

Book Notices

MICHAEL S. MOORE, *Law and psychiatry. Rethinking the relationship*, Cambridge University Press, 1984, 8vo, pp. xiv, 527, £35.00 (£11.95 paperback).

This vast (and almost certainly overblown) book takes on both those professional psychiatrists who see mental illness everywhere, and fashionable radical antipsychiatrists (who see it nowhere), in an attempt to hammer out a reasonable set of protocols for courts to decide under what circumstances the mental state of criminals should be taken as relevant. Professor Moore's argument basically attempts to rescue the *mens rea* stipulations of traditional jurisprudence, on the grounds that notions of responsibility are both intelligible and part of our everyday belief systems. The medical historian will find some helpful discussions of the notion of responsibility in the philosophical mainstream, and a selective analysis of key trials in which insanity has been the plea.

RIO HOWARD, *La bibliothèque et la laboratoire de Guy de la Brosse au Jardin des Plantes à Paris*, Geneva, Droz, 1983, 8vo, pp. vi, 133, [no price stated] (paperback).

Guy de la Brosse, the founder of the Jardin des Plantes, was a typical French representative of the "new science"; favoured by the Crown, sympathetic to Paracelsian ideas and experimentation, and acquainted with the circle of Mersenne and groups like the "Cabinet" of the brothers Dupuy and the "Tétrade" of Élie Diodati and others.

Rio Howard's transcription of the inventory made at La Brosse's death of his library and his identification of particular items gives us an added insight into La Brosse as an individual and as a representative figure. Of 1447 books, 531 could be identified of which, for instance, 176 (33%) were on medicine, 83 (16%) on alchemy, while only 33 (6%) were on natural history and botany. That medicine heads the list is surprising given La Brosse's interests, but perhaps less so when it is remembered that medicine acted as an intellectual fulcrum for chemistry and botany and that medical books formed a major part of academic publishing.

The contents of the library depict, if La Brosse can be said to have read all the books, a man of wide interests, who, although sometimes classed as a libertine, possessed a number of religious works, and who read widely in literature, philosophy, and mathematics (no Two Cultures then). Rio Howard has produced a scholarly piece of work, only his introduction—perhaps because of space limitations—is a little thin, much of the material reflecting previous work, especially that of Henry Guerlac.

JOHN W. YOLTON, *Thinking matter: materialism in eighteenth-century Britain*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1984, 8vo, pp. xiv, 238, £19.50.

Thinking matter — anyone who teaches or writes on eighteenth-century natural philosophy and physiology will know that there is a space on the library shelf awaiting such a title. But it seems unlikely that John Yolton's account of this subject will satisfy everyone's idea of what is needed. There is no doubting the range and detail of Yolton's reading, nor his sophisticated elucidation of eighteenth-century meanings, especially when he gets to work on Hume. His book, too, is invaluable as an account of animal soul, a crucial Enlightenment concept which has been virtually ignored by historians of ideas. Overall, though, the work is slightly disappointing in that the authors Yolton has chosen to examine float in philosophical aether devoid of any historical matrix. All the writings which he explores and analyses contain pertinent material, yet Yolton does not explain why he chose them and why he excluded others. Nor does he seem interested in which texts his authors were addressing themselves to, or which were considered important by contemporaries. He has little concern either, with chronology. He makes no attempt to relate the fine texture of writers' views to anything other than the general problem "thinking matter", certainly not to their theological or political positions. That Yolton's immediate interest and method do not extend to these things is not important; it simply means that there is still space on the library shelf.

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A. V. SIMCOCK, *The Ashmolean Museum and Oxford science, 1683–1983*, Oxford, Museum of the History of Science, 1984, 8vo, pp. viii, 48, illus., £3.00 (paperback).

This substantial brochure is the felicitous by-product of an exhibition in the Museum of the History of Science in Oxford to celebrate the tercentenary in 1983 of the Ashmolean Museum. The building which at present houses the Science Museum was constructed for the collections of “rarities” of Elias Ashmole and the Tradescant family. After its foundation in 1683, the Ashmolean collection continued to grow till it was broken up and dispersed across Oxford, mainly in the course of the nineteenth century. Even the Ashmolean name was moved and donated to another building. Simcock has taken this process of increase and dispersal as his *leitmotiv*, showing how the original Ashmolean legacy was the fountainhead from which sprang the ever-winding river of nineteenth- and even twentieth-century Oxford science. Thus the diversification of Ashmolean scholarship, especially in chemistry and natural history, has been synonymous, to a significant extent, with the history of Oxford science. A separate section is devoted to the stonemason Thomas Wood, who built the original Ashmolean Museum. A family tree of science departments and extensive footnotes complement the concise and well-illustrated narrative.

MICHAEL SHEPHERD (editor), *The spectrum of psychiatric research*, Cambridge University Press, 1984, 8vo, pp. xi, 240, £20.00.

Regular “Nature of the problem” or “State of the art” editorials have always been an attractive feature of the distinguished psychiatric journal, *Psychological Medicine*. This volume reproduces a generous selection of them, published since the journal’s inception in 1970. Their subjects range from the neurosciences to psychiatric epidemiology to general psychopathology. These short pieces (with useful bibliographies) allow leaders in research to stand back and reflect on the whys, wheres, and whithers of contemporary psychiatry. Only George Rosen’s ‘Psyche and history’ is directly historical, but many are infused with a historical sense, and in any case, in psychiatry more than in any other medical speciality, the dynamics of past and present are extremely rich.

S. G. E. LYTHER, *Thomas Garnett (1766–1802). Highland tourist, scientist and professor and medical doctor*, Glasgow, Polpress, 1984, 8vo, pp. vi, 57, illus., £1.85 (paperback).

It is remarkable that no historian until now has made a bee-line for Thomas Garnett. His life offers scope for the historian of medical ideas, student of provincial science, sociologist of scientific institutions, and so on. Garnett was a provincial surgical apprentice, who passed through the Edinburgh medical school, became a Brunonian, and went on to teach at Anderson’s College in Glasgow and then at the young Royal Institution. It is possibly Garnett who appears as the lecturer in Gillray’s backfiring cartoon ‘New Discoveries in PNEUMATICKS’. Packed into this short life—Garnett died at the age of thirty-six—was a tour of the Highlands. The book which this tour inspired seems to have been what first encouraged Professor Lythe to write this short biography, even though he clearly finds the *Tour* a very derivative work indeed. Although not scholarly in the most formal of senses—there are no footnotes, or in-depth analyses—this biography is a brief, easy, and enjoyable read.

H. A. SNELLEN, *History of cardiology*, Rotterdam, Donker Academic Publications, 1984, 8vo, pp. 191, illus., [no price stated].

H. A. Snellen has been producing valuable articles and books on the history of the study of the heart for some years. Now he has finally brought his work together in a book that in style and interpretative mode is in the tradition of Herrick’s *Short history of cardiology*, and Willius’ and Dry’s *History of the heart and circulation*. The virtue of Snellen’s book is that, not writing from an English or American angle, he brings a European perspective to the subject. Although the work is intended to deal with “Cardiology as a scientific speciality”, the student will find nothing here about institutionalization.

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BRUNO LATOUR, *Les microbes. Guerre et paix, suivi de irréductions*, Paris, Métailié (Collections Pandore), 1984, 8vo, pp. 281, Fr.90.00 (paperback).

Despite the title of the series, this book is not wholly a load of trouble, though many historians will find the second half (*irrédutions*), a series of numbered attacks on the supremacy of epistemology, both pretentious and banal. The historical first half of the book, though hardly constituting a piece of primary research, is a rather impressive statement of how Pasteur grabbed power in the world of French science by demonstrating himself the king of the laboratory. Latour's point is ultimately sociological, not historical: truth (and hence power) is something manufactured in human environments; for the last century, the environment of science has been the laboratory.

LINDA E. VOIGTS and MICHAEL R. MCVAUGH, *A Latin technical phlebotomy and its Middle English translation*, Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society (*Transactions*, 74: part 2), 1984, 8vo, pp. 66, illus., \$10.00 (paperback).

This collaboration between two of the leading experts in the field of medieval medical texts will be of use both to the specialist and non-specialist reader alike. After a substantial introduction, covering phlebotomy texts in the Latin and Middle English tradition, the editors present a facing page Latin and medieval English edition, based respectively on Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional MS 3066, ff. 5^v-7^v, and Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 176/97 pp. 1-11. A similar Middle English text from Gonville and Caius MS 84/166 is given as an appendix, along with a modern English summary of the phlebotomy itself.

ALAIN SAINT-DENIS, *L'Hôtel-Dieu de Laon 1150-1300*, Nancy. Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1983, 8vo, pp. 279, illus., [no price stated] (paperback).

The historian of medieval English medicine can only look on with envy at the wealth of material his French counterpart possesses about hospices providing medical care. The author of this splendidly illustrated book has called upon archival sources, as well as medical texts and archaeological evidence to outline the history of his subject. The results are presented in meticulous detail, with maps and photographs to support the text. The involvement of the hospice with the community at large is especially well treated, making this book of interest to the social historian as well.

[Facsimiles]: GEORG BARTISCH, *Augendienst*, Dresden, 1583; CASEY A. WOOD, *Benevenutus Grassus of Jerusalem, De oculis*, Stanford, 1929; WALTER BAYLEY, *A breife treatise touching the preservation of the eie sight*, London, 1586; New York, Taloroth, 1984, [no price stated].

This is a useful reprint of some of the early classics of ophthalmology, although it may well be doubted whether all of its potential readership will be able to cope with Bartisch's difficult German.