de León and the Basque novelist and philosopher Miguel de Unamuno figure prominently, and a fondness in Spanish historiography for local studies have led to the production of a number of works on Salamanca and its university. None of these has dealt in any detail with the hospital attached to the university, a void which Teresa Santander has sought to fill.

The result is mainly a compilation of archival material relating to the hospital. Santander points out at the beginning of her monograph that her interest in the subject is not primarily that of an historian, but rather derives from her concern with the documents preserved in the University library and archives of Salamanca. Reflecting this orientation, *El Hospital* is organized as an overview of four centuries in the history of the hospital presented by way of lists of data, generally devoid of historical analysis.

On the basis of numerous documents, Santander outlines the foundation of the hospital at the beginning of the fifteenth century as a charitable lodging for needy and infirm students, its architectural structure, and its sources of income. Subsequently, the functional side of the establishment is explained, including its administration, its role in providing religious and medical assistance, and the occasional use of it for a variety of special purposes, such as quarters for French troops from 1801 to 1802. Short biographical sketches of the physicians, surgeons, barbers and apothecaries associated with the hospital follow. The last section deals with the decline of the hospital, culminating in its closure at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

To the historian of medicine, it might seem rather unfortunate that Santander has contented herself with collecting information and has stayed clear of historical interpretation and contextualization. The place of the hospital within the medical school and the university at large is never really discussed, and there is only minimal reference made to changes in the role of the establishment over the centuries. Broader political, social and cultural frameworks and developments are by and large absent. Hence, by choosing not to go beyond the walls of the hospital, the book will be of only limited appeal to those interested in the general history of medicine in Spain. However, *El Hospital*, with its wealth of primary material (enhanced by an extensive appendix of documents), will provide for the specialist an indication of the range of documents available in the Salamanca archives and it will prove useful as a source of information on which to base further research.

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Michael R McVaugh, *Medicine before the plague: practitioners and their patients in the crown of Aragon 1285–1345*, Cambridge History of Medicine, Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. xvi, 280, £35.00 (0–521–41235–8).

Little did anybody suspect the debt historians owed to the paper mills of Xàtiva in Muslim Valencia, at least until this book appeared for, as Michael McVaugh explains in his introduction, it was their output that made possible the remarkable series of royal and municipal records the preservation of which makes the Crown of Aragon one of the most historically accessible of all late-medieval societies. Previously, however, these archives had not received much attention from medical historians. But now, partly in collaboration with Luis García-Ballester, McVaugh has systematically worked his way through the surviving royal, ecclesiastical, notarial and municipal archives of the Kingdom of Valencia, the Kingdom of Aragon and the Principality of Catalonia (which together formed the Crown of Aragon) for the period covering the reigns of Alfons II (1285–91), Jaume II (1291–1327) and Pere III (1336–87). Drawing upon these extensive sources, McVaugh characterizes medicine and its social relations in the Crown of Aragon between 1285 and 1345. The result is a work of immense scholarship that presents in

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025727300059627 Published online by Cambridge University Press

exceptional detail a fine-grained local study of medical practice during the late middle ages.

McVaugh organizes this wealth of information around the sorts of questions raised by medical historians working in other periods who have been exploring the social and cultural context of their subject. Thus in chapter one, he seeks to investigate an individual's experience of medical practice by constructing the individual medical history of two generations of the royal family and its personal involvement in the medical culture of the time. Chapter two presents a detailed analysis of the number and variety of medical practitioners recorded in the archives during this period, with special attention being given to the roles of Muslim, Jewish and women practitioners. McVaugh's research here supports the findings of Katherine Park for Florence, Joseph Shatzmiller for Manosque and Danielle Jacquart for France, that there was a steady expansion in the numbers of medical practitioners during the first half of the fourteenth century to levels approaching those of the early modern period, and that in the larger towns at least it was becoming much easier to find medical services.

In chapter three, the years 1285 to 1335 are characterized as a transitional period in which learned medicine emerged as a secular occupation and expanded in response to a growing social awareness of the benefits of health care provided by practitioners trained in learned medicine. Here McVaugh analyses the development of academic medical training, the diffusion of medical literature, and the moves on the part of the authorities to regulate medical practice. The next chapter presents an analysis of the spectrum of medical practice from physicians and surgeons to apothecaries and barbers. The sources suggest to McVaugh that there were no rigid professional barriers: rather there existed a continuum of practice and a continuity of experience both within and between each group. McVaugh's argument here is that continual association and interactive discourse between these groups promoted the spread of scientific medicine and the formation of a common intellectual culture. Chapter five then gives an account of the techniques of medical practice at the time, including diagnosis, prognosis and therapeutics, as well as the preventative measures prescribed by doctors.

The next chapter concerns doctor-patient relationships. Based on his examination of various contractual commitments between patients and practitioners, McVaugh claims that Christian practitioners exerted a good deal of authority over their clients, and that the general public expressed widespread confidence in its physicians and surgeons. The final chapter examines the social role of medicine. Here McVaugh claims that the move to appoint municipal physicians and surgeons was one of the indications of an increasing social conviction that medical learning brought with it an authority that could be trusted. Moreover, he argues that the appointment of municipal doctors represented one aspect of the increasing medicalization of social life at this time, a process which included an increased role for the authoritative testimony of learned medical men in disputes in civil and canon law. This leads McVaugh to conclude that society began to define what physicians should be and do well before the practitioners themselves had developed a common understanding of their nature and role.

One has to be impressed with this book as an excellent example of empirical research. It represents a complete mastery of the sources and a skilful handling of an immense amount of data. No inference is ever drawn that cannot be sustained by the evidence, and all the generalizations are of an indisputable nature. There is certainly no grand speculation. Herein lies its great reliability and usefulness. If there is a weakness with the book, it is in its general thesis: McVaugh argues that the assimilation of a rational, learned medicine at all levels of the medical community in the Crown of Aragon was not, as is often assumed, the result of physicians ambitiously pursuing their own ends by seeking to control all aspects of medical practice: instead, he claims that it owed much to a broad public enthusiasm for the learning that medical education seemed to

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guarantee (pp. 2–3). Here McVaugh is surely right to point out that this process cannot be explained by assuming unquestioningly that physicians aimed instinctively at professional status and the exclusion of others from practice, and that the spontaneous coming together of practitioners in associations needs no further explanation other than a common perception of self-interest (p. 242). McVaugh is less convincing, however, when he claims that this process may be explained by "a lay consciousness", "a general European feeling" (p. 69), "a public perception" (p. 70) and "a growing belief" (p. 71) in the benefits of learned medicine. McVaugh's documents definitely attest to an increasingly broad demand for book-based medicine, but whether inferences from these documents about a "general public enthusiasm for medical learning" (p. 244) really *explain* the process is another matter. In this context it would have been helpful to know much more about the documents themselves: what distinguished a document in the archives as a "medical" source; how were these sources written; how were they preserved; what was their purpose; why was this information considered noteworthy; and who was responsible for it? The answers to these questions might have made McVaugh's data an even richer source of information than they already are.

No matter. This is a major work which all historians of medieval medicine will want to have. McVaugh's thought-provoking study of the social role of medicine in the Crown of Aragon and the transformations that took place there during the first half of the fourteenth century is, in effect, a call for similar detailed local investigations into the same processes going on elsewhere in Europe at this time. Seen in this light, when put alongside the works of Park, Shatzmiller and Jacquart, McVaugh's study invites comparisons that give his book an even broader significance than its immediate subject matter would at first suggest.

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Hilary Marland (ed.), *The art of midwifery: early modern midwives in Europe*, The Wellcome Series in the History of Medicine, London and New York, Routledge, 1993, pp. xvi, 234, £50.00 (0–415-06425–2).

Hilary Marland and her fellow contributors have succeeded in correcting the historical distortion of an anglo-centric view of early modern midwifery. For too long the decisive moment in the social history of midwifery has been thought to have occurred when the man-midwife began to replace the midwife from the late seventeenth century onwards. Older medical historians, echoing the rhetoric of the men-midwives, have celebrated this as the triumph of education and reason over credulity and barbaric practice. Modern historians, on the other hand, have deplored the loss of an important female occupation and the increasing male dominance over women's bodies and women's culture.

However, as this book shows, what happened in England did not happen in Europe. In Holland, the German and Italian states, France and Spain changes centred on the control, education and possible reform of midwifery—the man-midwife was not significant (though physicians and surgeons did exercise some nominal control over midwifery). Once again English historians have generalized from their own country and got it wrong.

One of the virtues of this book is that attention is paid to the apprenticeship basis of midwifery, which was supplemented with varying rates of compliance by more formal instruction in topics such as anatomy and obstetrics. Also, networks of midwives and clients are analysed showing that repeat bookings were common, as was the concern by lay people to get the best possible midwife, even if of the wrong religion. In the case of the Quaker midwife Frances Kent whom the Anglican Verney family employed to attend to the mad Mary Verney's childbirth, the father-in-law warned: "if you and your wife resolve upon the Quaker for Midwife, I pray never lett her bee alone with her, for those persons

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