

The Black Doctors of Colonial Lima: Science, Race, and Writing in Colonial and Early Republican Peru. By José R. Jouve Martín. McGill-Queen's/Associated Medical Service Studies in the History of Medicine, Health, and Society. Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press. Figures. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Xxvii, 209 pp. Cloth \$ 45.96

At the turn of the eighteenth century observers in Lima noted the domination of the medical profession by persons of African descent. Yet, Afro-Peruvian medical practitioners are generally overlooked in narratives of the history of medicine in Peru which have been constructed around the contribution and lives of a few notable creole doctors and scientists. Focussing on the period between 1760 and 1840 Jouve Martín aims to rectify this oversight by focussing on three *pardo* doctors who left a significant body of scientific writings and were intimately involved in the scientific community in Lima. These comprise the physician José Manuel Valdés who rose to become *protomédico general* of Peru, José Manuel Dávalos who played a senior role in the smallpox vaccination campaigns of the late eighteenth century, and the prominent and controversial surgeon José Pastor de Larrinaga who was a staunch defender of the intellectual and practical contribution of Afro-Peruvians to medicine. It is not a criticism, but worth noting that those studied in the book came from elite families and were not therefore typical of Lima's broader population of Black doctors.

Building on his previous study of the engagement of African slaves with writing in early colonial Lima, *Esclavos de la ciudad letrada* (Lima, 2005), Jouve Martín first provides a historical sketch of role of Blacks in medicine prior to the 1790s before describing the efforts of Hipólito Unanue to open up the field to them on the basis of their knowledge and expertise rather than their ethnicity. Rather than consider each of the three practitioners in turn, Jouve Martín then eschews a biographical approach and pursues a number of themes. He first examines how with the support of Unanue and Cosme Bueno Afro-Peruvians disseminated their medical knowledge, especially through writing for the *Mercurio peruano*. He shows how through this means gained respect for their medical expertise, which enabled them to address wider contemporary political, philosophical and social issues, thereby secure their status among Lima's *letrados*.

While these Afro-Peruvian medical practitioners were involved in Lima's scientific community, Jouve Martín shows how they faced significant obstacles to practising their profession and racist criticism. Dávalos himself failed to gain entry to the University of San Marcos in Lima because of his African ancestry forcing him to seek medical training at Montpellier, France. Yet, the individuals themselves rarely alluded to their Black heritage, preferring to base their reputation on their science. As such he shows they were often professional rivals and did not form a cohesive social and ethnic group that aimed at improving its status. This is perhaps reflected best in their ambiguous position in the independence period when although they advocated full citizen rights they failed to campaign actively against slavery. Through an analysis of the dispute over the healing practices of a popular healer, Dorotea Salguero, Jouve Martín also shows that Valdés defended the control of popular practitioners by the *protomedicato* on scientific grounds even though many of whom were Afro-Peruvians. In his 1863 biography of the *mulato* saint Martín de Porres, Valdés also played down Porres's mulatto status. These cases suggest that despite their African ancestry, the identity of these Afro-Peruvian practitioners lay largely with the Creole elite society. Such stances, Jouve Martín argues, were necessary for them to

negotiate their way through a hierarchical world and enjoy professional success and recognition.

While the study discusses controversies in the nature and treatment of different medical conditions, such as hermaphroditism, epilepsy and uterine cancer, the book is generally more revealing about race, society and politics in late colonial and early independence Lima. It shows how these *pardo* medical practitioners were intimately involved in scientific debates of the Enlightenment and contributed to issues of wider intellectual and political concern at the time. The period studied probably marks the peak of their influence for as the nineteenth century progressed and medicine became more respected as a profession it attracted more whites and *mestizos*. Meanwhile access to medical education remained closed to those of African ancestry, whose numbers declined with the cessation of the African slave trade.

This well-written book is based on a thorough analysis of the writings of the three medical practitioners, as well as on newspapers, including in the *Mercurio peruano*, and archival research. *The Black Doctors of Lima* will be of interest to scholars of both the history of medicine and science in Spanish America, especially of the Enlightenment, and of race, social relations and politics in late colonial and early republican Peru. Peru probably had the largest number of Afro-American medical practitioners of any region in Spanish America, so one unanswered question posed by the book, is how far the Afro-Peruvian experience was unique. Whatever the conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of scholarship that focuses on the contribution of persons of mixed racial ancestry to the creation of knowledge.

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