the organization of nursing in different types of hospital is studied. Margaret Connor Versluysen points out that to study nursing history without the "amateur" medical work carried out by women is misleading. She discusses the response to and limitations of Ehrenreich and English's *Witches, midwives and nurses,* and stresses the importance of power differences between the sexes in analysing the history of health care. Finally, Janet Foster and Julia Sheppard present a guide to sources for nursing history, and Charlotte Kratz comments on the book in an epilogue.

The authors of this book are too varied in their subjects and approach to make general comments possible. The book should provide a needed stimulus to interest in and work on nursing. Many of the authors hope that this will not only inform the history of medicine, but will also allow greater understanding of the present position of nurses. There are two aspects which are, regrettably, little mentioned. One is the role of the development of medical techniques and technology, and what nurses do in their daily work. The other is the relationship between nurses, doctors, and patients; it is clear that many of the authors are concerned with the power over nurses held by doctors and employers, but little is said about the power of nurses over patients. This tends to support the view of nurses as either guardian angels or cruel trade unionists. That said, I look forward to more detailed studies of the questions raised in this book.

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RENATO G. MAZZOLINI, *The iris in eighteenth-century physiology,* (Berner Beiträge zur Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften, Neue Folge, Band 9), Berne, Hans Huber, 1980, 8vo, pp. iv, 193, illus., S.Fr. 36.00/DM. 39.00 (paperback).

Here is a very single-minded attempt to solve a deliberately very circumscribed historical problem, the cause of the motion of the iris. The advantages of working within such confines are clear: virtually all the primary and secondary material can be tackled, and Mazzolini demonstrates impressive scholarship in doing so. The concrete and discrete nature of the anatomy and physiology involved is a safeguard against being sidetracked and is a convenient peg on to which to hang the history.

But there are disadvantages. The coherence of the intellectual and empirical techniques of each of the authors listed slides imperceptibly into a coherence that stretches over generations. Ideas take on a life distinct from that of the minds in which they existed, and their history becomes a kind of Platonizing account of how pre-existing and external ideas are implanted in minds, each idea representing an ultimate reality (or error) at first seen only indistinctly by the mind. The subsequent "evolution" of these ideas clarifies the reality or exposes the error: new ideas are formed by the coming together of parental ideas (p. 39) and evolve under the influence of other ideas. They decline and die, sometimes by fighting each other (p. 8) or by being negatively selected (p. 6); those that survive their crises (chapter 5) complete their evolution by a final assimilation to the reality they represent, as we may see by the judicious use of modern science and microscopes (appendix F). During their passage through different minds, ideas appear as mental parasites, old ones producing symptoms of "archaeicity" and new ones "modernity", sometimes in the same host (p. 61) and the historian becomes a natural scientist describing the morphology and transmission of ideas, ideally in quantitative terms (tables I–V).

This, of course, is an unfair parody, born of a suspicion of a closed history of ideas approach. Given that the muscularity of the iris in the eighteenth century is a historical *explicandum,* perhaps there is no better way of explicating it; given that the author has limited himself to the "logical and empirical reasons for scientific change", we can be grateful for the immense fund of technical information he extracts from the literature, and we cannot grumble at the absence of a consideration of non-scientific elements of history. The grumble perhaps comes when we ask where we could dovetail into this account others that are wider than the logical and empirical components of science; we are left little scope when the duty of the historian of ideas is supposedly to establish "the exact meaning of a term", that of the social historian to clarify "the material context in which it was expressed", and part of that of the historian of science to

establish the significance of the term "through the experimental context in which it was used'. Surely all three fields can be united when we ask not how *ideas* change but how *people* have different ideas.

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NANCY G. SIRAISI, *Taddeo Alderotti and his pupils*, Princeton University Press, 1981, 8vo, pp. xxiii, 461, £17.80.

This is an important and much-needed book. By concentrating on Taddeo Alderotti (*c.* 1210–1295), professor of logic and medicine at Bologna, and six known pupils (Gentile da Cingoli, Bartolomeo da Varignana, William of Brescia, Dino del Garbo, Mondino de' Luzzi, and Pietro Torrigiano), Dr. Siraisi has uncovered some of the foundations of the medieval medical curriculum and set academic medicine in a proper context. She considers with admirable caution the crucial role of this group in introducing the latinized Galen and Avicenna into the syllabus, propounding human anatomy as essential for the doctor, and adapting medicine to contemporary philosophical issues and training. Their writings, which vary from a commentary on Aristotle's *Economics* to practical medical compendia and from an explication of modern poetry to *quaestiones* on sex, display the different emphases within the group, but also an overall hardheadedness. Their appreciation of the limits of medicine and philosophy is particularly impressive. Dr. Siraisi not only widens our knowledge of medieval academic medicine but also destroys many scholarly myths in passing, either by her silence (Mondino's call to Venice) or succinct criticism – Henri de Mondeville's studies at Bologna (pp. 51–52, although Henri, pp. 476, 481, ed. Pagel, needs a comment), and Hewson's attribution to Dino of a *quaestio* on the generation of the embryo (p. 200). There are two appendices, one a valuable register of *quaestiones*, and a good bibliography with a select list of MSS. The holdings of the Cesena library, noted but not seen by the author, deserve more attention. Not only do they contain more material from Taddeo's circle than is given here, but most of it was collected by one man, see G. Baader, 'Die Bibliothek des Giovanni Marco da Rinini', in K. Treu (editor), *Studia Codicologica*, Berlin, 1977, pp. 43–97.

Dr. Siraisi's touch is less sure on civic than on university matters. Despite p. 36, the evidence is against the hiring of Taddeo as a civic physician at Bologna: rather he belonged to a wider group eligible to be called on by the state to examine cases of death and injury, and who were then paid for each case attended. Although being included was a sign that one had arrived, this examination was perhaps more of a duty than a privilege: it should also be distinguished from the common obligation of all doctors at Bologna to notify any illegal injuries, see E. Dall'Osso, *L'organizzazione medicolegale a Bologna*, Cesena, 1956.

The group's standing can also be measured in financial terms. The salary offered by Venice to Taddeo in 1293, 47 lire gr., is the second highest known (a mysterious Anselmo (da Genoa?) is offered 50 l.gr. in 1296, also to teach and practise), while that proposed by Venice in 1321 to Bartolomeo, 40 l.gr. for a two-year contract to give medical assistance and instruction, is also exceptionally high, four or five times the average, see G. Monticolo, *I capitolari delle arti Veneziane*, Rome, 1896, doc. 148. Monticolo, doc. 90, also needs comment, as it apparently shows Bartolomeo as doctor to the count of Gorizia in early 1311, although this is probably a scribal or transcriptional error for his son, Guglielmo.

As Dr. Siraisi shows, Taddeo's circle is important in the history of Galenism, pp. 100–106. It had a far greater knowledge of Galen than was available to Vincent of Beauvais, and made considerable use of it. Yet paradoxically, Bolognese Galenism by its success may have reduced substantially the impact of the more accurate and extensive versions of Niccolò da Reggio (fl. 1308–45). Niccolò's largest translation, of *De usu partium*, 1317, – the alternative date, p. 101, derives from Mrs May's attempt, *more Thadei*, to reconcile the truth with a typical slapdash error by Sarton – is not known to Taddeo's pupils, and, indeed, his versions are never cited in their writings, with one dubious exception, a commentary on *De interioribus ['De locis affectis]*