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Gilbert Larguier, ed., *Questions de santé sur les bords de la Méditerranée. Malades, soignants, hôpitaux, représentations, en Roussillon, Languedoc et Provence (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle)*. Perpignan: Presses Universitaires de Perpignan, 2015. 231 pp. €20.00 (pb). ISBN 978-2-3541-2242-3.

Review by Laurence Brockliss, Magdalen College, Oxford.

The aim of this collection, as the editor explains in his brief introduction, is to examine the changing character of medical care and provision in the south of France in a period of growing state interference, first in the age of Louis XIV to quell perceived disorder, and then in the Age of Enlightenment to check the ravages of disease. The book consists of eleven essays: one on urban hygiene, three on hospitals, two on the broader structure of medical care, two on the contribution of the Midi to the work of the state's Société royale de médecine, established in 1766 as a data-collecting agency, one on mineral-water therapy, one on art and anatomy, and one on miracle cures. A central point of virtually all of the essays is the way in which the state's novel interest in the health and well-being of its subjects was finessed, exploited, or subverted by medical practitioners and municipal and ecclesiastical authorities on the ground who were tasked with carrying out the initiatives of the local *intendant* and usually lacked the wherewithal and the personnel to make much of difference, even when they were willing to be compliant. At the end of the day, there was a huge gap between the enlightened ideals of government administrators and their medical supporters, and the sick, in the Midi as elsewhere, continued to flock to empirical healers and appeal to the Virgin and the saints for succor.

Most of the essays cover ground that has already been ploughed by historians of medicine working on other parts of France in the last forty years. [1] This is not to deny their utility, but readers are unlikely to encounter much that is new. Two essays, however, significantly advance our knowledge. The first by François-Pierre Blanc discusses the case of Bertrand Carcassonne, a Perpignan barber-surgeon who was stymied at his first attempt to forge a new career as a graduate physician in 1786 by the local medical college. Much has been written about the pamphlet warfare between physicians and surgeons in the mid-eighteenth century, especially in Paris, over the surgeons' desire to raise their status and muscle in on the physicians' territory. The Carcassonne case is the first this reviewer has encountered of a would-be physician being taken to court for his temerity, even when the surgeon had retrained as a physician, spent the requisite time on the faculty benches, and taken a medical degree, albeit at Orange. The second essay, by Patrick Fournier, is an important contribution to our understanding of neo-Hippocratic medicine in eighteenth-century France. By looking at the work of three Languedoc physicians on the connections between climate and epidemic disease, Fournier throws much needed light on an area of medical research that is frequently referred to in histories of French medicine but never closely analyzed. We learn much about the different sources that the three physicians drew upon for their own observational work and are shown that Thomas Sydenham did not necessarily hold pride of place. We are also shown how two of the authors, Bouillet of Béziers and Barthez of Montpellier, had a much more flexible and cautious approach to the nature of individual disease than the third, Razoux of Nîmes, who was imprisoned in the nosology of Boissier de Sauvages. Furthermore, in Bouillet—hitherto completely

ignored in the historiography—we are introduced to the first French physician to publish his observations on the relationship between disease and climate.

Despite its limitations, the volume is a considerable publication, and the editor is to be congratulated for bringing together a scholarly collection of essays that cover a wide range of topics. After the heady days of the 1960s and early 1970s when Jean-Pierre Goubert, Jean Peter, and a number of other *Annaliste* historians were in the vanguard of the study of eighteenth-century medicine, the French have let the torch slip, and much of the best work in the last forty years has been done by Anglo-Americans.[2] The French in the last decade have rediscovered their interest in the subject, and the volume bears witness to its current health. The volume would have been more useful, however, if the essays had been properly set in the context of earlier research. There is very little reference to any earlier French scholarship, let alone the important contribution of the Anglo-Americans (and what occasional acknowledgements there are, are not always correctly cited). Foucault in particular is completely neglected. As a result, the interested but uninformed reader will get little sense of how the Midi fits into a wider French or even European pattern. There is a well-written chapter on *médicalisation* in Roussillon for instance, which contains some useful information about the status and wealth of physicians in the area, but no comparisons are made with the data that has existed for a long time for other parts of France. It would have been useful as well if the introduction had said something about the Midi's own centers and peripheries. It was not a homogeneous medical region, and the heavy emphasis on Perpignan, Roussillon, and Cerdagne tends to obscure the fact that Marseille, Montpellier, and their hinterlands were much more dynamic areas. The book is a scholarly work of regional history, but it could have been more ambitious.

LIST OF ESSAYS

Gilbert Larguier, “Avant Propos”

Christophe Juhel, “Hygiène et propreté des rues de Perpignan au XVIIIe siècle”

Caroline Perche, “Les chemins détournés de la restructuration hospitalière en Roussillon (fin XVIIe-début XVIIIe siècle)”

Jahiel Ruffier-Méray, “L'hôpital royal des forçats à Marseille aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles”

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François-Pierre Blanc, “L'agrégation en 1768 d'un barbier-chirurgien à la faculté de médecine de Perpignan”

Delphine Sanchez, “Présence et pratique de la médecine en Roussillon au XVIIIe siècle”

Anaïs Lewczyk-Janssen, “Vers la mise en place d'une politique sanitaire d'Etat: les médecins correspondants de la Société royale de médecine en Haut-Languedoc (1773-1793)”

Patrick Fournier, “La contribution des médecins languedociens à la genèse de la méthode médico-climatique au XVIIIe siècle: les exemples de Bouillet, Razoux et Barthez”

Jean-Christophe Sanchez, “Les bains et eaux minérales de Balaruc aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: entre entreprises institutionnelles et discours scientifique”

Pierre Marthy, “L'anatomie à l'usage des artistes au XVIIe siècle: l'exemple du peintre Jacques Gamelin (1738-1803) et de son *Nouveau Recueil d'ostéologie et de myologie* (Toulouse, 1779)”

Jean-Luc Antoniazzi, “Cultes des saints et guérisons en Roussillon aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles”

NOTES

[1] The pioneering study is Jean-Pierre Goubert, *Malades et medecins en Bretagne 1770-1790* (Paris : Université de Haute Bretagne, 1974).

[2] See, for example, Toby Gelfand, *Professionalizing Modern Medicine. Paris Surgeons and Medical Science and Institutions in the 18th Century* (London: Greenwood Press, 1980); Matthew Ramsey, *Professional and Popular Medicine in France, 1770-1830. The Social World of Medical Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Laurence Brockliss and Colin Jones, *The Medical World of Early Modern France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Tim McHugh, *Hospital Politics in Seventeenth-Century France: The Crown, Urban Elites and the Poor* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007); and Robert Weston, *Medical Consulting by Letter in France, 1665-1789* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

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