

BOOK REVIEWS *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 1994, 68 531

they must be faithful to the originals, and second, they must collectively have an identifiable focus. As far as the reviewer can determine, the texts are faithfully reproduced. The translations are generally smooth, and the editor has taken pains to emend the letters with explanatory notes. She has not abbreviated any of the letters.

The letters also form a coherent collection containing as far as possible both sides of a correspondence. With the exception of those by Carl August and Heinrich, the letters come from a seven-year period at the end of von Baer's life. Several general messages emerge from their content. One gets a real sense of the trials Dohrn faced in order to secure funding for the Stazione. He implored the aging von Baer on a number of occasions to support Dohrn's cause before the education ministry in Moscow. One also gets a real sense of the personalities of the two correspondents, one forty-eight years younger than the other. Dohrn is deferent, enthusiastic, and single-minded; von Baer is cordial, supportive, and realistic in the ways of the Russian bureaucracy. Perhaps the most interesting aspects of the letters concern the contrasting interpretations of Darwin's theory of evolution. During his final years, von Baer, although a transformationist of sorts, criticized Darwin's theory for its mechanistic principle and nonteleological orientation. Dohrn, a supporter of the mechanism of natural selection, focused on issues of phylogeny and his theory of the functional change of structures. The two ends of the century thus meet in this amicable and informative exchange.

Two coincidences made this correspondence possible. Both writers belonged to the educated elite of central Europe; they spoke the same languages of civility, science, and internationalism. The two were also convinced that only through embryology could the deeper perplexities of the Darwinian theory be resolved. It was through this latter conviction that each in his own way promoted the Stazione. Oppenheimer, who has studied von Baer for many years, provides a knowledgeable introduction in which she expands upon the relationship between Dohrn and von Baer and upon the content of the letters.

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Heinz David. *Rudolf Virchow und die Medizin des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Edited by Werner Selberg and Hans Hamm. Berlin: Quintessenz Verlag, 1993. 366 pp. Ill. DM 48.00.

The author of this book, the pathologist Heinz David, occupied Rudolf Virchow's chair of pathology at the University of East Berlin from 1987 to 1991. David, the seventh in the line of succession to Virchow's chair, convincingly demonstrates the relevance of his illustrious predecessor's cellular pathology for twentieth-century medicine. Next to Christian Andree at the University of Kiel, the author is one of the greatest living experts on Virchow. He meticulously quotes from 127

publications of Virchow's from the years 1845 to 1902 to substantiate his carefully worked out arguments. This is in stark contrast to many other contemporary publications on Virchow, which are too often based on secondary and tertiary sources.

David's account is not limited to Virchow. We hear from his contemporaries and from his successors, as well as from modern pathologists writing on cellular pathology. The result is a well-balanced yet lively presentation of the voices of supporters and opponents of cellular pathology over the past 135 years. Throughout the book, Heinz David retains the role of the knowledgeable even-handed exponent of the pros and contras, but becomes a champion of cellular pathology in his clear and unequivocal conclusion. Formulated by Rudolf Virchow around 1855, cellular pathology was the first workable paradigm for pathology. Its essentials still form the basis for morphological concepts in contemporary medicine. Cellular pathology is not a dogmatic system, but an open heuristic principle in which the cell as the morphological and functional unit is the focal point. The endurance of Virchow's paradigm must be attributed to this fact. The localization of the genes in the chromosomes of the cell's nucleus in the twentieth century undoubtedly contributed to Virchow's posthumous fame. David also provides us with a detailed account of Virchow's concept of the disease process and the etiology of disease, Virchow's ideas on medicine, society, and social medicine, and, finally, his political convictions. The book concludes with a biographical outline that includes nine portraits, the earliest from 1840 and the last from 1902.

Unfortunately the book contains a number of misprints and transpositions, such as 1983 for Aschoff (p. 102), which should be 1938. These excusable errors aside, the publishers, Quintessenz Verlag, committed a travesty which is hardly forgivable and is difficult to explain. The name of the author, Prof. Dr.sc.med. Heinz David, does not appear on the book's cover. It is only on the third page and in small print that the reader will find David mentioned by name. Two editors from Hamburg are prominently featured, but we are not told what they contributed. A letter written by the publisher reveals that powerful physicians in organized medicine in Berlin did not want to give credit to the author, formerly a prominent East German scientist, and pressured the publisher to suppress his name. This action illuminates the more destructive and vindictive aspects of German reunification in the realm of medicine.

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