

qualities). On the same basis physical methods are additionally prescribed, such as dry-cupping of the neck, or massage of the head with warm oils (thereby offering modern "aromatherapy" a much-needed "rationale").

This is indeed a "fine" edition in the scholarly sense, including variant readings, glossaries, ample notes and bibliography, which are matched by the quality of its design and typesetting contributed by members of the Wellcome Institute. An additional index in English might, however, be useful. Yet, a far more serious question is raised by the choice of this particular text to herald the series. Can it really be considered as a "classic"? It has been given a high gloss by its editor, but is its *content* really deserving of such an expenditure of talented effort: particularly the attempt to interpret the names of the innumerable drugs listed in both Arabic and Hebrew?

Far worthier texts of medieval medicine in Arabic and Hebrew, long and short, still remain untranslated because so few scholars are qualified for these tasks. Having long demonstrated such capabilities, let us hope that Dr Bos will now continue the pioneering efforts of Max Meyerhof and Franz Rosenthal to excavate new treasures from this much-neglected field, which will then be added to the series.

Elinor Lieber, Oxford

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya, *Natural healing with the medicine of the prophet: from the Book of the provisions of the hereafter*, transl. Muhammad Al-Akili, Philadelphia, Pearl Publishing House, 1992, pp. xxvi, 360, £14.95 (p&p £1.45), \$16.95 (1-879405-07-5). Distributed in Great Britain by Alif International, 109 Kings Avenue, Watford, Herts WC1 7SB.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya (d. 1350) was a renowned Damascene scholar and jurist of the Ḥanbalī school. The author of many literary and doctrinal works, he was especially prominent as a preacher and theological

popularizer, and it was in this capacity that he wrote his most important book, the *Zād al-ma'ād* ("Provisions for the Hereafter"), an encyclopaedic survey of the vast materials available in his day on the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, his merits and distinctions, and traditions (*ḥadīth*) concerning religious observances and law. This didactic work quickly became an authoritative text in Islamic devotional literature; among the Ḥanbalīs in particular, it enjoyed a status comparable to that of the classic *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* ("Revival of the religious sciences") by al-Ghazālī (d. 1111).

One of the many topics considered in the *Zād al-ma'ād* is the Medicine of the Prophet, a fluid corpus claiming to record the sayings of Muḥammad pertaining to medicine, but in fact representing a much broader range of material. Most of it originated in later times, and came to include, for example, quotations from Avicenna (d. 1037). The genre was well developed by the fourteenth century, and Ibn Qayyim's presentation of it in his *Zād al-ma'ād* takes advantage of much previous work. The first part (pp. 1–116 of the translation) deals with treatments for physical complaints, the second (pp. 117–216) is more oriented toward charms and amulets, and the third (pp. 217–345) is an alphabetical survey of materia medica. Ibn Qayyim sometimes comments at length on his material. Of particular interest is his discussion of the medical profession (pp. 98–105), which considers such issues as how to find the most expert physician, the qualifications a physician should have, and his responsibility and accountability to the patient. He also offers an important analysis of contagion (pp. 106–12). In the main, Ibn Qayyim presents the traditional religious materials pertinent to medicine, within the framework of an educated layman's knowledge of the humoral medicine inherited from Galen and systematized by Avicenna. Hippocrates and Galen are both cited (pp. 48, 114, 242, 280), for example, and always approvingly. This is a typical attitude, but the fact that such a stand is taken by a conservative Ḥanbalī

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highlights the extent to which the Greek medical tradition has been assimilated, even at the level of popular and religious medical writing.

Unfortunately, Al-Akili's translation is wildly exegetical; in some passages more than half of the content of the translation is not to be found in the Arabic. On contagion, for example, one tradition simply states the following: "In the delegation of [the tribe of] Thaqif there was a man afflicted by leprosy. The Prophet—may the blessing and peace of God be upon him—sent [word] to him: 'Go home; we accept your covenant.'" For this the translation has: "... a delegation from the tribe of Thuqaif [*sic!*] came to Medina to declare its faith, and to allege its loyalty to God's path. With them, they brought a man who was afflicted with a severe and incurable leprous condition. Prior to their presenting the man before him, God's Messenger—may the blessing and peace of God be upon him—sent a word to him, 'Return to your home, we have accepted your covenant.'"

The text is also peppered with anachronisms; wishing to stress the debt of modern medicine to that of medieval Islam, Al-Akili routinely translates as if Ibn Qayyim knew of such distinctly modern scientific notions as, *inter alia*, microsleep, and adds many "modernizing" headings and sub-headings not present in the original Arabic. Names and transcriptions of Arabic words are often inaccurate, the text lacks the explanatory notes required to elucidate the text for the non-Arabic reader, and much of the Introduction is dubious or irrelevant.

Prepared for the benefit of the non-Arabic reading Muslim and published as a pious Islamic contribution to modern medicine (both translator and publisher disclaim any responsibility for use of the book without professional medical advice), the translation highlights the central position of Ibn Qayyim's contribution to this literature over the past six centuries, and more generally, the important place that continues to be given to the Medicine of the Prophet in the contemporary Islamic world. More's the pity, then, that this

English version cannot be considered an accurate representation of what Ibn Qayyim actually wrote on the subject.

Lawrence I Conrad, Wellcome Institute

Zbigniew Szydło, *Water which does not wet hands: the alchemy of Michael Sendivogius*, Warsaw, Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute for the History of Science, 1994, pp. xiv, 300, illus., £14.95 (83–86062–45–2). (Distributed by White Eagle Publications, 24B Broadlands Road, London N6 4AG).

The works of Michael Sendivogius enjoyed enormous popularity throughout the seventeenth century: they were often reprinted, translated into different languages and became the subjects of commentaries. Of their author, however, very little was known apart from various legendary accounts of his life. Modern historians, as for instance John Partington, have even questioned his very existence. It was the Polish historian Roman Bugaj who unearthed documentary evidence from archives in Central Europe and gave (in 1968) a detailed account (in Polish) of Sendivogius's life—which Szydło often refers to in the present book.

The main events of Sendivogius's life are now well assessed: born in 1566 near Sacz in Southern Poland, he studied in different universities, including Leipzig, Vienna and Altdorf, was both a diplomat and an alchemist at the courts of Sigismund III Vasa at Krakow and of Rudolph II in Prague, and played a prominent role in the development of the chemical industry in seventeenth-century Poland. He also tried to promote a secret society of "Unknown Philosophers", for which he wrote the statutes, to be found in one of the appendices to the present book.

The thesis of Szydło's book is that Sendivogius's "central nitre", though it was concealed in his writings, marked a significant rupture with alchemy and Paracelsian iatrochemistry. According to the author, Sendivogius's central nitre (which he has