larger changes of subject and style in midcentury Dutch art. The new silk imagery was accompanied by a flood of aristocratic subjects such as hunting scenes and game still-life, luxury good still-life, mythological scenes and mythological portraiture, neo-classical architecture and interior furnishings, oriental tapestries, and views of villas, gardens, and arcadian settings. To move from subjects to style, the new coloured silks participated in the larger shift toward a courtly aesthetic of rich colours and beautiful bodies. The *fijnschilder* aesthetic then was the response of a socially presumptuous, bourgeois genre painting, dressing itself up in the aristocratic splendour usually reserved for history painting. Set within this aesthetic context, the clothing topic regains its traditional value as a metaphor for style and ornament. Along with colour and cosmetics, clothing was in fact one of the three most common metaphors for style in Western discussions of poetry, rhetoric, and art since antiquity (Elaine Fantham, *Comparative Studies in Republican Latin Imagery* [Toronto, 1972], 166-167, 171). With her stronger background in social rather than literary history, the author never sees clothing on this more general level. Had she done so, the evidence she cites could have illuminated more fundamental changes in mid-century Dutch art. Despite such drawbacks, Stone-Ferrier's book is lucid, intelligent, and usually convincing. If future scholarship on Dutch art disagrees with some of her conclusions, it will have to build on many of her findings.

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Note

- 1 Madilyn Kahr, "Velasquez 'Las Hilanderas': A New Interpretation," *Art Bulletin*, 62 (1980), 376-384; Helen North, *From Myth to Icon: Reflections of Greek Ethical Doctrine in Literature and Art* (Ithaca, 1979), 52-54; idem, "The Mare, the Vixen, and the Bee: Sophrosyne as the Virtue of Women in Late Antiquity," *Illinois Classical Studies*, 2 (1977), 35-48, esp. 4144; Gerhard Rodenwaldt, "Spinnende Hetaren," *Archäologische Anzeiger*, 1932, 7-21; E. G. Suhr, *Venus de Milo, the Spinners, and Ancient Fertility Symbol* (New York, 1958); idem, "Winged Words," *Folklore*, 85 (1974), 169-172; Jeffrey Alan Hirschberg, "Noah's Wife on the Medieval English Stage: Iconographic and Dramatic Values of Her Distaff and Choice of the Raven," *Studies in Iconography*, 2 (1976), 25-40, esp. 30-32. Since Stone-Ferrier's book appeared, there is Eva Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus* (New York, 1985), ch. 3.

The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century. Ed. A. Wear, R.K. French and I.M. Lonie. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. Pp. xvi, 349. US \$59.50.

If the history of medicine is a drama, then this book is about the importance of spear-carriers.

A collection of articles edited by Andrew Wear, Roger K. French and Iain M. Lonie, *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* is the product of a September 1983 conference at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, which was sponsored by the Wellcome Trust. The avowed intention of conference organizers and editors alike was to emphasize the role played by less significant characters in sixteenth-century medicine. Too often, they claim, the history of medicine in the Renaissance

period focuses on the "heroes," like Vesalius and William Harvey, blithely ignoring much of the work and ideas of those people whose contributions to the progress of "modern" medicine seem minimal.

But this book is more than yet another prick at the complacent bubble of Whig history. The various authors, prominent and promising historians of medicine, concentrate on two main areas: how medicine, as one of the triad of major academic disciplines (along with theology and law), was affected by humanistic ideals that encouraged the restoration and reinterpretation of classical texts; and how, outside the Whiggish limits of the "medical heroes" approach, the practice of sixteenth-century medicine reflects the changing intellectual context of Renaissance society.

In examining the impact of Renaissance humanism on medicine, however, Roger French ("Berengario da Carpi and the Use of Commentary in Anatomical Teaching") sounds a cautionary note: because the concepts of "Renaissance" and "humanism" have both been generated by historians with little or no reference to the field of medicine, one should be wary about applying them too freely to medicine during this period. French observes that "humanism" in medicine could more accurately be called "Hellenism," for to early sixteenth-century medical authors Latin was the language into which Greek ideas were unfortunately transcribed. But, while some Hellenists concerned themselves uncritically with the ontological value of Greek medical knowledge, others (like Berengario da Carpi) applied "humanistic" ideas about textual scholarship and historical criticism to Greek, Latin and even Arabic sources alike. French points out that da Carpi in so doing considered himself an heir of the scholastic tradition, not a humanistic rebel.

The traditional interpretations of concepts like "Renaissance" or "humanism" thus present problems for the historian of sixteenth-century medicine. Nancy Siraisi ("The Changing Fortunes of a Traditional Text: Goals and Strategies in Sixteenth-Century Latin Editions of the *Canon* of Avicenna") demonstrates the continued popularity of Avicenna's *Canon* in teaching practical medicine, for example. Similarly, Gerhard Baader ("Jacques Dubois as a Practitioner") describes how "the arch-Galenist of Paris" (p. 146) was unable in practice to avoid using Arabic remedies, despite his puristic attitude toward teaching Galenic anatomy within the Paris medical faculty. Andrew Wear ("Explorations in Renaissance Writings on the Practice of Medicine") shows clearly how in Renaissance medical *practica*, Dubois' dilemma was commonplace; Arabic medicine – whatever the impact of sixteenth-century Hellenism – had a far from negligible influence on the academic education of physicians and their subsequent practice.

Of course Renaissance medicine was affected by "humanistic" intellectual trends, but the rediscovery and reinterpretation of classical Greek texts seem to have inhibited the spread of new ideas about the nature of disease and its treatment. Andrew Wear traces the changes that occurred in Renaissance *practica* to a general desire for "rational, methodical medicine" grounded upon the codification of Galenic knowledge. He concludes, however, that this desire proved to be a powerful conservative force, dampening systematic innovation in all but radical Paracelsian medicine. It is regrettable that Walter Pagel's death deprived this

collection of what undoubtedly would have been an insightful consideration of the Renaissance roots of Paracelsian medicine, and its parallels to more traditional medical practice.

The unification of Galenic method with Renaissance medical practice, however, was far from a negative or regressive development. Iain Lonie ("The 'Paris Hippocratics': Teaching and Research in Paris in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century") discusses the activities of the Paris medical faculty in teaching the precepts of practical Hippocratic medicine, and the excellent reputation the school and its faculty enjoyed as a result. Similarly, Andrew Cunningham ("Fabricius and the 'Aristotle Project' in Anatomical Teaching and Research at Padua") argues that Fabricius is best understood not as an anti-Vesalian reactionary, but as a teacher and author following a specific agenda for understanding the anatomy of all animals – something that he derived from the fragmentary works of Aristotle on animal biology.

Turning from anatomy to physiology, Jerome J. Bylebyl ("Disputation and Description in the Renaissance Pulse Controversy") discusses the implications for the work of William Harvey of sixteenth-century ideas about the movements of the heart and arteries. Just as Cunningham is concerned with representing sixteenth-century anatomy as anything but a monolithic activity, Bylebyl discusses how, within their sixteenth-century context, these ideas are exemplars of "the diverse methodological strands – dialectical, authoritarian, textual, observational and experimental – that helped to make up the fabric of renaissance physiology" (p. 223).

As for an understanding of the way other ideas about medicine and the nature of disease were articulated, Charles B. Schmitt ("Aristotle among the Physicians") discusses the prominent place natural philosophy occupied within the Renaissance academic curriculum, especially as a part of the study of medicine. Linda Deer Richardson ("The Generation of Disease: Occult Causes and Diseases of the Total Substance") explores the unorthodox features of Jean Fernel's system of pathology and concludes that, when faced with the occult explanations of disease that Fernel favoured, his contemporaries seemed to prefer the rational method about which Andrew Wear has written.

As for what the "practice" of medicine actually entailed for the medical spear-carriers in Renaissance society, *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* follows a fairly recent historiographical trend reflected in the work of Charles Webster, Margaret Pelling and others. Vivian Nutton ("Humanist Surgery"), Richard Palmer ("Pharmacy in the Republic of Venice in the Sixteenth Century") and L. Garcia-Ballester ("Academicism versus Empiricism in Practical Medicine in Sixteenth-Century Spain with Regard to Morisco Practitioners") focus on the subject of "medicine" outside the universities, demonstrating the historical importance of medicine practised by surgeons, apothecaries and empirics, and suggesting ways in which such people were also influenced by the changing intellectual and social climate in which they lived. In exploring the activities of those medical practitioners not normally part of academic medicine, these authors reinforce the conviction that the social and cultural context of medical practice is essential to the proper understanding of medicine as a whole.

One apparent weakness of such a diverse assortment of articles – ostensibly “chapters” in a book – is its lack of cohesiveness. *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* is an agglomeration of attempts to describe different facets of Renaissance medicine. In this instance, however, diversity of approach and subject matter is in fact a strength; it is perhaps unfortunate that the Introduction, in asserting the coherence of the whole, tends to emphasize unnecessarily the similarities between historical apples and oranges.

For historians of medicine, *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* is essential reading, as much for what its authors say about the character of Renaissance medicine as for the roadsigns it presents for future research. For those with more general interests, it exemplified the utility of synthesizing social and intellectual history in the Renaissance period. Perhaps a reasonably priced, paperback edition would make it more accessible to academic spear-carriers as well.

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