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La salut en la història d'Europa (review)

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Jon Arrizabalaga, Àlvar Martínez Vidal, and José Pardo Tomás. *La salut en la història d'Europa*. Publicacions de la Residència d'Investigadors, no. 1. Barcelona: CSIC, 1998. 93 pp. Ill. No price given (paperbound).

"Health in the history of Europe" is a lavish birth announcement—the trilingual

catalog of an exhibition held to inaugurate the Researchers' Residence in Barcelona. The institution is jointly sponsored by Catalonia's autonomic government (the Generalitat) and Spain's agency for coordinating and funding scientific research, the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC). The Residence opened with an exhibition to illustrate the pursuit of health in Europe for the last one thousand years, as homage to the fiftieth anniversary of the World Health Organization. The initial section of the catalog contains the text in Catalan, an international bibliography, and color photographs of the vases, bas-reliefs, manuscripts, books, prints, posters, and photographs that formed the exhibition. Many illustrations come from the Wellcome Institute Library (London), and are well known by historians of medicine, but many more, from Wellcome and from the abundant graphic resources of Spanish libraries, have been rarely used before. Two other sections (in smaller font) present the text and captions in Spanish and English. Unfortunately, the English translation of the text is often not accurate.

Health in the history of Europe is examined exclusively as a social development. Hippocrates and Galen are mentioned initially, but thereafter "cities," "practitioners," "royal power," "universities," "the privileged," "modern states," "urban masses," "hygienists," and "social reformers" are the source or object of action. This focus on groups is a corrective to the histories that spoke only of great and good scientists, but the absolute exclusion of individual actors is also to be deplored. It may be difficult, if not impossible, for the viewers of the exhibition to understand how social movements developed, when indisputably important participants, such as Louis Pasteur, are not mentioned. Captions provide some details that link the exhibition to a specific time and place, so the reader can witness the condition of individual humans throughout the ages and across the map of Europe.

The principal sections in the exhibition were as follows: personal health before 1750 (classical hygiene); public health measures before 1750 (sanitation; poor relief and public employment of practitioners; fighting against epidemics); personal health after 1750 (from classical hygiene to body cleanliness); the construction of public health, 1750–1900 (the beginnings; quantifying health: vital and sanitary statistics; urbanism and sanitary engineering; the moralization of public health; the emergence of experimental hygiene; the impact of germ theory); the rise of social medicine, 1900–1940 (social hygiene; fighting for health: sanitary campaigns); health as a global issue (from the International Sanitary Conferences to the World Health Organization).

The "parents" of the Researchers' Residence deserve our congratulations. This new citizen of the Republic of Letters has announced its arrival with a beautiful and concise presentation of the social forces that have moved public health in Europe.

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