of the collectors and their collections in the period of the enlightenment, and this it does admirably. What caught their eyes is there for us to see. What is less certain is what twenty-first-century eyes make of all this.

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Alessandro Arcangeli, *Recreation in the Renaissance: attitudes towards leisure and pastimes in European culture, c. 1425–1675*, Early Modern History: Society and Culture, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. xi, 188, illus., £45.00 (hardback 0-333-98453-6).

From at least the thirteenth century onwards, rest and exercise were classified by physicians and the learned public among the so-called six non-naturals, the crucial determinants of health and disease. In this elegant and wide-ranging book, Alessandro Arcangeli sets medical exercise among other types of recreation discussed by European writers during the long Renaissance. He rightly points out that, although in theory exercise for health applied equally to all social groups, medical writers almost exclusively aimed their recommendations at elite males. Even when Girolamo Mercuriale mentioned exercise for women in his *De arte gymnastica* (1569), it is different in kind and intensity from that for men. His muscular males indulge in wrestling and