

## Book Reviews

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HAROLD. J. COOK, *The decline of the old medical regime in Stuart London*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1986, 8vo, pp. 310, \$32.95.

It is twenty years since Sir George Clark published his official history of the Royal College of Physicians. His book was liked by the establishment, but it was given a restless reception by younger historians. Since then a great deal of effort has gone into this subject. Professor Cook draws together revisionist findings and he adds much research of his own. He brings to bear on this subject the realities of social and intellectual history. His judicious and well-informed review supersedes Clark, and it demonstrates the full historical importance of this subject.

Professor Cook concentrates on the troubled experiences of the College of Physicians between 1630 and 1704. First, the fortunes of the College sank along with its Royal master. The revolutionary period then reduced the College to its lowest ebb. The Restoration revival was hesitant. Before the College's position was consolidated, it took further serious knocks to its prestige between 1689 and 1704. These complex events are described throughout with great clarity. The final sections of this study are particularly novel and compelling.

Cook succeeds because he is less myopic than Clark. He recognizes that the College was operating in a market situation in which its competitors were in a position of considerable strength. Notwithstanding the advances of science, the members of the College proved unable to distance themselves from their rivals. It is arguable that the College should be pushed still further from the centre of the historical stage. After all, there were fewer than forty Fellows for most of the century. Numbers were artificially boosted to eighty in 1687, but with disastrous consequences for the internal coherence of the College. The author urges that expansion of the College kept up with the pace of population increase. But there was only one Fellow for every ten thousand of London's population. Consequently, the medical needs of the population were largely met from elsewhere, from the ranks of other academically qualified practitioners, surgeons, apothecaries, and a whole host of individuals. There must have been at least a thousand of such practitioners in London at any one time in the later seventeenth century. Their leader was Thomas Sydenham, and their ranks included prolific writers and respected practitioners such as John Pechey and William Salmon. The author is perhaps not completely sensitive to the quantity and quality of the opposition faced by the College. He rightly avoids a monocausal approach in his analysis of the decline of the College. Perhaps more could be said concerning factors serving to isolate dissenters from the universities and consequently from the College itself. As a consequence of the religious tests, the College of Physicians was deprived of some of its most able potential recruits. It was thus set on course to becoming a slumbering Anglican coterie by the mid-eighteenth century.

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FRIDOLF KUDLIEN, *Die Stellung des Arztes in der römischen Gesellschaft*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1986, 8vo, pp. vi, 228, DM 59.00 paperback.

After his studies on slaves in ancient medicine and on the status of doctors in the Hellenistic East, Professor Kudlien turns to the place of the doctor in Roman society, by which is meant Italy and the Western Roman Empire from the third century BC until the third century AD. He is well aware of the difficulties involved in making such an investigation, and avoids many of the pitfalls by considering in turn various physicians according to their legal status, Roman citizen, new citizen, peregrine, slave or freedmen, before passing to the more problematic question of the status of the art of medicine and individual opinions of the acceptability of this or that physician. In this careful differentiation of types, Kudlien marks a great improvement over previous attempts, and in the range of material used, particularly the epigraphic, he offers the most accessible survey of medical life in ancient Rome.