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BOOK REVIEWS

Thomas G. Benedek. *Rheumatism: Its History from Paleo-Pathology to the Advent of Experimental Science*. New York: Nova Biomedical / Nova Science, 2015. x, 169 p., \$121.50 hardback, ISBN 978-1-63482-712-6. \$135.00 e-book, 978-1-63482-736-2.

Thomas G. Benedek. *Rheumatism: Its History from the Advent of Experimental Science to the Impact of Bacteriology*. New York: Nova Biomedical / Nova Science, 2017. viii, 292 p., \$144.00 hardback, ISBN 978-1-53610-430-1. \$160.00 e-book, 978-1-53610-442-4.

Rheumatism is not a single disease with multiple manifestations, but a large class of diseases from arthritis to gout to fibromyalgia, with varied etiologies, presentations, and prognoses, and with their main point in common being severe systemic or localized pain in joints, bones, muscles, or related tissues. The word *rheuma* (ῥεῦμα) in ancient Greek means flow, stream, river, flood, flux, or tide. At first it is difficult to see how this word contributes to the etymology of a word which denotes the inflammation of structural or connective tissues, but in the context which Benedek cites from Plato's *Timaeus* 84d, the fluid blocks rather than flows, i.e., the *rheuma* is phlegm or catarrh which impedes the flow of air from the lungs into the body and thus causes all sorts of diseases, depending on the specific location of the impediment and its consequent inflammation. Hence, through the centuries, the word "rheumatism" became a general term to indicate any pain, anywhere in the body, caused by any kind of flow - or stoppage of flow (2015, 36-37).

There is probably no one on the planet who understands rheumatism, its history, its concept, or its clinical phenomenology as thoroughly as Tom Benedek does. He says (2015, vii) that it would take 2000 pages to describe it adequately, but here, in these two books of 461 pages total, is a very good start. The content of both books is superb. Benedek's narrative is engaging, multi-faceted, and readable; and his references are copious and seminal. He is conversant with original scientific publications and other primary sources from the last several centuries, written by not only medical authors, but also representatives of the intelligent laity, such as Petrarch.

The 2015 book mainly concerns gout. Its first four chapters each deal with specific eras in the history of gout from prehistory until the early nineteenth century. Its fifth and final chapter closely examines the history of biochemical investigations into the relation between uric acid and gout from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries.

The 2017 book considers diseases which could have rheumatoid complications, e.g., gonorrhoea, sclerosis, lupus, dysentery, heart disease, etc.; as well as possible causes of many kinds of rheumatoid diseases. It is important for both clinicians and historians to recognize interrelations between the various rheumatic presentations, on the one hand, and a wide range of inflammations, lethargies, infections, and abnormalities, on the other hand; and indeed, to understand that rheumatic presentations seldom occur in isolation from other health problems. Benedek puts these interrelations in plain language and explains clearly how bioscientists gradually became aware of them.

Their excellent content notwithstanding, the form of these two books leaves much to be desired. Even though, especially because of their chronological arrangement, they seem like they should be Volume 1 and Volume 2 of a single title, they are not. In fact, they are quite different. They do not even look alike. The 2015 book is 26 cm., but the 2017 book is only 23 cm. - and there seems to be no good reason for this difference.

There is inconsistency among the chapters, not only in format, but also in tone and emphasis, and not only between the books, but also within each book, especially regarding the scattered and unheralded bits of apparatus. The backmatter of each chapter in the 2015 book is, respectively: 1. "Dates of Cited Individuals," "References." 2. "[Individuals] Cited in Chapter 2," "References." 3. "Dates and Locations of Cited Individuals," "References." 4. "Individuals Cited," "Glossary," "References." 5. "Timeline of Uric Acid Discoveries," "References." In the 2017 book this backmatter is: 1. "References." 2. "Timeline for Gonococcal Arthritis," "References." 3. "Early Case Reports of Reiter's Disease," "Timeline," "References." 4. "References." 5. "Chronology of Observations relevant [sic] to the Bacteriology of Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatoid Arthritis," "References." 6. "Timeline of Inflammatory Myopathies," "References." 7. "I. Synonyms for diffuse [sic] Scleroderma," "II. Synonyms for Scleroedema," "III. Time Line [sic]," "References." A more systematic, comprehensive, and uniform approach to creating the charts, tables, and timelines in the chapters' backmatter, as was done for the references, would have improved the readers' experience and unified the greater concept of rheumatism. Chapter-by-chapter glossaries would have helped too. There is a brief glossary at the end of the 2017 book, but its focus is unclear.

The indexes are perplexing. The 2015 book has just a general index, but the 2017 book has an "Index of Biographical Articles" (which uniquely refers to the books as Part One and Part Two), a name index, and a subject index. Even though extensive, the indexes suffer from several significant omissions; e.g., an entire chapter is devoted to reactive arthritis, which is known as Reiter's disease or Reiter's syndrome, but there is no index

entry for Hans Conrad Reiter (1881-1969). Despite the concerted effort to expunge Reiter from the medical lexicon because he was a convicted Nazi war criminal, there is no excuse for not indexing him here in this historical context, even given that the eponym is anachronistic.

The series, [Rheumatism and Musculokeletal Disorders](#), as of August 2017 has eight titles, which can be found on the linked website. Benedek's two books in the series are well-conceived and, as far as just his own contribution is concerned, well-executed; but Nova's copy editing is deficient. One would think that such expensive books would not contain elementary errors such as occasionally misusing apostrophes, misidentifying sources (e.g., *Timaeus* 84d as 84b), misspelling Virchow's first name as "Rudolph" on p. 127 of the 2017 book but correctly elsewhere, writing "vice versa" as "visa versa," using the "@" sign to mean "circa," calling DNA "deoxynucleic" instead of "deoxyribonucleic" acid, and identifying Benedek as the editor, not the author, on the back cover of the 2017 book.

Eric v.d. Luft, Ph.D., M.L.S.

Curator of Historical Collections Emeritus

SUNY Upstate Medical University

**Charles DePaolo. *William Watson Cheyne and the Advancement of Bacteriology*.
Jefferson, NC: McFarland, Inc., 2016. 280p. \$39.95. ISBN: 978-1-4766-6651-8.**

Charles de Paolo, professor of English at Manhattan Community College, and author of previous works including *Pandemic Influenza in Fiction: A Critical Study* (2014), *The Ethnography of Charles Darwin* (2010) and *Epidemic Disease and Human Understanding* (2006) has produced an excellent volume combining the biography of William Watson Cheyne (1852-1932) with the history of bacteriology.

Cheyne himself was both a bacteriologist and a historian of bacteriology, thus simultaneously a creator, documenter, and historiographer of his own field. De Paolo adopts Cheyne's own system of periodization as the structure for his book which is divided in half. The first half of six chapters starts in 1857 and moves steadily forward through bacteriological "Landmarks" to 1895. "Landmarks" include the work of Louis Pasteur, Robert Koch, and Alexander Ogston. Cheyne himself is the focus of the last five chapters that make up the second half.