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how a very different sense of time governed the way that the relations between the local West Indies naval bureaucracy and the central one in London were structured, with an order or explanation taking weeks or months to arrive, whilst nine months might elapse between the request for food or medicines and their arrival. Such time-lags encouraged a degree of local independence but all the major financial decisions were made in England with the result that the time taken to initiate projects such as the new hospital might appear very lengthy from a modern perspective. However, it seems from the surviving correspondence that delay in communications between the West Indies and England was not seen as a problem but that the “real time” delay in Jamaica in completing the building of the hospital was.

At a less abstract level the book is full of nitty-gritty details, and the acrimonious quarrels between the naval commanders and the island governors and their assemblies over the pressing of men from merchant ships and over the navy’s attempt to import rum without paying local duty provide entertaining reading as well as illustrating that the British state was not yet monolithic.

Although the book is really one for the naval historian, other historians may well find that the rich store of empirical data which has been ably put into a coherent and informative narrative sets them thinking.

Andrew Wear, Wellcome Institute

Juan Antonio Rodríguez-Sánchez,
Historia de los balnearios de la provincia de Málaga, Málaga, Centro de Ediciones de la Diputación de Málaga, 1994, pp. 287, illus., no price given (84-7785-101-8).

Some years ago Roy Porter commented on the paucity of historical research into “balneology in its widest sense, and upon the historical phenomena of the spa city, spa-life and water-cure establishment”. In a very localized setting, Rodríguez-Sánchez’s

monograph puts into focus some of these issues for Málaga, a province of abundant springs and several spas, one of which—Carratraca—became during the nineteenth century one of the principal spas of the Iberian peninsula.

Los balnearios is a careful examination of the spas of Málaga as health resorts, as well as of their location within, and implications for, the geographical and socio-economic framework of the province. Hence, after a brief sketch of the history of hydrology in Spain, Rodríguez-Sánchez sets out to map the interplay between the demography and infrastructure of the province and the spa-cities. Discussing the network of approach roads, ways of transport, housing and leisure facilities, he points at some interesting differences and similarities between Málaga’s spas and the better-known ones of central and northern Europe. What most prominently figures here is the peculiar difficulty of access, mainly due to the non-existence of railways, affecting not only attendance but also preventing the commercialization of bottled water. Housing conditions at Málaga’s spas were, in comparison, extremely austere (with the partial exception of Carratraca). As with many other European spa-cities, however, gambling at Carratraca became a popular form of entertainment and one of its most distinctive attractions, creating much the same tensions as elsewhere.

Rodríguez-Sánchez next focuses on the spas as health resorts. He describes the gradual transformation of the uses of the springs for healing purposes ultimately into privately owned spas during the nineteenth century, and discusses the nature of the role of physicians, and conflicts between them and the owners of the spas. He also surveys the analyses of the waters and the changing conditions that were treated at the spas (although unfortunately he never quite explains why these changes occurred) and additionally the author presents a break-down of the social origins of the patients attending the establishments.

What Rodríguez-Sánchez never really seeks to interpret and contextualize, however, are the

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reasons for the rise and decline of the spas in the first place. Neither does he adequately explore why Carratraca became one of the most important spas of the country, or why another one—Tolox—followed a very different developmental pattern, in that it began to take off at the beginning of the present century when the others were in definite decline. Moreover, although the book makes it clear that Málaga followed the more general European developments in the “history of waters and spas”, it would also have been interesting to see the spa placed within a broader medical context in Spain and to hear a bit more about the particular Spanish relationship between religion and science in the constitution of the healing powers of water.

All the same, this richly documented and carefully researched work is in many respects a plentiful source of information, particularly with regard to the local history of Málaga, the relationship between the infrastructure of the spas and the economic situation of the province, and the spas’ institutional history.

Katharina Rowold, Wellcome Institute

Joseph Shatzmiller, *Jews, medicine, and medieval society*, Berkeley and London, University of California Press, 1995, pp. xi, 241, \$40.00 (0-520-08059-9).

One of the neglected areas of medical history has been the study of medieval Jewish medicine, particularly in its social aspects. Joseph Shatzmiller takes advantage of the abundant information in the archives of southern France, northern Spain, and Italy, to paint a vivid picture of the position of Jewish doctors within society from 1200 to 1500 AD. He draws attention to an abundant literature in Hebrew, mainly versions of the standard university texts, and to interactions between various communities of scholars. There were successes—many rulers, ecclesiastical as well as secular, had their private Jewish physicians, despite repeated attempts to prevent such heathens from treating Christians—but there

were also failures, and these might prove disastrous in a community officially on the margins of society. Shatzmiller is good on the massive differences between the leading physicians, like Moses of Rieti, who were allowed dispensations from the outward signs of Jewishness, and more humble practitioners, both male and female, for whom doctoring was only one source of a very meagre income. The polylingual abilities of leading Jewish doctors also enabled them to act as ambassadors, or spies, as well as translators, especially from Arabic.

But the significance of this book does not lie only in its focus on an often forgotten group. It offers many valuable observations on the whole sphere of medieval medicine, arguing, for instance, that in the thirteenth century in Southern Europe the ratio of healers to patients may have been as high as 1:750. Jewish doctors offered financial advantages to hard-pressed councils: as public physicians they could be paid at only a fraction the rate of their Christian counterparts, and they dare not complain too much, for fear of stirring up ever more hostility. Yet they continued to attract patients, and there is ample evidence that, at least at a local level, the sick cared little about the religion of their doctor or surgeon: competence took precedence over creed. But, equally, the process of medicalization, and the increasing university bias of the medical profession, tended to push the Jewish healers more and more towards the margins of medical society. In their golden age, in the early thirteenth century, Jewish healers read the same books, carried on the same practices, and treated the same patients. A century later, medicine was becoming defined as a university subject only, and those, like the Jews and women, who were excluded from the university, were, unless they had a particular protector, also excluded from practice among the urban elites. Jewish access to new texts may also have been restricted: few modern works were available in Hebrew translation after the 1320s. Whether prejudice also increased against Jews and Jewish practitioners is a more difficult question to answer, but some