

tactics, including the use of attack dogs. While pre-Columbian America was by no means a disease-free Shangri-La, the airborne and highly infectious European and African imports caused havoc among populations living in splendid immunological isolation. In contrast to some earlier works, Noble's book succeeds because of its scope and balance, and the author's effort to present the onslaught of disease as a gradual process in which mass infection is portrayed within a loop of panic, social disintegration, lack of caregivers and farm hands, famine, depopulation, political chaos, and religious scepticism, all of which created further susceptibilities to disease.

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Robert Sigaléa, *La Médecine traditionnelle de l'Inde: doctrines prévédique, védique, āyurvédique, yogique et tantrique. Les empereurs moghols, leurs maladies et leurs médecins*, Geneva, Editions Olizane, 1995, pp. 558, illus., SFr 350.00, FFr 1450.00 (2-88086-179-9).

Holding this magnificent volume in one's hands, words like "opulence" and "luxury" spring inevitably and appropriately to mind. No expense has been spared in the production of the book, which is printed on art paper and is densely illustrated throughout with full-colour reproductions of drawings, photographs, miniature paintings, manuscripts, and other pictorial matter. A significant research effort has gone into identifying and acquiring the images so beautifully reproduced: they are sourced from the great Oriental collections of Boston, London, Paris, Madras, Calcutta, Benares, and elsewhere, as well as from eminent private collections such as that of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. Many photographs are from the collection of

Jean-Louis Nou, as well as from the private collection of the author. This visual feast is tightly bound to the narrative of the text. For example, when discussing the contribution to our medical knowledge of seventeenth-century India made by such visitors as John Fryer (c. 1655–1733), François Bernier (1620–1688), and Nicolao Manucci (1639–1717), Sigaléa gives us splendid portraits of these authors from the National Portrait Gallery, London, and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Elsewhere too, imagination and originality have been applied to choosing appropriate and striking images to accompany the text. Amongst my favourites are the sensitive pencil sketch of the Emperor Akbar as an old man (fig. 35), which captures the heavy patience of a powerful man ending his life surrounded by sickness, intrigue and treachery; the vivid portrayal of a hemiplegic wanderer (fig. 12); *The agony*, a pathetic portrait of Jahangir's courtier Inayat Khan, alcoholic and opium addict, drawn at the Emperor's direct instruction; and the striking series of birthing scenes from very different representational traditions (fig. 7, plates I–II).

Indian medical manuscripts, to which one might naturally turn for illustrative material, are notorious for their complete lack of iconic representation. No Sanskrit medical manuscript known to the reviewer contains any image of the body, its parts, or even any herbal medicine or plant. Sigaléa's book succeeds admirably in presenting a fine catalogue of stimulating illustrations drawn from every imaginable alternative source, integrated with a narrative of the history of medicine in India.

The text of the book is divided into two major parts. The first covers the medical traditions which might loosely be called "indigenous", i.e., the classical Indian system of medicine (*āyurveda*), with its antecedents and successors ranging from Pre-Vedic medicine to yoga and tantra. The literature of this medicine is written principally in the Sanskrit language, in texts

whose composition began at about the time of the Buddha (d. c. 400 BC). Sigaléa describes the early medicine recoverable from Vedic and Upaniṣadic sources, its relationship with the nascent Indian philosophical schools, and the formation of the Sanskrit medical canon. In the following thirty chapters he provides a comprehensive account of Indian classical medicine, including the formation of the human body, its relationship to the ecological environment, nosology, diagnosis, prognosis, pathology, and a wide range of therapies, including surgery. The final ten chapters of this part of the book cover subjects such as veterinary medicine, public health, medicine and the law, and the specific contribution to medicine made by India's rich religious heritage, including yoga, Tantra, Buddhism and Jainism. He also examines the relationship between ancient Indian and Greek medical traditions. A final, very brief chapter deals with Indian medicine from 1300 to the present. This is a very interesting period, in which *āyurveda* continued to evolve energetically, and was eventually influenced by, and began to influence, European medical practice; it is also the period in which traditional practitioners have had to come to some accommodation with the modern biomedical model of medicine. In contrast to the detailed treatment of classical doctrines in the earlier chapters, these topics are only touched upon.

The second part of the book deals with the Islamic medical milieu of the Moghul and Sultanate courts, and is based on the biographies, chronicles and memoirs of the rulers, chiefly written in Persian and Arabic. The main organizing principle of this part is the lives of the Moghul rulers from Babur to Aurangzeb, who are described in historical sequence. Chapter nine presents a summary of Islamic medical thinking, and later chapters include interesting biographies of individual court physicians, including a female surgeon from Delhi. The book ends with an account of the

medical information reported by European travellers in India from the sixteenth century onwards.

Both parts of the work are written on the basis of translations and secondary literature, but Sigaléa has made excellent and judicious use of these materials, penetrating the subject to an impressive degree.

This is a book aimed at an intelligent reading public interested in medicine and the East. It might also have a role as a text (taken with others) in an introductory course on Asian medicine, although its cost would unfortunately limit students' access to library copies. It successfully achieves its goal of presenting a rich panorama of Indian medical history in an accessible and attractive format, while remaining intelligent and well-researched throughout.

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C Aufderheide and Conrado Rodríguez-Martín, *The Cambridge encyclopedia of human paleopathology*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. xviii, 478, illus., £75.00, \$100.00 (0-521-55203-6).

An encyclopedia can be defined as: "a book, often in many volumes, containing articles on various topics, often arranged in alphabetical order, either dealing with the whole range of human knowledge or with one particular subject" (P Hanks (ed.), *Collins dictionary of the English Language*, 1979). As such, this book deals with one subject, that of paleopathology (or the study of disease in past populations). On the first page, it is described as "a major reference work for all those interested in the history of disease in human remains", and it fulfils that description. It also, unusually, covers diseases affecting the soft tissues, an