

## Book Reviews

psychoanalytic and psycho-historical approaches so assiduously. This is an author inherently offended by realms psychiatric.

Nevertheless, the book is useful, well written, always intelligent, and engages a number of areas, not least demonstrations of the developing discourse sometimes called “literature and medicine”. Wiltshire shows that all six major Austen novels concern themselves with the body in its normal and pathological states, and speculates about the conditions and circumstances under which this can occur for a novelist who never attended university, let alone was medically trained. He is thoroughly familiar with the novels and their interpretations, and writes lucidly and often persuasively about their characters and plots. If the reader happens *already* to be an aficionado of Austen’s fiction, this is *the* book to read about her treatment of illness and the body. I doubt its task will be repeated; if it is, it will have been because another approach was preferred: more theoretical, philosophical, and medically informed.

Medical historians who happen not to be interested in literary analysis may not be as persuaded as I have been, or as enthusiastic. They will be unable to deny Wiltshire’s command of his texts and facility with words but will wonder how he proceeds from symptom to organ to organic body to diagnosis and, finally, to the interpretation of complex characters and the conditions of their minds and bodies. For example, consider Marianne Dashwood’s “illness” in *Sense and sensibility*. She is clearly love-sick and many critics, long before Wiltshire, have noted her malaise; but it has been less than clear what specifically afflicts her, how the condition develops, and what Austen’s background (reading, knowledge, symptomatic analysis) was in relation to the condition described. Wiltshire makes some fine observations about the details of Marianne’s “illness”, but does not answer crucial questions about background with any degree of historical rigour. It is, perhaps again, a tendency not to want to address specific questions, as in the matter about the choice of author (Jane Austen).

Missing from this discussion is the precious author herself—even *her female* body—and a firm sense of her anatomical and medical mindset when pinpointed in a firmly medical-historical context. Wiltshire may respond that authors cannot be known: after all, “what *is* an author?” as Foucault asked. Besides, Austen’s life remains shrouded in uncertainty: all we can do is surmise that she *must* have known about this or that medical theory or diagnosis—the rest, especially Austen’s personal psychology, is prodigiously unclear. It is possible that Austen may have absorbed a great deal about these matters, but much more about the medical milieu of her day is known than Wiltshire expounds here, and if one proceeds on the premise that “we can assume Jane Austen knew everything”, then why not assume she was in touch with the *best* anatomical and medical ideas of the time? More medicine rather than less, I am suggesting, if one adopts this approach for a writer of the English Regency whose intellectual mindset and daily rituals are not recorded in the depth they are for other great novelists. Still, the book is excellent and forces readers to consider the possibility that the Austen we have known was too narrowly construed in our mindsets.

G S Rousseau, Aberdeen and Oxford

**Teresa Santander**, *El Hospital del Estudio (asistencia y hospitalidad de la Universidad de Salamanca), 1413–1810*, Salamanca, Centro de Estudios Salmantinos, 1993, pp. 280, illus., no price given (84–86820–16–2).

The city of Salamanca, located geographically and ideologically in the heartland of Old Castile, has an exceptionally rich history. An important part of this history is linked to its university. Founded in 1218 by Alfonso IX, it soon turned Salamanca into one of the medieval centres of learning. The long history of the university, in which names such as those of the theologian and poet Fray Luis

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