

Lists of these coinages have been separately published by King-Hele but it is good to have them spelled out here in conjunction with the detailed criteria involved. No one could know more about the doctor's originality, sources and impact than King-Hele; and the concordance must surely stand as a triumph of meticulous expertise. I would imagine it was compiled without a computer—King-Hele's easy intimacy with his 5,000 words speaks instead of a long and personal relationship. The volume offers an entirely auspicious start to the Occasional Publications series begun by the Wellcome Institute, from whose collections, one supposes, the very beautiful cover also derives.

Janet Browne, Wellcome Institute

Patricia Spain Ward, *Simon Baruch: rebel in the ranks of medicine, 1840–1921*, History of American Science and Technology series, Tuscaloosa and London, University of Alabama Press, 1994, pp. xiv, 399, illus., £44.95 (0–8173–0589–0).

Biography as an art form that documents the life and times of one figure, is, unfortunately, a rarely used tool of the academic historian. Indeed, the eminent medical historian, Erwin H Ackerknecht, once complained "Every biography disfigures history". To some extent, of course, this is true. Biographers tend to be attracted more towards exceptional figures than to representative ones. Individual stories are frequently different from group experiences. On the other hand, as Patricia Spain Ward shows in her new biography of Dr Simon Baruch, it is possible to use such an exceptional figure to illustrate an individual life and how American medicine was taught, practised, and advanced from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century.

Applying a chronological approach to the life of Simon Baruch, MD, Ward follows Baruch from his arrival in the United States as

a Polish Jewish immigrant and his initial settlement in South Carolina. There, we learn of the medical training Baruch underwent and his experiences as a surgeon in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. From these events, she continues with young Simon Baruch's career in the rural South and the tempting call to the big city, New York, in 1880, and then with his well-known career as a practitioner, public health activist, and medical journalist for Charles A Dana's famed *New York Sun*. At the same time as covering these individual events, Ward takes great pains to discuss the pivotal changes occurring in medicine during this period as it tried to establish itself along new lines of scientific knowledge, professional requirements, and expectations.

One of Baruch's best-known fields of inquiry and medical activism was his long-held faith in the curative powers of hydrotherapy. Ward assiduously covers Baruch's written work on the topic, his move to make public baths available for New York's urban poor, and his widespread teaching of the medicinal uses of water for health and the prevention of disease during the last decades of the nineteenth century and until his death in 1921. She makes excellent use of the extant documentary materials including a now lost trove of Baruch's personal papers and his extensive published record. As a sign of Ward's sensitivity for her subject, she also explores some of Baruch's personality traits that hindered as well as helped these efforts. For example, in a well-written discussion of Baruch's sometime contentious work to develop the water spa at Saratoga, New York, Ward explains how Baruch's ego may have impeded the cause of hydrotherapy in New York State: "Baruch was apparently so unaware of his ego's intrusion into his work that he failed to anticipate his effect on those he hoped to persuade or instruct" (p. 243).

Baruch's long-held convictions on the power of water or his sometimes conflicting views on germ theory and the use of quarantine may seem antiquated to a modern-day reader but they also represent the complicated mix of ideas and medical epistemologies that

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characterized the late-nineteenth-century American physician. There are some issues that warrant further exploration including Baruch's coming of age in an era of slavery; Baruch's Jewish background and his relationships with immigrant patients and the urban poor; and Baruch's professional relations with other physicians more enamoured of the power of germ theory than that of hydrotherapy. Discussions of these and similar social changes in medical practice and

epistemology may have strengthened this study. However, these are quibbles of a reviewer and should not detract from Ward's successful accomplishment. *Simon Baruch, rebel in the ranks of medicine, 1840–1921* is a fine biography that documents both a unique medical life and the context in which it occurred.

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