

Book Notices

Juliane C Wilmanns, *Der Sanitätsdienst im Römischen Reich: Eine sozialgeschichtliche Studie zum römischen Militärsanitätswesen nebst einer Prosopographie des Sanitätspersonals*, Medizin der Antike, Band 2, Hildesheim, Zurich, New York, Olms-Weidmann, 1995, pp. x, 314, illus., DM 68 (3-487-07919-4).

This eagerly awaited book is all that it promised to be, a focused and detailed treatment of the evidence for a Roman military medical service. It is divided into two roughly equal parts, the first a multi-faceted discussion, clearly and succinctly presented, of Roman military health-care provisions, their genesis and their setting; the second a prosopography of the military doctors and other healing personnel. Throughout, the use of the evidence is generally scrupulous, with an avoidance of false certainties and a usually clear division between the presentation of factual material and its interpretation.

In the eight (unequal) chapters of the first part the following subjects are covered: I The Greek and Roman background to the establishment both of a standing army and of a correspondingly "professional" military medical service. II A rapid survey of the scattered sources for military medicine (literary, archaeological, epigraphic) and of modern research into these aspects. III A compact and clearly articulated summary account of the units, soldiers, hierarchy, pay and benefits of the imperial armed forces of the early and middle empire. IV This, by far the longest chapter, on the service conditions of military doctors (*medici*), includes a careful and convincing analysis of the evidence for their recruitment, number of posts, rank, status, promotion prospects, and pay. V A clear and wisely cautious summary of the mainly archaeological evidence for hospitals in fortresses and forts. VI A cool look at the rather limited evidence for the tasks and duties of medical personnel other than the *medici*.

VII An attempt to assess the training and ability of military doctors compared to their civilian counterparts. VIII The diffusion of Greco-Roman medicine and culture via the army, and its legacy.

The second part, and the basis of the book, is a detailed catalogue of almost one hundred testimonies (the great majority being inscriptions on stone) to doctors and healers of the Roman armed forces of the period 31 BC to AD 284. Each entry combines a clear presentation of the factual information and references with an analysis and discussion of the text. Indices, bibliography and a selection of illustrations complete this invaluable work.

Johanna Geyer-Kordesch and Rona Ferguson, *Blue stockings, black gowns, white coats: a brief history of women entering higher education and the medical profession in Scotland in celebration of one hundred years of women graduates at the University of Glasgow*, University of Glasgow, Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, 1995, £6.00. Copies available from: Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, 5 University Gardens, Glasgow G12 8QQ; cheques payable to Glasgow University.

In 1894 the first two women students graduated in Scotland from the University of Glasgow, both of them receiving medical degrees. It is in commemoration of this occasion that this booklet, which accompanied an exhibition at the University of Glasgow, was published.

The authors give a broad overview of the ideas and events which led to the demand on the nineteenth-century women's movement to give women access to university education and the medical profession, as well as of the issues and concerns which were raised by these demands. One of the points discussed, for example, is the notion of separate spheres for men and women and the support of this concept

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by ideas of physiological difference between the sexes, which led some medical men to argue that female physiology was unsuited to undergo the strains of higher education.

Although sketches of the protagonists and institutional developments in the general British context are provided, the authors pay particular attention to events in Scotland, such as the unsuccessful attempt by Sophia Jex-Blake and four other women to gain medical degrees at the University of Edinburgh, and the establishment of the women's college, Queen Margaret College, which was affiliated to the University of Glasgow.

The volume ends with a selected bibliography of primary and secondary literature. All in all, it provides an easily accessible introduction to the history of women's entry to higher education and the medical profession with a particular focus on Scotland.

Brian Bracegirdle, *Notes on modern microscope manufacturers*, The Quekett Microscopical Club, 1996, pp. xiii, 88, £11.50 (0-09514441-7-4). Distributed by Savona Books, 9 Wilton Road, Hornsea, North Humberside HU18 1QU, UK.

The SIMON Index (G Clifton, *Directory of British scientific instrument makers*), published in 1995, lists and describes most British scientific instrument makers active before about 1850. Such an enterprise is, amongst other things, a measure of the interest in early instruments and a lack of concern for later ones. The present work is based on Brian Bracegirdle's examination and cataloguing of the collections of microscopes in the Science Museum in London. The volume is a series of notes on microscope and microtome manufacturers alphabetically arranged. The great majority of entries pertains to post-1850 manufacturers but there are a few earlier examples. Most entries relate to British makers although a few foreign firms are included. Importantly, Bracegirdle insists that none of his dates for microscopes are estimates, all his dates for serial numbers being derived from

documentary evidence. This is a volume for the enthusiast and the specialist but even the amateur who has picked up a microscope in an antique shop will no doubt wish to refer to this, the authoritative source, for some time to come.

Fritz Spiegl, *Sick notes: an alphabetical browsing-book of medical derivations, abbreviations, mnemonics and slang for the amusement and edification of medics, nurses, patients, and hypochondriacs*, New York and London, Parthenon Publishing, 1996, pp. xii, 171, illus., £12.00, \$19.00 (1-85070-627-1).

Compendia of medical jargon are addictive, and what makes Fritz Spiegl's survey doubly compulsive is the alphabetical ordering with lavish cross-referencing, which means that almost every entry leads the curious eye to yet further instances of gobbledygook or in-house slang. Start the linguistic mystery tour, for instance, with "Doorhandles" (patients who "remember" another complaint just as they are about to leave the GP's surgery), follow up the cross-references—"For a Friend (FAF)", "Heartsinks" and so forth—and, hey presto, you will go through most of the alphabet from Ambulance Chaser to Wallet Biopsy via Grey Suits, chuckling along with Spiegl's droll view of medical practice today. Illustrated with some out-of-the-way medical cartoons, *Sick Notes* will serve as a "Panacea" (q.v.) for most of the (often imaginary) diseases here listed.

BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review. Items received, other than those assigned for review, are ultimately incorporated into the collection of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.)

Raquel Álvarez Peláez, *La conquista de la naturaleza americana*, Cuadernos Galileo de Historia de la Ciencia no. 14, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1993, pp. 607, illus., no price given (84-00-07369-X).