

## Book Reviews

Théodoridès' survey of more recent rabies literature from 1800 onwards is also extensive. It includes a *History of rabies* published in 1810 and written not by a physician but by a hospital administrator who happened to be the father of Honoré de Balzac. Balzac père did well to distinguish between rabies and hydrophobia which could be caused by psychological factors unrelated to the disease proper; and he appealed for tighter controls on stray dogs. He also made a moving plea that such cases of "non-infectious psychological hydrophobia" made it of paramount importance to avoid hasty decisions to use euthanasia as was then sometimes done—usually by the pillow-smothering method.

Rational experimental work began early in the nineteenth century, developing from slow beginnings in Germany and in France, where Magendie performed transmission experiments in the Paris dog-pound. The great achievement of that century was, of course, the development of Pasteur's post-exposure vaccine; here Théodoridès is rightly at pains to emphasize the contributions of Pierre-Victor Galtier who, in the late 1870s, began a study of rabies in rabbits. The rabbit develops a "dumb" paralytic, non-furious (non-biting) type of rabies and therefore provides a convenient subject for experimentation. Galtier, who believed the seat of the disease to be exclusively in the lingual glands and the saliva, made an extensive study which he reported to the Academy of Medicine and the Academy of Science. His reports provided a convenient point of departure for Pasteur's more immediately and more obviously successful work on rabies.

The book proceeds via the work of Pasteur and his team on rabies vaccine to later studies of Negri's inclusion bodies and related theories to the final revelations, in the 1960s, of the nature, dimensions, and properties of rabies virus as we now know it. As a final icing on the cake, we also get Dr Théodoridès' extensive guide to literary sources on rabies—from Theocritus, Virgil, and Ovid via Rabelais and Montaigne to Joyce, Noel Coward, and even Patrick White—and many more.

In its entirety, the present volume is a formidable compilation of all that is worth knowing of rabies. It must be welcomed as an invaluable and definitive work of reference.

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DANIEL PANZAC, *La peste dans l'empire Ottoman 1700–1850*, Louvain, Editions Peeters, 1985, 8vo, pp. 659, FB.2580 (paperback).

The Ottoman Empire was literally "the sick man" of Europe. One of the conclusions of this rich and detailed monograph is that the population of the empire was stagnant in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries due, in part, to continual plague epidemics. By exploiting primarily the contemporary European evidence, Daniel Panzac has given a more refined account of plague occurrences and their consequences in the Middle East and the Balkans than is possible for the medieval period. Yet, the general picture is consistent with that of the earlier period, and the epidemiological behaviour of plague epidemics between 1700 and 1850 is compatible with the modern understanding of the disease. The author is particularly informative about the recent scientific study of plague and applies it successfully to the historical evidence. Also of considerable value is Panzac's survey of Ottoman population, especially his analysis of the census of 1831. He is, then, able to place the impact of plague within its demographic context. The responses of Ottoman society to these periodic reductions of population were complex, and they are carefully delineated. The economic effects, particularly, are fully discussed because of the availability of European commercial records. Similarly, by drawing on the European diplomatic records, Panzac is able to describe the preventive measures that were used by Europeans in the empire and the adoption of such measures by the native rulers in the first half of the nineteenth century.

In general, Panzac follows the "French school" of plague studies that emphasizes the importance of human ectoparasites, especially *Pulex irritans*, as plague vectors and of the various methods of quarantine in ending plague epidemics. The cessation of plague in the Middle East in the early nineteenth century cannot, however, be attributed entirely to the introduction of western-style sanitary measures. The author suggests that this enigmatic disappearance of

## Book Reviews

plague may have been due to a number of factors beside quarantine; the gradual spread of *Yersinia pseudo-tuberculosis* among the rodent population from the fourteenth century and its communication to human populations may have conferred immunity to *Yersinia pestis*.

The monograph suffers unavoidably from the relative lack of contemporary Ottoman sources. It appears that the restriction of this work to the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries was made by the author because of his interest in the European aspect of the subject, for which he promises a separate publication. Nevertheless, it is regrettable that Panzac has not surveyed the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with regard to plague epidemics and population levels. The Ottoman sources, especially the census records, are far better for the height of the empire, and they afford significant data that are relative to the subsequent period. It is inexplicable why this information is not presented at the outset. Furthermore, the author does not discuss the prevalence of the pulmonary form of the disease despite its demographic importance. The discussion of medicine *per se* is superficial; there is no investigation of the contemporary medical literature with regard to plague. The bibliography is extensive, but the omission of a subject index seriously limits the usefulness of this major work of scholarship.

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ANNE DIGBY, *Madness, morality and medicine. A study of the York Retreat 1796–1914*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, 8vo, pp. xvi, 323, illus., £27.50.

The York Retreat necessarily occupies a central place in histories of Anglo-American psychiatry, whether conventional or revisionist. For the former, its existence and practices constitute the *locus classicus* of the new humanitarian outlook on lunacy and lunatics that prompted one of the most notable nineteenth-century reform movements. For the diverse, less sanguine historians, misleadingly lumped together under the revisionist banner, its iconography is distinctly different—in the case of Foucault and his followers almost reversed—just as the “reform” movement it spawned is viewed through much darker lenses, even, in some quarters, seen as little more than a “gigantic moral imprisonment”. Yet however vast their interpretive differences, both groups agree that this small institution, initially for the care of mad Quakers, exercised an extraordinary influence on educated opinion on both sides of the Atlantic, particularly in the early part of the nineteenth century, making an adequate understanding of its character and operations vital if we are to obtain a fully informed understanding of the history of nineteenth-century psychiatry.

A good part of the Retreat’s impact derived from the publication, in 1813, of an account of its operations by Samuel Tuke, the grandson of its founder. The younger Tuke felt that the success of his book had, as he put it, “proved the omnipotence of facts”. And it is the “facts” retailed in *A description of the Retreat* which subsequent generations of historians have been largely content to rely on, supplemented perhaps by some of Tuke’s occasional essays and by some of the newspaper and periodical accounts of the new moral treatment regimen.

Until the appearance of Anne Digby’s new book, therefore, our understanding of the York Retreat has rested upon quite slender and distinctly partial evidence. Based upon meticulous researches into what is clearly an enormously rich archive, her detailed and judicious portrait of its evolution through the whole of the long nineteenth century is thus most welcome. Along with Nancy Tomes’ recent book on the Pennsylvania Hospital, Ellen Dwyer’s forthcoming volume on the Utica and Willard Asylums in New York State, and a spate of recent doctoral dissertations devoted to the study of individual institutions, it gives us a far more detailed glimpse into the realities of nineteenth-century asylum life than an earlier generation of more global studies could hope to provide.

Digby’s study begins with a brief chapter sketching the changing perceptions of insanity in the years leading up to the foundation of the Retreat at the close of the eighteenth century. There is little here with which one can take issue, if also little that differs greatly from other recent discussions of these materials. Once the attention shifts to the Retreat, however, she provides a great deal of novel information. Digby rightly stresses the distinctively Quaker character of the Retreat in its early years, and the defects and virtues that flowed from this religious orientation.