

## Book Reviews

symptoms and signs, e.g. “if the upper part of a man’s skull is feverish . . .” (480–2); “if a man’s back sinews are wasted it is . . .” (473–4); “if a man’s eyes are sick it is . . .” (510, 513–22); “if [the breathing through] a man’s nose is heavy it is . . .” (547–66); if a man’s teeth hurt it is . . .” (538). These include suggested treatments and are therefore a development from the earlier lengthy diagnostic series (“when an *āšipu* enters a patient’s house . . .”) published by R. Labat, *Traité akkadien de diagnostics et pronostics médicaux* (1951), which makes observations of external parts of the body in sequence from the top of the head to the feet. In this, physical signs are described, e.g. “if the patient’s right ear is dark his illness will be severe but he will recover”; “if the patient’s right kidney hurts him and he cannot lie on that side, he will die in seven days”; “if his left kidney is attacked and he cannot move and vomits blood . . . it is the hand of the god Sibitti, he will die”. It is noteworthy that many of the serious conditions which baffled this healer are ascribed to the “hand of the god X” and the usual prognosis was “he will die”.

Though this type of document was covered by Köcher in earlier volumes, these texts provide scant evidence for the identification of diseases except perhaps for bronchitis (554, *kiširti hašē*). However, elsewhere Kinnier Wilson has used the evidence of a variety of texts from this same period to suggest a probable recognition of xerophthalmia or xerotic keratitis, oedema, scurvy (*bu’šānu* – “stinking disease”), followed by pneumonia, scabies, bilharzia, “Baghdad boil”, tinnitus, various degrees of deafness, suppurative otitis media, and possibly typhoid, diphtheria, lept meningitis, and angina pectoris.

These volumes do not include references to surgery. The reviewer has elsewhere shown that the case cited in the Laws of Hammurapi (§ 218) in which a physician was condemned to lose his hand for destroying a patient’s eye when he cut a *nakkaptu* with a bronze lancet, is a specific judgment for which we are not given, in typical Babylonian legal drafting, the attested evidence or special circumstances. Certainly no general inference can be drawn from this case, which was probably an instance of unsuccessful cleaning of an incision of the lacrymal sac rather than of treatment of cataract or scarification, as was thought earlier. Recently, additional examples of attempted Caesarian sections have come to light.

Köcher’s work in presenting these texts is a good step forward for the study of the early history of medicine. It is only on this basis that the many problems, especially those connected with the identification of the ancient terminology employed, can be solved. Certainly, the traditional post-Herodotus view that Babylonian, as opposed to Egyptian, medicine was a frail science, needs reviewing.

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STEPHEN T. ANNING, *The history of medicine in Leeds*, Leeds, W. S. Maney, 1980, 8vo, pp. ix, 218, illus., [no price stated], (paperback).

Local medical history is an area of study which has been remarkably neglected by medical historians in this country. There are medical histories at national level such as Fleetwood’s *History of medicine in Ireland*, or Comrie’s *History of Scottish medicine*,

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but there has been neglect of systematic study of the development of medicine, and of medical services, in the smaller geographical areas – the large town, the city, or the country.

It was, therefore, a pleasure to prepare to welcome to a very meagrely furnished shelf in the library Anning's *History of medicine in Leeds*. Regrettably, the welcome has to be somewhat qualified, for Anning's book is less a history of medicine in Leeds than a history of a number of medical institutions in Leeds. A great part of it is devoted to the General Infirmary at Leeds, the medical and surgical practice carried on there, and those associated with it. There are also, however, interesting accounts of the Dispensary and the House of Recovery, and these are of particular value, since these forms of medical institution have roused the interest of fewer medical historians than have the voluntary hospitals.

Seven of the thirteen chapters in the book have already appeared in various journals, and one in a published congress report. The form adopted – the reprinting of previous articles – does lead to some repetition, which can be irritating; and it is a pity that the form of reference used in the final chapter follows the convention of the journal in which it originally appeared rather than that adopted in the remainder of the volume.

These blemishes, however, are not major ones, and there are many things of interest for the general historian, medical or non-medical, as well as for those concerned with the history of Leeds itself. The note on cholera in the chapter on the House of Recovery, for example, draws attention to a report in the *Leeds Intelligencer* of June 1831 that rags from continental hospitals were being imported through Hull for the manuring of hop gardens, and a case of cholera occurred in Hull the following month. The account of operations undertaken in the General Infirmary in 1823 demonstrates, sometimes in horrifying detail, the immense fortitude required of surgical patients before the days of anaesthesia, and the chapter on the use of alcohol in the Infirmary shows that a primitive controlled trial could be proposed in 1883, and medical audit in 1896.

The non-medical historians of Yorkshire and Leeds will be particularly grateful to Dr. Anning for having brought these articles together in an easily accessible form, but medical historians also will find profit and pleasure from reading Dr. Anning's new book.

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I. G. JONES, *Health, wealth and politics in Victorian Wales*, University College of Swansea, 1979, 8vo, pp. 39, [no price stated], (paperback).

Professor Ieuan Gwynedd Jones in his E. Ernest Hughes Memorial Lectures of 1978 examines the thesis that, in Victorian Wales, a preoccupation with health and amenities stimulated political activity. He illustrates its divergencies in the communities of industrial Morriston and rural Bala.

When in 1859 Mr. Henry Hussey Vivian bought an abandoned zinc spelter works at Morriston with the intention of restarting the furnaces, Mr. William Jowett was