

provide detailed accounts of the social, political, and religious processes involved in the production and dissemination of natural knowledge in the early seventeenth century and continue to justify Renn's aim to build an accurate and truly contextual account of Galileo's life and works. As Renn, Damerow, and Rieger put it in their conclusion—probably the most important paper in this book—Galileo's works were “the outcome of a complex human interaction determined by both tradition and innovation” (126).

In summary, this is not only a book that demands attention because of its great scholarly work on Galileo, but it also presents some pertinent historiographical issues. Most of these papers could have benefited from a greater use of the recent erudite work by Peter Dear, who also discusses the emergence of physico-mathematics in the seventeenth century and the importance of practical mathematics to the Scientific Revolution. Nevertheless, in the Appendix Renn still does an excellent job of bringing our attention to the brilliant studies undertaken by some famous late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century historians of Italian science, Raffaello Caverni, Antonio Favaro, and Emil Wohlwill. The writings by these authors may have been forgotten by many historians today, but Renn shows that they have contributed greatly to our understanding of Galileo's work on projectile motion, and are now helping recent scholars, such as the contributors to *Galileo in Context*, to accumulate thorough and contextual accounts of Galileo's achievements.

Lane Furdell. *The Royal Doctors 1485-1714: Medical Personnel at the Tudor and Stuart Courts*. Rochester, NY: Elizabeth University of Rochester Press, 2001. 315 pp. \$65.00. Review by KAROL WEAVER, PURDUE UNIVERSITY.

Elizabeth Lane Furdell's *The Royal Doctors 1485-1714: Medical Personnel at the Tudor and Stuart Courts* is a traditional history of England's royal medical practitioners. Furdell provides biographies of figures in the history of British medicine, and offers retro-

spective diagnoses of the illnesses suffered by the monarchs of England. Consulting a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, Furdell is at her best when she shows the effects that political circumstances had on medicine.

Furdell presents an amazing treasury of biographical facts on royal medical practitioners, including physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, and midwives. Furdell's inclusion of medical personnel at both the high and low ends of the medical corporate ladder is commendable. *The Royal Doctors* is an excellent reference book for information about the men and few women who served the kings, queens, and rulers of England. Furdell considers prominent individuals such as Thomas Linacre, physician and advisor to Henry VIII, as well as lesser-known persons like Margaret Kennix, an irregular who employed simples and who may have been consulted by Elizabeth I. Furdell rightly observes that a history of medical practitioners who catered to England's elite is not a popular or fashionable topic in the history of medicine today: "In recent years, medical and social historians have focused on ordinary practitioners and their patients, eschewing the study of acclaimed . . . doctors for political or publishing reasons" (254). She correctly argues, "Besides their individual import, the doctors at court are too consequential collectively and their multifaceted impact on medicine too great to be ignored" (254-255).

Like other customary histories of medicine, Furdell's work employs retrospective diagnosis to ascertain what physical conditions English rulers experienced. For instance, she presents the medical history of Mary I, including her peri-menopause and a phantom pregnancy. Furdell contends that the ill health of the monarchs and the care they received affected the nation. Speaking of the royal medical practitioners, she notes, "They correctly envisioned their function as pivotal in the protection of harmony throughout the kingdom through their attention to the ruler's health" (255). Furdell's presentation of case studies also shows how monarchs influenced medicine "by the medical personnel whom they summoned to attend to them" (259). These royal medical practitioners then used their positions to advance their careers, promote certain

medical theories, and endorse particular types of remedies. Thus, Furdell's use of retrospective diagnosis, which may appear to be a throwback to earlier days in the history of medicine, is, instead, an excellent tool for uncovering England's medical past.

The strongest portion of Furdell's text is her use of primary and secondary sources to elucidate the relationship between political events and the transformation of medicine over time. For instance, the ascension of James I to the throne of England affected the practice of medicine because the monarch "came to promote a more rational approach to medicine and science through his court appointments" (100-101). James I exercised his authority in order to speak out against the harmful effects of tobacco and dueling. Unlike his predecessors, he did not support the King's Touch. His wife, likewise, affected the course of medical history by backing the efforts of apothecaries to separate from the grocers, whom they considered "tradesmen" (101). An excellent example of Furdell's contextualizing medicine in the midst of political change is her explanation of the attempts by the College of Physicians to maintain a low profile to weather the political storm of the Interregnum. By consulting the Annals of the College of Physicians and secondary sources, she shows that the College avoided recording major political and social happenings, such as "war, regicide, or the establishment of a new government" (135) but, instead, concentrated on dealing with unlicensed practitioners. Ultimately, the College's reserve did not profit them; Paracelsian practitioners, more attuned to the political and social atmosphere of the time and backed by Charles II, triumphed at the end of the Interregnum.

Several different audiences would benefit from reading Furdell's book. Historians of medicine will find excellent biographical sketches of royal medical practitioners who served the British crown from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. These same students also may learn that a traditional history of medicine is, in the current academic and historiographic environment, quite revolutionary. Finally, scholars interested in the history of the British monarchy will discover the physical conditions to which leaders

were subject, the ways rulers influenced medicine, and how royal practitioners shaped and reacted to changing political fortunes.

I. Bernard Cohen & George E. Smith, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Newton*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. xiv + 514pp. £15.95 paper/£ 45.00 hard. Review BY ALESSANDRO GIOSTRA, ACCADEMIA GEORGICA, TREIA.

“The goal of this volume is to provide an introduction to Newton’s work, enabling readers to gain more rapid access to it and to become better judges of how well subsequent philosophers have dealt with it” (4). These words, which are part of the introduction by the editors, clearly express their main preoccupation in issuing this work. This collection of essays, included in the Cambridge Companions to Philosophy, was released through the contribution given by some specialists of Newtonian thought, who lay stress on the main aspects of the activity of “*the giant of science in the seventeenth and eighteenth century*” (1).

The editors introduce this volume by pointing out the contribution given by Newton to philosophy, even if he cannot be deemed a philosopher in the common meaning of this word. His own vision, which opposed Descartes’s mechanical philosophy, does not contain any philosophical arrangement. Newtonian ontology, however, arises from the distinctive feature of his scientific research; “hence it too was part of the split between science and philosophy” (2). Besides a “Brief Biographical Sketch” (9-14), the editors treat the role played by the scientist from Woolsthorpe in the advancement of learning, referring to the contents of the single works by the contributors. The analysis of each aspect of Newton’s thought allows grasping a sort of methodological unity belonging to the wide range of disciplines he dealt with.

The philosophical theory of absolute space-time is the one which most made Newton a milestone in the history of philosophy. That vision underwent its final crisis during the nineteenth cen-