

Obituary

Juan Antonio Paniagua (1920-2010), Medical Historian

Pedro Gil-Sotres¹

The Spanish medical historian Juan Antonio Paniagua Arellano (Artajona, Navarre, 1920) passed away in Pamplona on 11th February. He read medicine at the University of Valladolid (1945) and received his PhD at the Complutense University of Madrid (1948). For thirty years he was Professor of History of Medicine and Pharmacy at the University of Navarra (Spain), where he carried out research into Medieval Latin Medicine and trained many students.

In 1948 he began his studies on the History of Medicine in Madrid under the guidance of Professor Pedro Laín Entralgo (1908-2001) who, since 1942, had held the only Chair for the History of Medicine existing then in Spain. While working with Laín Entralgo, Paniagua was the editorial secretary of the journal *Archivos Iberoamericanos de Historia de la Medicina y Antropología Médica* (founded in 1949, and published now under the title *Asclepio*), and a founder member of the Spanish Society for the History of Medicine. It was Laín who encouraged him to study the life and work of the physician and professor at de Montpellier's University, Arnau de Vilanova (c.1240-1311), a field of study which was to bring Paniagua international recognition.

As he was convinced that, in order to strip the written works of Arnau de Vilanova of any dubious ascriptions, it was necessary to become familiar with them at first hand, in 1956 he moved to Paris to study the manuscripts kept in the French libraries. There he made acquaintance of other European medieval historians, who, in the post-WWII period, were constructing the subject on new documentary foundations. His research proved that many of the works attributed to the medieval physician, particularly those dealing with alchemy and magic, were apocryphal.

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Paniagua's scientific production was, and still is, an obligatory reference for historians of medieval medicine. Outstanding among his works are: *Vida de Arnau de Vilanova* (Valencia, 1969), the critical edition in two volumes of Arnau's aphoristic work (Barcelona, 1990 y 1993), the publication of his own Spanish version of *Régimen para el rey de Aragón* (Jaime II), Saragossa, 1980; and the monograph *El doctor Chanca y su obra médica: vida y escritos del primer médico del Nuevo Mundo* (Madrid, 1977) which won him a Spanish award. After his retirement from teaching tasks, his most important articles on Arnau were collected in the volume *Studia Arnaldiana: trabajos en torno a la obra médica de Arnau de Vilanova, c.1240-1311* (Barcelona, 1994).

From 1975 to 2000, Juan Antonio Paniagua, together with Luis García Ballester and Michael McVaugh, directed the *Arnaldi de Villanova Opera Medica Omnia* (AVOMO), an international project for the criticism and study of the medical works of Arnau de Vilanova. To date 13 volumes have been published, authored by a broad interdisciplinary panel of European and American researchers.

Juan Antonio Paniagua combined a great intellectual stature with a deep human sensitivity. His kind, frank nature made discussion the most grateful and significant element of his lectures. The opinions of his audience, even if they were far from what he thought or uphold, attracted always his kind attention and interest. His open-mindedness was proof of the true wisdom of those few who are always willing and ready to learn.