

Newtonian philosophy in France in the 1730s and 1740s.

Maupertuis is known to students of history of science primarily for his role in determining the shape of the earth. Readers find in this highly readable volume a complete account of Maupertuis's involvement in this fascinating episode, which exposes both his command of technical challenges and the darker side of his ambition. Maupertuis promoted himself as the man who flattened the earth, but the clash with the Cassini family about the shape of the globe did not exhaust his scientific achievement. Yet whatever Maupertuis touched appeared to elicit controversy, from the articulation of his beloved principle of least action to his original and creative treatment of organic molecules and heredity, tinged as it was with the ghosts of both Leibniz and Spinoza.

Terrall conveys masterfully how this man, who wanted desperately to belong, chose a course that made him the preeminent outsider. His tenure as president of the Berlin Academy of Science pleased neither the Germans nor the French, yet in some ways it expressed well his fundamental ambiguity as a man in search of an identity.

Terrall's study is based on an exhaustive scrutiny of European archives. She has left no stone unturned in her pursuit of the primary and secondary materials that shed light on Maupertuis's life and work and on his public and private sociability during an important formative period of eighteenth-century science. For her impressive achievement we stand deeply in her debt. It is in that spirit that the committee is proud to award the 2003 Pfizer Prize to Mary Terrall.

DEREK PRICE/ROD WEBSTER PRIZE

Presented by Jon M. Harkness at the Annual Meeting of the History of Science Society, 22 November 2003:

On behalf of my fellow committee members, Emily Thompson and Judy Grabiner, I am pleased to announce that we have chosen to award the 2003 Derek Price/Rod Webster Prize for the best article published in *Isis* during the past three years to Peter Neushul and Zuoyue Wang for their coauthored piece "Between the Devil and the Deep Sea: C. K. Tseng, Mariculture, and the Politics of Science in Modern China," which appeared in the March 2000 issue of our journal.

Biography has, at best, a mixed reputation among professional historians. However, Neushul and Wang demonstrate that the genre can be an especially effective means for achieving the combination of narrative drama, historical importance, and historiographic sophistication that characterizes our finest work. They also have been astute in their choice of biographical subject: to follow C. K. Tseng's life is to watch a scientist traverse the twisting—sometimes treacherous—trail of twentieth-century Chinese history. During the Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s, for instance, we see Red Guards imprison and torture Tseng as a "reactionary academic authority." Then, we watch as Tseng is forced to serve for a time as a janitor at the Institute of Oceanology he had previously directed for two decades. The essay also serves as a seminal contribution to the history of ma-

rine biology by focusing on a true pioneer in the discipline. For example, Tseng was among the first scientists in the world to carry out underwater research, using hard-hat diving equipment during the early 1940s while a visiting researcher at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego. Tseng had come to the United States in 1940 to do doctoral work at the University of Michigan; when he completed his degree in the spring of 1942, wartime travel restrictions would delay his return home for several years. Tseng's scientific sojourn in the States provides Neushul and Wang with an opportunity for a deft analysis of the relationship between Chinese and American science—and scientists—during the twentieth century. Tseng placed particular emphasis in his work on integrating basic and applied research, with grand aspirations for feeding millions through what he called "agriculture in the sea." Neushul and Wang adroitly explore the vast—and still largely untapped—practical potential of ocean farming. Along the way, they provide useful insights on the interplay between science and technology. And the authors offer important commentary on, as they put it, "the social construction of science within the Maoist totalitarian regime," comparing the Chinese experience with science as practiced in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. They argue—convincingly—that "science and technology can be socially constructed, but only to a certain degree."

Neushul and Wang have fashioned their article from a copious supply of telling details gathered from numerous interviews (including two with Tseng himself) and far-flung archives. And their footnotes are a model of the form: they carefully describe their primary sources, they clearly explicate relevant secondary literature, they give occasional primers for readers who might be shaky on the basics of Chinese history (in one note, for instance, they provide the essentials of the Boxer Rebellion in four quick sentences), and they offer a few entertaining asides (in another note, we learn that Peter Neushul's father, as a Scripps grad

student in the 1950s, read Tseng's work as translated from Russian by Peter's grandfather, a Russian immigrant). Neushul and Wang's prose goes beyond clarity to achieve elegance and eloquence. And, finally, the illustrations they have found to accompany the piece are actually illustrative—and visually alluring.

We are, indeed, proud to present the Derek Price/Rod Webster Prize to Peter Neushul and Zuoyue Wang for their article "Between the Devil and the Deep Sea: C. K. Tseng, Mariculture, and the Politics of Science in Modern China," from the March 2000 issue of *Isis*.

HENRY AND IDA SCHUMAN PRIZE

The Henry and Ida Schuman Prize is awarded this year to Avner Ben-Zaken of UCLA for his essay "Hebraist Motives, Pythagorean Itineraries, and the Galilean Agenda of Naples: On the Margins of Text and Context."

Ben-Zaken's essay begins with a text—a rather curious one—an account of the Tychonic system translated into Persian by a young Italian scholar. Della Valle, who was on a nine-year journey in the Near East, had been sent by a patron to collect ancient books and manuscripts. His travels took him to Istanbul, Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and finally India, following in the footsteps of an ancient predecessor, Pythagoras. Della Valle began his journey in 1612 and was probably instructed along the way, Ben-Zaken argues, to search for one particular manuscript

above all—the original Hebrew version of the book of Job. But why was this text so important? Ben-Zaken's answer brings us back to Italy and to a group of radical Neapolitan Galileans. Della Valle's quest for the lost book of Job, Ben-Zaken suggests, had a very specific purpose in reconciling Scripture with the Pythagorean cosmology. Thus, to understand the fuller context of the struggle over Copernicanism we find that we must look east, to the lure of the lost wisdom of the ancients.

Avner Ben-Zaken's essay links together an impressive variety of texts and people from various religious, cultural, and linguistic traditions. He skillfully and imaginatively moves back and forth from text to context to shed light on the world of early seventeenth-century natural philosophy.

SARTON MEDAL

The Sarton Medal is the most prestigious award of the History of Science Society. It honors a lifetime of scholarly achievement and is awarded each year to a historian of science of outstanding merit selected from the international scholarly community. I am honored and delighted to have been asked by HSS President John Servos to introduce this year's Sarton Medalist. She is Nancy G. Siraisi, Distinguished Professor Emerita in the Department of History at Hunter College, City University of New York.

Professor Siraisi has devoted her long and exceptionally productive career to the history of science and medicine of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, with a special focus on Italy. Her six books, four edited volumes, and fifty articles embrace a tremendous range of topics,

from learned medicine to the daily practices of physicians and barber-surgeons, from medieval universities to Renaissance court patronage, from her very first publication on Pietro d'Abano's commentary on the *Problems* of Aristotle, ca. 1300 (*Isis* [1970]), to her work in progress on the interrelations between natural history and human history circa 1600. Via the music of the pulse, the art of narrative, and the practice of anatomy, to mention only a few of the highlights along the way.

When I was going through the Princeton program and had the great good fortune of getting to know Nancy while she was there, we were enjoined to work beyond the internalist/externalist distinction. Even better than working beyond the distinction, Nancy Siraisi works with-