

Book Reviews

L. BOLK, *De segmentale innervatie van romp en ledematen bij de mens*, Utrecht, Bohn, Scheltema & Holkema, 1985, 8vo, pp. xx, 158, illus., Dfl.39.50 (paperback).

Although the editor, in his introduction, does not make it quite clear why at this particular point in time the decision was taken to reprint Louis Bolk's neuro-anatomical work on the segmental innervation of the human trunk and limbs, there can be no doubt that this monograph of 1910, both from a clinical and historical point of view, is a worthwhile publication. Bolk, the most influential of Dutch anatomists during the first half of the twentieth century, was highly regarded for his educational methods and played a decisive role in establishing research institutions of lasting importance, such as the Central Dutch Institute for Brain Research.

Clinicians today can find much of interest in the present text since the concept of segmental divisions as applied to the peripheral nervous system still has its place in the examination of neurological patients, and the "facts" of it have changed surprisingly little since Bolk's time.

Historically speaking, the text forms in tone and outlook an example of the path trodden by comparative anatomists once Darwin's evolutionary theory had got a stronger hold on them. They concerned themselves with the question how the development of the human individual might reflect the evolutionary past of the different species (or, in Ernst Haeckel's terms, how "Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny"). Bolk (1866–1930), who studied anatomy under Georg Ruge (1852–1919), in his turn a disciple of the Jena professor Carl Gegenbaur (1826–1903), showed in his early work on metamerology a clear influence of the latter's school of thought: placing comparative anatomy on the frontlines in the search for understanding the evolution of species. Between 1894 and 1900, Bolk published the results of his work in Gegenbaur's *Morphologisches Jahrbuch*.

The 1910 monograph under discussion is a summary of the findings of those years. Bolk considered higher developed vertebrates to have "lost" the direct visibility of their principal—and in embryological stages still discernible—building elements, which he called segments. This loss was due to their development of more differentiated organ-systems. But, so he states, it is still possible indirectly to trace back this rostro-caudal segmental origin by accurately dissecting the peripheral nervous system, since in this system, especially when looking at the spinal nerves, the segmentation principle is clear. The next step was to describe the innervation of muscles and skin, and, following the nervous system, to divide also these tissues into their primary myotomes and dermatomes.

That his interest was also of a topographical kind—forecasting his later topographical book on the cerebellum—shows clearly in his final chapter on the intravertebral part of the nervous system.

This edition follows in text and illustrations the original one, only the spelling has been updated. Later corrections and comments on method and results have not been added, though references to them are made in the introduction. Unfortunately, the pleasure of the reading is slightly exclusive, since the text appeared only in Dutch and German, but those for whom this barrier is not too high, gain a nice treatise, representative of the issues in anatomy of the time.

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D. TUTZKE, K.-J. BURMEISTER, R. LANGE-PFAUTSCH, and G. BRÜSCHKE, *Charité 1710–1985*, Berlin DDR, VEB Verlag Volk und Gesundheit, 1985, 8vo, pp. 79, illus., M.25.00 (paperback).

This short, illustrated history of the Charité Hospital in East Berlin was produced to mark the hospital's 275th anniversary. The authors use the fact that a history of the hospital had been issued in 1945 to justify concentrating on the post-war period, thus emphasizing the Communist part of its history.

The book traces the hospital's passage from plague house in "feudal-absolutist" Prussia to modern university clinic in Socialist DDR. The plague house existed from 1710, but in 1727 it was re-named by Friedrich Wilhelm I the Charité Hospital. Soldiers as well as the poor were