

resisted the Foundation ethos stressing full-time research activity, from a fear that salaries would be eroded by high levels of inflation. Across the continent, politicians and public opinion demanded more doctors rather than the fewer and more scientifically trained doctors proposed by the Foundation. In Argentina during the late 1940s and early 1950s the Foundation gradually withdrew its support from the Nobel Prize-winning physiologist Bernardo Houssay and his associates, because the first two Peronist regimes were virulently anti-American and relentlessly hostile to “elite” science. In post-1945 Peru Rockefeller-trained researchers displayed good technique, but, showing little flexibility in their work, made a false association between original research and the possession of modern equipment. This precipitated a decline in physiological research and a shift of Foundation interest from medicine to agriculture. The book contains illuminating examples of the over-confidence of “Rockefeller doctors” in their own science. For two decades they failed to recognize what Brazilian physicians familiar with yellow fever had long suspected: that Afro-Brazilians tended to display yellow fever symptoms in milder forms than Brazilian whites.

This reviewer has one reservation about the book. Most of the authors have insufficient command of the broader socio-economic and political historiography, so that fascinating data are not always contextualized persuasively. The volume is flawed by a failure to grapple directly with the significance of the crises of the World Depression and the Second World War, which did much to undermine cherished “progressive” assumptions of a harmonious linear progress within a capitalist framework that Rockefeller officials shared with their Latin American allies. How far did these crises deflect Foundation officials from their earlier objectives? And how far did a contraction in both national and philanthropic financing of projects sap confidence in international co-operative activities?

The book suggests many fruitful lines of inquiry. Comparative study of the role of

foreign missions, amongst which the Foundation was probably unique in having an enduring institutional presence, is important. There is much more to say about interactions between the “scientific community” in the United States and its impoverished, embryonic counterparts in Latin America. The character of the French influences in medical education and practice which were routinely criticized by Foundation employees as insufficiently rooted in experimental science has received only recent attention by scholars. And the links of “scientific politics”, proclaimed by positivists in Mexico, Brazil and elsewhere, with “scientific philanthropy” and “scientific racism” merit clarification. Not all innovation radiated from the United States: the sub-centres of research—the work of Houssay, the National Institute of Cardiology in Mexico City, the public health experiments and “yellow fever studies” in Brazil—all deserve more attention.

Rockefeller officials were animated by a vision of inciting other scientists to transform the scientific structures of their countries so that science served the peasants and the urban poor. Yet Latin America was barely ready for the promised transformation, and received little more than injections of science. Perhaps the long-term significance of the Foundation lay in the diffusion of incremental change: a stress on cost-effectiveness; care in reporting problems and prescribing solutions; thoroughness in experimentation; the habit of purchasing equipment in the United States; and the displacement of French models by their US rivals.

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Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalāni, Abū-l-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī, *Badhl al-mā‘ūn fī faḍl al-ṭā‘ūn*, edited by Abū Ibrāhīm Kaylānī Muḥammad Khalīfa, Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-atharīya, 1413/1993, pp. 246, no price given.

Medieval Arabic plague treatises in manuscript have frequently been used for

Book Reviews

research on the history of epidemic disease in the Middle East, but hitherto no complete edition of any of the more important works has been published. Khalifa's choice of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) for this distinction is an appropriate one. The author of nearly 100 extant titles, some of them multi-volume compendia, Ibn Ḥajar ranked among the leading scholars of Mamlūk Egypt and could claim more than a little personal knowledge of his subject: there were plague epidemics about every three to four years in Egypt during his long lifetime, one of his daughters died in an outbreak in 819/1416–17, two more perished in 833/1429–30, and he himself was stricken in 848/1444.

The treatise is addressed to a Muslim readership that wants to know not only how plague epidemics arise and what prophylactic and therapeutic measures can be taken, but also why it is that God smites the good along with the wicked, and faithful Muslims as well as unbelievers. Reflecting his own primary interests as a scholar of the Islamic religious sciences, Ibn Ḥajar replies that the plague is sent by God, who had first used it to chastise the Israelites for their sins. In our own time, he explains, the plague comprises a punishment for the unbelieving; for Muslims it is a mercy, since death in a plague epidemic is a form of martyrdom and so guarantees admission to Paradise. Muslims should not flee from the plague, since it is not a transmissible disease: the plague is sent by God upon whom He wills, and flight is therefore both an exercise in futility and a sign of deficient faith. On the other hand, the faithful should not enter a town or region where they know the plague is raging.

Ibn Ḥajar describes the symptoms of plague very clearly and suggests a variety of treatments and protective measures; as in all medieval efforts to counter the disease these were ineffectual remedies, ranging from patience and prayer to bleeding and application of violets to plague buboes. In a most interesting section on etiology, the author argues that while he would agree with miasmatisers that the immediate cause of plague

is a toxin which agitates the blood, this toxin is introduced not by a general corruption of the air, but by the machinations of spirit beings (the *jinn*, from whence the English word “genie”). He justifies his abandonment of the Galenic explanation favoured by other writers of his time with a number of telling examples of the inability of the theory of miasma to account for prominent features of epidemics: failure of the disease to strike every member of a household, or every house in a neighbourhood, for example, and outbreaks in places considered to have perfectly salubrious climates. But the primary aim of Ibn Ḥajar, who had no medical background whatever, was not to offer a reasoned medical response to the challenge of the plague; rather, he sought to uphold religious tradition and keep his readers firm in their faith. Many of his views can be traced back to arguments which had already reached their mature forms 600 years earlier. These had come to be regarded as the pronouncements of the Prophet Muḥammad or his Companions, and Ibn Ḥajar, most of whose career was devoted to the study and interpretation of the deeds and sayings of the early Muslims as moral and ethical guidelines for his own time, would hardly have jettisoned them in writing about the plague (or indeed, any other topic).

The five chapters devoted to such matters are followed by a concluding more historical section. The author here compiles a chronology of plague epidemics from the early seventh century to 848/1444—no mean task in light of his own earlier conclusion that by his time the terms for “epidemic” in general and “plague” in particular had become confused—and then closes with a series of plague-related narratives and more descriptive accounts of specific epidemics.

The editor has not published this text as a contribution to medical or even Islamic history; rather, like Ibn Ḥajar himself, he has a more religious agenda in mind. For Khalifa, the *Badhl al-māʿūn*'s importance lies in the way it illustrates the ways of God, upholds ideal Muslim attitudes in the face of adversity and affliction, encourages proper solicitude for the

sick, and so forth. Much effort has been devoted to the editing of the text, for which six manuscripts have been examined and collated. There are, however, numerous other copies in Arab and Western libraries (Khalifa seems not to know of these), and the history of the text's composition and transmission does not lend itself to editing simply by opting for the more frequently attested variants. Ibn Hajar revised or rewrote his treatise at least twice between 819/1416 and his death thirty-three years later, and his changes were significant enough for him at one point to opt for a different arrangement of the chapters. Features of all three recensions can be detected in the extant MSS, along with marginalia and possible interpolations by later scribes. Khalifa's editorial method lacks the sophistication required to differentiate among these versions and additions, however, and his text more likely represents yet a fourth version rather than any one of those that Ibn Hajar left us.

This obviously affects the use of the book for serious historical purposes, and, at the least, means that we still lack the critical edition that the *Badhl al-mā'īn* merits. Nevertheless, one can hardly fail to welcome a major addition to the meagre Arabic plague literature available in print, and it will hopefully draw attention to and encourage work on other books of this genre.

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Hartmut Walravens, *Catalogue of Chinese books and manuscripts in the library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine*, London, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1994, pp. xii, 169, illus., £40.00 (1-869835-21-2).

This catalogue by Hartmut Walravens and the Wellcome Institute is both handsomely produced and very useful. It opens with a foreword by Dr Nigel Allan, curator of the collection, describing how the collection developed, and something of the individuals, several doctor-missionaries in China, who aided Sir Henry Wellcome in acquiring items and provided donations. Dr Walravens then

explains the arrangement of the catalogue, and gives a bibliography of reference works cited.

The catalogue, listing some 542 items, is arranged by subject, and divided into two main parts, each further sub-classified. The first is called 'Medicine, botany, science and technology', the second, 'Humanities and the social sciences'. These are followed by two sections entitled 'Miscellaneous' and 'Books in Manchu and Mongol'. It concludes with four appendices: A. 'Editions published under the Henry S Wellcome China Publication Fund'; B. 'Modern Chinese editions and a few other works on China: a short-title list'; C. 'Indexes: I. titles, II. Personal names, III. Publishers'; D. 'A note on Benjamin Hobson'. This overall arrangement makes searching satisfactorily convenient. Though the subject classification is not comprehensive, the number of entries in each section is small, so browsing a particular subject is easy. The indexes in Appendix C allow one to search by title and author (the romanization system used for Chinese characters is Wade-Giles), and even publisher. One serious omission, however, especially in a work on which such care has been lavished, is the lack of an index of Chinese characters, thus detracting from the catalogue's usefulness to Chinese and Japanese researchers.

The arrangement of the entries is somewhat more innovative. Each is in two columns. To the right is found title, author and other information, while the left has the corresponding Chinese characters, and occasional notes. This arrangement is strange at first sight, but actually rather convenient, as it allows one to scan the Chinese alone, if one wishes. The bulk of the information falls under the right hand column. Here one finds the title, author, publication details, physical description, contents if collectaneous, and details of how the work was acquired. Dr Walravens has also provided a variety of other information, such as extracts from prefaces, other extant editions, whether or not the volume is held in the British Library or the School of Oriental and African Studies, details of some key reference works and other articles concerned with the work, and notes giving bibliographical and other relevant