

Anne-Marie Moulin (ed.), *Médecines et santé—Medical practices and health. Les Sciences hors d'occident au XX^e siècle—20th Century Sciences: Beyond the Metropolis*, vol. 4, Paris ORSTROM Editions, 1996, pp. 247, Fr 50.00 (2-7099-1298-8).

This is the fourth in a series of collections under the general editorship of Roland Waast, on the history of western science beyond the West. While concentrating on medical practices and health, it is not simply another volume on “tropical” or “colonial” medicine but a more general survey of the spread of western medicine and its modification in non-western contexts, colonial and post-colonial. The emphasis throughout is very much on the dynamic nature of the relationship between western medicine and other systems, and some of the thirteen essays are written from a contemporary, non-historical perspective.

In her introduction to the volume, Anne-Marie Moulin provides a somewhat broader context in which to locate the essays which follow, discussing the changing face of western medicine at the beginning of the twentieth century, exemplified by the emergence of tropical medicine. The birth and development of this new specialism is then problematized in one of the most interesting essays in the volume, by Harish Naraindas, who asks why tropical medicine could exist when it was realized that there were very few strictly “tropical” diseases. Naraindas finds an answer in a broadening conception of “the tropical”, which embraced the habits and practices of colonized peoples. Tropical medicine held cultures as well as climates to be pathogenic. However, as Laurence Monnais-Rousselot points out in his chapter on tropical medicine in French Indochina, the fact that tropical medicine served the interests of colonial powers did not mean that it was totally subordinate to them. It was profoundly shaped by the peculiarities of its colonial context and became, progressively, liberated of much of its colonial baggage. But despite these peculiarities, tropical medicine remained unified between the wars by its emphasis on

the eradication of disease and in this, as Ilana Löwy shows, the Rockefeller Foundation was the guiding light, funding and directing campaigns against yellow fever, hookworm, and other vector-borne diseases.

Sections I and II, which consider tropical medicine and vector eradication, are the strongest parts of the book. The merits of individual contributions notwithstanding, the last two sections are less successful. The essays in the section entitled ‘unity and diversity’ are so diverse that collectively they add little to our understanding of the interaction between “traditional” and western medical practices, and the development of western medicine in non-western countries. The subject deserves fuller consideration in a separate volume. Nevertheless, Diana Obregon has interesting things to say about the social construction of the leper in Colombia, showing how the professionalization of the Colombian medical corps brought a change from traditional (biblical) images of leprosy to more modern, medical ones by the 1920s. This new approach to leprosy also reflected Colombian national pride, and the nation’s desire to be seen as part of the “civilized world”. The remaining chapters provide overviews of non-western medical systems and of recent developments in ethno-pharmacology. However, the quality of these chapters, as in the earlier sections is uneven. Some are little more than digests of secondary literature but some provide serviceable introductions to their respective fields.

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Josep Lluís Barona, *Ciència e historia: debates y tendencias en la historiografía de la ciencia*, Godella, Seminari d'Estudis sobre la Ciència, 1994, pp. 270, no price given (84-920303-0-5).

Josep Lluís Barona’s ambitious kaleidoscoping of trends and debates in the Spanish, European, and world historiography of science is part textbook, part membership

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directory, and part methodological guide. As the author points out in the preface, there exist few general works on science historiography in any language, let alone Spanish. This volume fills that void, but it does so unevenly.

Divided into sections on the study of science, theories of history and of history of science, scientific and medical historiography, current historiographic debates, the social history of scientific knowledge, and research methodology, the book offers a cornucopia of names, ideas, and places. We are reminded that understandings of science and of history are protean, hotly debated, and context- and actor-specific. The author discusses the triumph of interpretation over historical facts; the influence of the Vienna Circle, the Annales school, and Henry Sigerist; Robert Merton's insights on the popularity of hydraulics; the Karl Popper-Thomas Kuhn polemics; and Auguste Comte's three levels of development of human knowledge. Many others in this hit-parade of historians of science are mentioned only in passing (often in long lists of scholars), so that only the reader with prior knowledge of the work of Georges Canguilhem, for example, can appreciate the brief references to him. More troubling is the absence of scholars who have influenced the study of science from gender and race perspectives, such as Donna Haraway and Evelyn Fox Keller, particularly in a volume that promises attention to current debates. These imbalances limit the usefulness of this book as a graduate textbook of science historiography and give the reader the sensation of being caught in a battle between depth and inclusiveness.

At its core, nonetheless, this remains a textbook, complete with dictionary definitions of science and elegant discussions about the object of the history of science including not just scientific events, but the entire set of circumstances in which they take place. Barona also draws on Helge Kragh's historiographic work to explain the anachronistic and relativistic dilemmas of studying scientists in their own epochs, thus "presupposing the existence of something called science" (p. 44). Such explanations are interspersed with selective information about

sources, individual-scholars, research institutions and funding, some of which is long outdated.

The book's last, shortest, and oddest chapter discusses research methodology, going from prosopography to experimental history of science to electronic search engines in just ten pages. Barona neatly resurrects scientific biography to its rightful post-hagiographic place, but he skips through other approaches such as discourse analysis. The overall sensation created is that semester's end is upon us, and we must hurry through the last topic.

While this volume inspires new admiration for the task of synthesizing historiography, especially in a field that draws from so many perspectives, the book remains idiosyncratic. It also prompts the question of whether all the details that need to be learned in a graduate history of science course—who's who, who's where, who says what, and how they do it—belong between the covers of a single volume.

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Jon Arrizabalaga, John Henderson, Roger French, *The great pox: the French disease in Renaissance Europe*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1997, pp. xv, 352, illus., £25.00 (0-300-06934-0).

The authors of this splendid history admit that they are adding to an already massive literature in the medical history of *lues venerea*, and they announce in the title that they will focus on just the Renaissance European phase of the story. They similarly declare quite a different perspective from that of the last major survey, Claude Quézel's *Le mal de Naples*, in English translation, *A history of syphilis*, for they sympathize with neither the French chauvinism nor the modern physician's perspective. This is a fiercely historicist volume, driven by exhaustive and careful review of the production of learned Renaissance texts about a new, or newly important, illness phenomenon.