

Book Reviews

Leon Battista Alberti—ein Hygieniker der Renaissance, a lecture by ERNST RODENWALDT, ed. by HELMUT J. JUSATZ (Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Mathematisch-naturwissenschaftliche Klasse, Jahrgang 1968, 4. Abhandlung), Heidelberg, Springer-Verlag, 1968, pp. 104, port., DM. 11.80, \$2.95.

Ernst Rodenwaldt [1878–1965], whose main preoccupations were epidemiology and tropical hygiene, has here used his scholarship and knowledge in a historical essay on the fifteenth-century Italian architect L. B. Alberti. He gives a detailed description of the contents of the ten books of Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* of 1485, a work on the desirable principles of architecture, and stresses the passages dealing with the choice of a healthy site, taking into account light, air, wind, direction, sun, the size and position of windows, water supply, and all things connected with hygiene and comfortable living. Rodenwaldt shows the improvements on Alberti's forerunner, Vitruvius, from the time of the emperor Augustus, whose *De architectura libri decem* had been unearthed by Poggio in 1414 at St. Gall. He also points out the many recommendations which still hold good today. The last book deals partly with a question dear to Professor Rodenwaldt's heart, i.e. epidemics and especially malaria, and here he quotes the examples from history adduced by Alberti while in other books they are summarily dismissed as digressions. For the sake of these digressions, with fascinating details of beliefs and customs, the reader may eventually turn to Alberti himself.

MARIANNE WINDER

CORRECTION

LAURENCE, B.R., 'The Curse of St. Thomas', *Medical History*, 1970, 14, p. 352, line 1: for 1479 read 1497.

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