

his doctors while he underwent radiotherapy and surgery for cancer. He has collected an impressive and wide-ranging literature on the history of the subject in numerous languages, from Russian to Romanian, German to Japanese. Each article or book is either annotated or cross-referenced to a description of a similar entry. There are some omissions and problems. For example, Olson does not list Lindsay Granshaw's *St. Mark's Hospital* or Jacob Wolff's monumental history of cancer *Die Lehre von der Krebskrankheit von den ältesten Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart* first published in Germany between 1907 and 1928. Regrettably, he includes only two women—Marie Curie and Maud Slye—among his tally of cancer specialists. And, finally, the index could do with some editing, as the surfeit of Borrels suggests—Borrel A., Borrel Amédée e., Borrel Amédée, and Borrel Amédée. Despite these points, the bibliography will provide a valuable starting point for anyone interested in the history of cancer.

If the book began as a historian's attempt to make sense of contemporary medicine, regrettably we get little idea of which articles or books Olson found the most useful or illuminating. There is no historiographic survey, and it is almost impossible to assess which he considers the key texts from the annotations alone. For example, Olson gives James Patterson's history of cancer in late-nineteenth and twentieth-century America (perhaps the best social and cultural history of the disease to date) the same treatment as an article entitled 'Historic Milestones in Cancer Pathology' (p. 141), which takes us from Hippocrates to the 1930s in all of five pages. A rare exception to his silence on different historiographic approaches is Olson's discussion of Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor*, where he notes Sontag's suggestion that the best way of discussing illness is that most resistant to metaphoric thinking. But he could surely have highlighted the very different ways in which historians such as L. J. Rather, Richard Rettig, and Patterson have approached the history of cancer.

The problem is further complicated by Olson's tendency to privilege science over history. He notes that he organized the book as a physician or oncologist might do, beginning with a section on the historical background, followed by others on theories of the aetiology of cancer, different types of malignant diseases, methods of diagnosis and treatment, and cancer institutions and services. Olson's arrangement may reflect the fact that in practice most of the countless historians of cancer are themselves doctors and scientists who see little connection between the theory and practice of medicine and science on the one hand, and its social, cultural, and political context on the other, and who are happy to construe past science in terms of the present. The time has long passed when it was acceptable for a survey of the field to avoid such issues, and it leads Olson into some curious categorizations. Are Avicenna, Benjamin Rush and Galen really best described as 'cancer specialists'?

Published in Greenwood Press's series of Bibliographies and Indexes in Medical Studies, this book could have been a marvellous opportunity to bring the diversity of historical approaches to cancer to the attention of scientists and doctors. By failing to make clear how rich is this diversity, it does a disservice to doctors and scientists who might be interested in the field and to history itself. Nevertheless, for all these problems, this is a book I'm glad to have on my shelves; a quick and easy guide to literature on this disease.

DAVID CANTOR, *Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, Mathematics Tower,
The University, Manchester M13 9PL, U.K.*

Astrology, Alchemy, and Occult

R. CASTAGNOLA, editor, *I Guicciardini e le scienze occulte. L'Oroscopo di Francesco Guicciardini. Lettere di alchimia, astrologia e Cébala a Luigi Guicciardini*. Foreword by E. Garin. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1990. 397 pp. Lire 85,000. ah

Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540) is best known as one of Italy's greatest historians. The author of numerous volumes, most notably the *Ricordi*, *Storia d'Italia*, and *Dialogo e discorsi del reggimento di Firenze*, Guicciardini epitomizes the sober, circumspect, professional statesman. Not surprisingly, he is often portrayed as the intellectual and temperamental antithesis to his vibrant, mercurial contemporary, Niccolò Machiavelli. Indeed, from his writings, Guicciardini is certainly among the last figures of the Italian Renaissance one would suspect of harbouring any serious belief in astrology, particularly since Francesco seems repeatedly to go out of his way to deride astrologers and those who consult them: '*Quanto disse bene el filosofo: De futuris contingentibus non est determinata veritas!*' (*Ricordi*, p. 58). Nevertheless, a remarkably detailed

series of astrological predictions based on Francesco's natal horoscope have survived. First discovered in the Guicciardini family archives by Roberto Ridolfi,¹ Guicciardini's *L'oroscopo* now forms part of a much larger collection of astrological and alchemical papers related to the Guicciardini held by the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Florence.

Castagnola has done scholars a great service in editing not only Guicciardini's *L'oroscopo*, but also the series of astrological and alchemical letters addressed to Francesco's brother, Luigi, from Ramberto Malatesta, Marchion Cerrono, Fra Giovanni Bersano, and Giulio Camillo. The letters themselves are varied and lively, containing a good deal of material for future studies. The section most likely to interest the historian of science, however, is the author's preface to *L'oroscopo*, in which he goes to great lengths to stress the 'scientific' basis of his predictions. He proclaims astrology as the rational development of philosophy and places great emphasis on the scientific skills needed to discover the 'true horoscope' of a man. Having said this, however, it may not surprise one to note that virtually all his calculations and interpretations depend on one text: the *Centiloquium*, then ascribed to Claudius Ptolemy and most widely read in the sixteenth century with the aid of Haly's *Expositio*.

The text and the letters have been well transcribed and Castagnola's introduction to the edition helps set many of the documents into historical perspective. Unfortunately, however, none of the actual texts is provided with more than a minimal apparatus. To cite one example: Castagnola feels it necessary to tell the reader that the 'Materno Iulio Firmico' cited in the text is the Iulius Firmicus Maternus, who wrote *Matheseos Libri VIII*, but she rarely provides any additional information concerning the exact location of the passages described as 'secondo Materno Iulio'. It is slightly alarming to see footnote references in such an erudite publication simply state 'Haly, *Centiloquium*', 'ben Ezra [sic], *De nativitatibus*' or 'Aristotle, *Physica*, passim' without noting in which book or chapter the reference might appear. Beyond this, the edition also lacks a glossary of astronomical/astrological terms such as *hylec*, *alcocoden*, *animodar*, *almuter*, and so on. As anyone who has worked with astrological texts will know, the greatest obstacle to understanding these texts is the unfamiliar vocabulary. The omission of a glossary will prevent most readers from venturing more than a few pages into the the heart of the text. As a result, Castagnola has limited the overall benefit of her edition by failing to help readers over these very first hurdles. Castagnola has also chosen to reproduce the series of charts and tables contained in the manuscript of *L'oroscopo* (ff. 10^v-12^v), rather than transcribe them. This is unfortunate, since most of the text of *L'oroscopo* depends directly on the material illustrated by the charts. Any reader unable to decipher the script or the astrological symbols in these charts will not be able to follow the arguments presented in the text; and even those well-versed in astrological symbolism will find a close reading of the text a rather arduous task.

To her credit, Castagnola has courageously tackled several of the most problematic questions surrounding the text in her introductory notes. Most notably she addresses the main issues of who might have been the true patron of *L'oroscopo* and who was its author. For the former, she follows Ridolfi in proposing that Francesco himself commissioned the text following his election as Governor of Modena in 1516. For the latter, Castagnola's palaeographical examination of the manuscripts has verified Randolph Starn's earlier suggestion that the author of *L'oroscopo* is none other than Ramberto Malatesta, 'the strange count of Sogliano'.² If one agrees with her conclusions regarding patronage and authorship, the most pressing question raised by *L'oroscopo* still remains unanswered: how can modern scholars come to terms with the fact that a man who serves for many as the epitome of Renaissance sceptical empiricism must have had very close links with a practising astrologer? How is it that Francesco Guicciardini is responsible for having commissioned the most complete set of horoscopic prognostications to have survived from the sixteenth century? In making *L'oroscopo* more accessible to the modern reader, Castagnola forces us once again to re-evaluate our preconceptions about the intellectual and emotional substrata of the Italian Renaissance. Preparing editions of relatively obscure texts is often a thankless task, but for having brought this text to the attention of modern scholars, Castagnola should be heartily congratulated.

¹ R. Ridolfi, *Vita di Francesco Guicciardini* (Rome, 1960), especially Chapter 7.

² R. Starn, 'Francesco Guicciardini and his Brothers', *Renaissance: Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, edited by A. Molho and J. A. Tedeschi (Florence, 1971), pp. 409-44, especially pp. 440-42.