

Book Reviews

professional success, from anatomical research to hospital practice to dealing in art. Overall this is an excellent and consistently interesting collection of research papers, that reveals new aspects of the central importance of medicine in early modern society and culture.

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Andreas Vesalius, *On the fabric of the human body. Book VI: The heart and associated organs. Book VII: The brain,* a translation of *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* by William Frank Richardson in collaboration with John Burd Carman, Novato, CA, Norman Publishing, 2009, pp. xx, 413, illus, \$275 (hardback 978-0-930405-90-8).

The great work is now complete. After eleven years, the final volume of this monumental translation of Vesalius' masterpiece has finally appeared. The last two books of the *Fabrica* concern the heart and its associated organs, and the brain, and end with Vesalius' comments on vivisection. Neither is as familiar as it should be, and even those, like myself, who thought they were familiar with large sections of Vesalius, now find new observations and points of interest. The high standards set in the first volume have been maintained throughout. English readers now have both an accurate and an elegant guide to the *Fabrica*, and have no excuse for concentrating on its illustrations rather than its verbal message. Sadness at the death of the translator, Will Richardson, who was thus unable to see his achievement in print, is tempered only a little by the knowledge that he had effectively completed all that he set out to do.

But there are also others who deserve praise, as well as John Burd Carman, who provided an anatomical commentary throughout. The publisher took a big risk with so huge and prestigious a volume: at least one other publisher was certainly reluctant to

commit to a similar project. The design team have produced a page lay-out that mirrors the clarity and elegance of the original, and a series of volumes that are a pleasure to handle. It is a pity that the opportunity was not fully taken to sharpen some of the original images, which are occasionally too dark to show clearly the identifying numbers.

Over a hundred pages of this final volume are taken up with a series of indexes, beginning with a complete translation of Vesalius' own index, reordered according to English word order. This remains valuable because it often gives a context and the ideas that accompany a particular word. It is followed by an index of words, one of names, one of foreign words retained, one of passages cited from ancient authors, and one of topics and names and foreign words included in the translator's notes. These relate only to the text of volume V, and are then followed by cumulative indexes to all the volumes. They will be of great assistance when trying to look up a particular passage even if, as I found, one may have to consult a variety of entries before alighting on the right one.

But this is a quibble, as is the wish that some of the notes had been fuller and had explained more of the context. It would also have been nice if Professor Carman had given us a retrospect of the changes that have taken place over the last decade or more in the understanding and interpretation of Vesalius and his book. When this book was begun, its authors were working in isolation, as much intellectual as physical, and O'Malley's (not always accurate) interpretation held the field unchallenged. The last fifteen years have seen major advances in our understanding of dissection in the Renaissance and of Vesalius in particular. Scholars in England, France and the USA have challenged many of the central themes of the older historiography, and some of their findings could well have been incorporated in the notes. But this would have added to the work, and possibly delayed production even longer, so that the decision to present a slimmer Vesalius is understandable.

Book Reviews

These criticisms are in no way intended to detract from what has been achieved. These volumes deserve all the praise that has been heaped upon them. They mark a major step in the rehabilitation of renaissance medicine, and add to the reputation of Vesalius as well as of all those involved in this memorable production.

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Peregrine Horden, *Hospitals and healing from antiquity to the later Middle Ages*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008, pp. xii, 338, £65.00, online £58.50 (hardback 978-0-7546-6181-8).

The Variorum Collected Studies Series has a long-standing tradition of presenting the best articles by individual established scholars in an easily accessible and useful format, and this volume continues that tradition. The sixteen essays collected in this book highlight the impressive breadth of Peregrine Horden's interests and abilities. The materials are largely focused on the early Middle Ages, mostly Byzantine and some western, but also include brief forays into the ancient Hippocratic and medieval Arab worlds. Documenting a quarter century of studies, the essays display a number of innovative approaches to the history of hospitals, as well as other subjects, by a major scholar in the field of early medieval medicine.

The volume is divided into two sections, the first entitled 'Hospitals and institutions of care' and the second 'Sickness and healing'. In some ways, the book's title and divisions do not do justice to the variety of subjects under discussion. Firstly, the term "hospitals" is problematic because too narrow; instead Horden deftly and appropriately connects hospitals with many types of social organization, including confraternities and

families. In contrast, the terms used to categorize the second half of the volume, 'Sickness and healing', are too broad and vague to capture the specifics of each article, which range in topic from the Justinianic plague to late medieval and early modern music therapy.

Some of the more intriguing articles involve topics that had previously received little attention. Essays IV and XVI address the connections between music and medicine, essay IX deals with the issue of travel and medical treatment, and travel *as* medical treatment, essay XII analyses feigned insanity through the lives of early Byzantine saints, and essay VIII considers the meanings of pain in the Hippocratic corpus, a topic which has only recently begun to receive the attention it deserves. A theme common to many of the essays is the complex relation between the spiritual and the curative, whether it be, for example, saints healing the possessed (essay XI) or the importance of emotions, the "accidents of the soul", as part of the non-naturals which influence both health and illness (essays IV and V).

When approaching a subject, Horden is concerned with the possible as much as the clearly demonstrable. He sometimes argues his points from conjecture, often in revealing, fruitful and entertaining ways. Most of the material here is not centred on archival research, but such an observation misses the point: these are essays in the sense of Montaigne's works as explorations of a topic, its epistemology and (in this case) its historiography. This method can lead to kaleidoscopic snapshots across time and place, bound together by a theme, as in essay VI, 'Family history and hospital history in the Middle Ages', which manages to incorporate the thirteenth-century miracles of St Louis, Hellenistic Egyptian letters, imperial Roman oratory, and early modern Italian charity. While at times disconcerting and decontextualized, such an approach more often uncovers new avenues and new connections to be pursued.