

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

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treated, and the hospital served the clinical purposes of the Collegium Medico-Chirurgicum. The Charité became an exemplar in Germany, and by the nineteenth century had high standing, with such notables as Virchow, Henle, von Helmholtz, Du Bois Reymond, and Koch becoming associated with it.

With its Marxist approach this little history includes more social and political history than would be the case in a western celebratory version, but its propagandist nature is very prominent. Thus, due obeisance is paid to the Russians, and links between the Charité and Soviet doctors from the time of the Revolution are stressed. Between 1933 and 1945, the authors relate that there was an “anti-fascist struggle” at the Charité. Great detail is given to reconstruction in 1945, and much attention to subsequent Soviet-East German politics and “friendship”.

The book concludes by documenting extensive new buildings constructed in the 1980s, listing national prizes won by those at the hospital, and claiming that the Charité is a leading centre for transplant surgery and high technology. The authors’ final effort is, not surprisingly, to emphasize the Party involvement of those at the Charité. All in all, an interesting piece of propaganda.

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RONALD HAMOWY, *Canadian medicine. A study in restricted entry*, Vancouver, Frazer Institute, 1985, 8vo, pp. xxiii, 394, \$15.95 (paperback).

Over the last dozen years, the evolution of the British and American medical professions has been subjected to scrutiny by a number of scholars including Paul Starr, William Rothstein, Ivan Waddington, and M. Jeanne Peterson. Unfortunately, the historiography of Canadian medicine can claim no such studies, a deficiency which Ronald Hamowy’s volume does little to redress.

The purpose of his study, Hamowy states, is “to trace the history of physicians’ efforts to establish a monopoly in the area of medical practice” (p.262) in Canada. The initial chapter, based almost exclusively on outdated secondary sources, focuses on unsuccessful attempts by the diminutive central Canadian medical profession to secure licensing legislation before 1840. The chronology continues in chapter two, stressing the ongoing but inconclusive confrontation between orthodox physicians and unlicensed practitioners, including homeopaths and eclectics, prior to Confederation. The third chapter, covering the two decades after 1867, discusses the success of medical acts in Ontario (1869) and Quebec (1876) in effectively barring heterodox practice in central Canada, and the manner in which Maritime and Western practitioners attempted to follow suit. The final chapter considers the way in which these initial victories were consolidated in the quarter-century before the First World War. Among other accomplishments, orthodox medicine secured the privilege of professional self-discipline, suppressed intra-professional competition by banning advertisements, manipulated educational requirements to curtail the number of new practitioners, vigorously prosecuted unlicensed healers, created an effective means of dealing with liability litigation, and extended professional authority nationwide with the formation of the Medical Council of Canada in 1912.

Hamowy’s study is a wearisome and often repetitious narrative, based almost entirely on legislative texts, articles from medical journals, and secondary sources of questionable reliability. Frequent lengthy quotations, intrusive chapter sub-headings, and rambling end-notes make this book unnecessarily awkward for the reader. Most disconcerting is the careless use of historical evidence. For example, we are told that during the 1850s, homeopaths and eclectics in Upper Canada “were comparatively well-organized and had substantial followings” (p.63). The footnote accompanying this assertion—which may, indeed, be correct—provides absolutely no proof of the point at issue. Indeed, several pages later Hamowy admits there are “no hard data on the number of unregistered or unlicensed doctors practicing in British North America” (p.78). Similarly, in discussing orthodox medicine’s attack on irregular practitioners, the author argues that “the public” firmly opposed the actions of the allopaths (p.125). This is an important and plausible contention, but unfortunately no evidence in the references provides