

Book Reviews

despite their individual obscurity, Birken claims that as a group they can tell us something of the closeness of seventeenth-century Puritan medical and clerical families, and also reveal “the mighty compatibility of Puritanism and medical professionalism”, which is “not fully appreciated” (p. 101). And here we glimpse an axe that the author has brought with him to the historical mill: Puritans were good, orthodox members of the College of Physicians.

The patriarch of this family, Dr Edmund Wilson, Sr, was a Puritan who early in his education opted for a medical career to avoid the bureaucratic hindrances that were being created to block Puritans from ecclesiastical careers. This choice worked because the College of Physicians was more concerned with candidates' credentials and medical orthodoxy than with their religious background or views, and therefore provided a professional refuge from policies aimed against dissenters. This helps “to cast doubt on the common assumption that the College was an extension of royal and ecclesiastical authority in Church and State” (p. 41). Owing to the complete lack of references or other critical apparatus, the reader has no idea whose views Birken is addressing. However, examination of his earlier work suggests that he is still engaging George Clark, Christopher Hill, Charles Webster, and others who have portrayed the College as an instrument of official policy and Puritans as champions of sectarian, Paracelsian medicine. This is a profitable discussion, but one to which this paper makes little contribution.

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Timo Joutsivuo, *Scholastic tradition and humanist innovation: the concept of *neutrum* in Renaissance medicine*, Humaniora series, vol. 303, Helsinki, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1999, pp. 288 (951-41-0863-9). Distributed by: Bookstore Tiedekirja, Kirkkokatu 14, FIN-00170 Helsinki, Finland.

This fine example of traditional intellectual history tells the story of the concept of the neutral body during the Renaissance. This is an important story to tell because the idea that a human body could exist in a state that was neither healthy nor sick was integral to the doctrines of *complexio* and latitude of health which lay at the heart of Galenic medical theory. Joutsivuo shows how Renaissance commentators changed the terms within which this concept was traditionally debated, and thus contributed to the introduction of Renaissance humanism into university medicine.

The depth and range of Joutsivuo's scholarship is impressive. His research is based upon a thorough investigation of 27 printed commentaries and one manuscript commentary on Galen's *Tegni* (where the idea of the neutral body is most clearly stated), dating from the 1520s (when Galen's collected works were printed in Greek for the first time) to the early seventeenth century when interest in the *Tegni* died out. For the earlier period, he relies primarily upon printed editions of well-known scholastic commentaries on the *Tegni* by Pietro Torrigiano, Gentile da Foligno and Giacomo da Forlì. In addition, Joutsivuo makes use of other theoretical works, such as the *Canon* of Avicenna, and a number of practical gerontological treatises where the idea of the neutral body is also discussed.

His investigation of these sources provides a wonderful mine of information on how Renaissance expositors understood many of the central concepts of Galenic medicine, such as *sanum*, *aegrum* and

Book Reviews

neutrum, and *ut nunc* and *simpliciter*. The more technical chapters devoted to explaining these theoretical concepts are nicely balanced by an excellent introductory chapter on Galenic medicine in the Renaissance, and a fascinating closing chapter on Renaissance discussions of whether neutral bodies really do exist in nature and whether ageing bodies and convalescing bodies provide practical examples of neutral bodies.

But was there really a continuous history of the “idea” of the neutral body? Though the author admits that each commentary introduces conceptual changes and is itself a reflection of new contemporary issues, he never directly addresses the problem of essentialism that inevitably arises when writing the history of an idea. Even though Joutsivuo wisely focuses upon texts and interpretations rather than ideas, one is still left wondering whether all his commentators really are talking about the same thing.

Joutsivuo is also rather free with his use of the categories “scholastic” and “humanist”. In order to highlight the impact of humanism on discussions of the neutral body, he contrasts the views of Renaissance expositors with those of scholastic commentators on the matter. But this assumes that there was indeed an identifiable “scholastic” interpretation of the neutral body, which some Renaissance expositors were closer to than others. Yet, as the author’s own research shows, there was as much diversity of opinion among scholastic commentators as among Renaissance expositors.

Does the concept of the neutral body in the Renaissance really tell us anything new about medical humanism? Joutsivuo’s work is certainly valuable in confirming what we already know about the novelty of humanist exegesis, its concentration on philological and inter-textual analysis, its new historical sensitivity, its concern for discovering the origins of ideas, and its interest in establishing the integrity of an author’s

entire output. But as Joutsivuo admits in his conclusion, his story tends to reaffirm the traditional picture that, though new sources and translations were used and new literary techniques adopted, university medicine was stubbornly resistant to the broader philosophical challenges of Renaissance humanism.

These are but minor quibbles with an exemplary piece of scholarship. The impeccable explication of text, the copious footnoting, and the excellent appendices make this an invaluable reference tool that will be treasured by scholars of early modern medicine for a long time to come.

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Rona Goffen (ed.), *Masaccio’s Trinity*, Masterpieces of Western Painting series, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. x, 166, illus., £30.00, \$49.95 (hardback 0-521-46150-2), £11.95, \$15.95 (paperback 0-521-46709-8).

The seven essays in *Masaccio’s Trinity* utilize a wide range of approaches to examine one of the most familiar paintings in Italian Renaissance art. Written by six authors, all were extracted or expanded upon from other sources, excepting the introduction by the editor, Rona Goffen, and the last essay by Katharine Park. Despite their disparate origins, together they provide an impressive overview of this so-called “masterpiece” from a variety of perspectives.

Two essays by Goffen and one by Gene Brucker situate the painting and its patrons in the context of early fifteenth-century Florence and Dominican theology, despite Goffen’s incomprehensible placement of Gentile da Fabriano’s *Adoration* in Santa Maria Novella, rather than Santa Trinità.