

This translation history shines a new light on British scientific print culture in the immediate wake of the Industrial Revolution — with its gendered distribution of labor and knowledge. Women dominated scientific translation for only one generation, when specialization had not yet caught up with the rapid expansion of print culture. By the 1860s scientific writing became so specialized that only the emerging male technocracy was educated enough to translate it; it would take until the end the nineteenth century before women could finally enroll in universities and potentially rejoin the scientific intelligentsia (p. 235).

Alison Martin draws on a wide range of influential translation theorists to account for translation's historical function. That theoretical framing might have distracted from the historical narrative if it were not so well integrated. Esther Allen, Walter Benjamin, Antoine Berman, Luise von Flotow, Daniel Simeoni, Sherry Simon, and Lawrence Venuti are not reduced to caricatures or one-trick ponies but inform Martin's understanding of the complex interplay of sciences and languages. This new study shows that translators often determine if and how ideas travel and that translation theory offers some of the best language for explaining this complex mediation process.

Spencer Hawkins

*Spencer Hawkins is a Research Fellow at the University of Mainz (Germersheim). He has published extensively on translation theory and practice and occasionally on cultural and intellectual history. He is now completing a monograph on the English translations of influential German thinkers, especially Sigmund Freud.*

**Amir A. Afkhami.** *A Modern Contagion: Imperialism and Public Health in Iran's Age of Cholera.* xv + 276 pp., apps., notes, bibl., index. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019. \$54.95 (cloth); ISBN 9781421427218. E-book available.

A terrifying, unknown disease arrives from “the East.” People die in droves, forcing mass burials. Heavy-handed state actions and economic crisis provoke violent responses from a disillusioned public. The disease apparently recedes, only to reappear in unpredictable clusters that spur devastating new outbreaks. Successive waves of the pandemic usher in a broad social transformation, generating a new politics and prompting new forms of scientific inquiry.

At this moment in late May 2020, it is eerie to read these observations of cholera in nineteenth-century Iran from Amir A. Afkhami. As I write this review, COVID-19 has transformed life as we know it in much of the world. Governments are reaching a breaking point, and political protests have brought many cities in the United States and abroad to their knees. Yet while the parallels appear overwhelming, Afkhami's volume reminds us that each epidemic has its own social history and its own political context. Just as COVID-19 reveals the cracks in a late capitalist global system, cholera through the nineteenth century exposes the friction of imperial contests in the Persian Gulf as well as an Iranian society and political regime in a moment of stark transition.

Although cholera had long been endemic in South Asia, it exploded from Jessore in 1817, exploiting networks of British colonial commerce in India. The disease assumed pandemic proportions, reaching Iran in 1821, and became entrenched in Europe and the United States by the early 1830s. Despite being less deadly than many endemic diseases around the world, including smallpox and tuberculosis, it provoked horror wherever it landed. Cholera terrified populations and states through its unfamiliarity, its apparently exotic origins, its swiftness, and its unpredictability.

Afkhami focuses on the pandemic's impact in Iran during the Qajar dynasty (1796–1925), a relatively stable period that followed decades of political chaos. Drawing on sources from dozens of collections in the United States, Europe, and Iran, he weaves together a narrative of an emerging public health modernity in a country struggling under both the pressure of epidemic disease and the thumb of British and

Russian imperial rivalry in the region. Along the way, Afkhami provides extraordinary insight into the intersection of religion, empire, public health, politics, and economics in Iran.

At the heart of *A Modern Contagion: Imperialism and Public Health in Iran's Age of Cholera* is an inherent paradox. Political stability and a modernizing bent in the Qajar period allowed Iran to integrate more fully in a nascent global economy. The erosion of boundaries and the development of new trade and transportation networks created new epidemiological pathways, exposing the country to disease as never before. At the same time, this integration introduced Iranian political and medical elites to new scientific paradigms for how to fight these emerging epidemics. The nineteenth century witnessed an important transformation for Iran. Afkhami asserts that in the moment between cholera's initial arrival in Iran and the end of the nineteenth century, an increasing openness to the West encouraged the adoption of sanitarian and bacteriological approaches to disease, a move that reflected political as well as scientific modernization.

Yet Western perspectives on Iran were hardly reciprocal. As a function of Russia and Britain's "Great Game" to control central and west Asia, pressure on Iran produced a financial crisis that led to increased borrowing and dependency on these powers, reducing the regime's political legitimacy. Western powers came to dominate public health efforts in the region, implementing strategic quarantines that preserved imperial interest more than they protected the population from disease. Shi'ite clerics in turn exploited this crisis to drive anti-Western populism. Ultimately, successive epidemics through the turn of the twentieth century prompted the 1906 Constitutional Revolution, as the population sought to produce lasting public health reforms. The book concludes by noting how the Great War's weakening of Britain and Russia created an opportunity for the new Pahlavi regime to consolidate its public health authority and finally bring an end to cholera's grip on the country.

Afkhami's book offers an important view into a region that gets less attention in the history of medicine and empire than it deserves. There are, however, a few moments that distract from the overwhelmingly convincing thesis, mostly related to Afkhami's explanations of the relationship between Western and local medical knowledge. Afkhami establishes a tension between what he sees as a progressive Western biomedical knowledge and what he repeatedly calls the "fatalistic" attitude of Iranians toward disease in the nineteenth century. This construction presents the risk of recapitulating European colonial descriptions of Islamic declension. Although Afkhami strives for a nuanced reading of Western biomedical hegemony—which has indeed been neither all good nor all bad—he does so by perhaps creating a shorthand version of what a bacteriologically oriented public health policy came to replace. Finally, the convention of describing the disease as "Asiatic cholera," which Afkhami does repeatedly throughout the book, is a problematic one that deserves to be retired. But these are small quibbles with a book that historians of public health, the modern Islamic world, and European empire will find both useful and insightful.

**Richard C. Keller**

*Richard C. Keller is Professor of Medical History at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He is the author of Fatal Isolation: The Devastating Paris Heat Wave of 2003 (2015) and Colonial Madness: Psychiatry in French North Africa (2007), both from the University of Chicago Press.*

**Jessica Wang.** *Mad Dogs and Other New Yorkers: Rabies, Medicine, and Society in an American Metropolis, 1840–1920.* (Animals, History, Culture.) xvii + 322 pp., notes, index. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019. \$54.95 (cloth); ISBN 9781421409719. E-book available.

The concept of "One Health" never enters the analysis in Jessica Wang's *Mad Dogs and Other New Yorkers*. One Health, a new and increasingly global health initiative, seeks to understand the interconnections among people, animals, plants, and their shared environments as an important way of conquering