



PROJECT MUSE®

Humanistas médicos en el Renacimiento vallisoletano
(review)

Jon Arrizabalaga

Bulletin of the History of Medicine, Volume 76, Number 1, Spring 2002,
pp. 131-132 (Review)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/bhm.2002.0001>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/4805>

author alternates between too-detailed and too-general sections, without giving a proper explanation of his complicated philosophy of history; the list of people belonging to Vico's Neapolitan circle and their works is too narrow a framework to allow readers fully to appreciate Vico's position with respect to the new experimental philosophy, medicine, and monstrosity.

One of the most intriguing themes of this book is monsters' place in the framework of the changing relations and boundaries between animals and humans, including the fascination for metamorphosis. The persistence of physiognomy and mythology as major cultural arenas where such relations were formulated is interestingly played against the rise of the mechanical model of the human body and could perhaps have served as the book's backbone, around which the varied material could have been organized. At the outset the author declares that she is more concerned to make little-known sources available to the public than to engage with the growing secondary literature on monstrosity: this shows in the bibliography. And since some of the issues that she raises certainly whet the reader's appetite for more, what she delivers cannot but cause a little disappointment.

Silvia De Renzi
Open University
Milton Keynes, U.K.

José Ignacio Blanco Pérez. *Humanistas médicos en el Renacimiento vallisoletano*. Estudios y Monografías, no. 5. Burgos, Spain: Universidad de Burgos, 1999. 231 pp. Ptas. 4,618.00; € 27.76 (paperbound, 84-95211-05-X).

Despite its unquestionable relevance, the history of medical and scientific language has been scarcely dealt with. Instead, it has generally been trapped in a "no-man's land" between philologists' lack of concern for the topic and an ignorance of its analytical tools on the part of historians of medicine and science. In the history of Europe it is difficult to find any phenomenon that has consciously given more emphasis to language as an agent for cultural and pedagogical reform than the movement known as Renaissance humanism. Thus the interest of the monographic study reviewed here. In *Humanistas médicos*, the classical philologist J. I. Blanco Pérez focuses on the language—mostly Latin, but also Castilian—of medical humanists bound to the University of Valladolid who have left us printed medical works. The volume is partly built on a Ph.D. dissertation (Valladolid, 1996) inscribed within a research program that is concerned with the language of medical humanism in Renaissance Spain, led by Enrique Montero Cartelle (professor of Latin at Valladolid). Other outstanding results of this program include two monographs focusing upon the same topic in the other two major sixteenth-century Castilian universities, namely those of

Alcalá (Ana I. Martín Ferreira, *El humanismo médico en la Universidad de Alcalá [siglo XVI]*, 1995) and Salamanca (M. Jesús Pérez Ibáñez, *El humanismo médico en la Universidad de Salamanca [siglo XVI]*, 1998).

In chapter 1 the author examines the concept of medical humanism, which he applies so loosely that the distinction between “humanist” and “humanized” physicians is almost entirely watered down. Valladolid’s medical humanism is dealt with through the written works of five physicians bound in one way or another to the local medical faculty, who are considered by Blanco Pérez as the main figures of the movement: Bernardino Montaña de Monserrate (ca. 1480–1558), Alfonso de Santa Cruz (d. ca. 1576/7), Luis Mercado (1525–1611), Lázaro de Soto (ca. 1540–1626), and Ildefonso López Pinciano (1556/7–ca. 1627). In chapter 2, sketches of these physicians’ biographies are provided and the canons of their medical works, including a list of editions, are set.

Blanco Pérez, who has specified from the very beginning of his volume his strict concern with linguistic analysis rather than with a historico-medical study of these works (p. 14), deals with the several literary genres to which they belong (chap. 3), examines the quoted authoritative sources on which these physicians base their arguments (chap. 4), and develops his linguistic analysis (chap. 5). While in dealing with the literary genres his attention is focused on the commentaries by de Soto and López Pinciano, on the dialogues by de Santa Cruz and Montaña de Monserrate, and on Mercado’s wide and diverse written production, his linguistic analysis copes with the issue of the language (Latin or Castilian) in which they are written as well as with their major phonetic, morphological, lexical, syntactical, and stylistic characteristics. Although, quite obviously, linguistic analysis can by no means be exhaustive, its results are often greatly expressive.

In sum, Blanco Pérez’s volume is a valuable instrument with which to approach the history of medical humanism in Renaissance Spain. A fuller knowledge of medicine in the Spanish kingdoms during early modern times will be achieved by applying its conclusions to the results of the new research to be undertaken by medical historians on this complex but exciting topic.

Jon Arrizabalaga
Institución Milà i Fontanals, CSIC
Barcelona

Sara Ferri, ed. *Pietro Andrea Mattioli, Siena 1501–Trento 1578: La vita, le opere: con l’identificazione delle piante*. Perugia, Italy: Quattroemme, 1997. 405 pp. Ill. L 70,000.00; € 36.15 (paperbound, 88-85962-27-0).

“If the mind could be pictured as well as the body, then a single image would serve for both Dioscorides and Mattioli.” This verse, attached to a portrait of Pietro Andrea Mattioli published in 1563, neatly summed up his reputation in his