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universities outside Germany like Montpellier, Basle, and Cambridge. The activities of Simone Simoni (1532–1602) at Geneva, Heidelberg and Leipzig are instructive in this respect, as was shown long ago by Frank Ludwig (*Neues Archiv für sächsische Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, 1909, 30: 209–90). Equally, while Paracelsus' own view of the body militated against any commitment to anatomical study, it still needs to be demonstrated that those Paracelsians who obtained university positions were similarly disdainful, and that, if they did, they also shared Paracelsus' own theological position.

What this volume reveals is that the proper study of the interactions of religion and science in the Renaissance is only just beginning. Some themes are familiar, but need greater precision of thought as well as deeper delving in the archives, but others have scarcely been touched upon. Future work needs to combine the institutional with the intellectual, the social with the individual, in order to capture the subtleties of belief and the practicalities of daily life as a physician, professor or preacher. These essays are first steps, no more, but they at least point the way to potentially fruitful pastures.

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Karen Jolly, Catharina Raudvere, Edward Peters, *Witchcraft and magic in Europe. Volume 3: The Middle Ages*, London, Athlone Press, 2001, pp. xiv, 280, £60.00 (hardback 0-4858-9003-8), £19.99 (paperback 0-4858-103-4).

This book forms part of the six-volume Athlone History of Witchcraft and Magic in Europe, edited by Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark, which began in 1999 and was completed in 2002. The series provides a broad survey of magic from biblical times to the twentieth century. Each volume is multi-authored, drawing upon the latest research of experts and providing a rich variety of perspectives.

Karen Jolly's essay on ways of thinking about medieval magic opens the volume. Jolly is keen to dispel the essentialist myth that there is

something that can be identified as "magic". Defining magic is no easy matter, especially for the Middle Ages when magic was inextricably bound up with religion and what we today would call science. Jolly recognizes that the sources themselves often mislead us as to the nature of medieval magic. For the most part, they constitute either intellectual attempts to undermine the claims of magic or theological attempts to suppress its practice. Even sources that promote magic invariably idealize the topic, presenting an image far removed from the experience of ordinary people.

Jolly's solution is to contextualize the sources and read them as records of changing attitudes to magic. She outlines three main periods in the development of beliefs about magic. The first was the period of conversion, from the fifth to the eleventh century, when Christianity encountered the pagan practices of northern and western Europe. During this period the Church condemned pagan practices as either popular superstition or illusory demonic magic. The growth of towns, the rise of new religious movements and the rediscovery of Aristotelian logic in the twelfth century ushered in a new period when magic was re-categorized and re-conceptualized. During this time, the Church condemned magic less for its demonic association with paganism and more for its demonic association with heresy. Another shift occurred in about 1350 when the Church started to regard magic not so much as a list of objectionable practices as an organized demonic cult that sought to undermine the integrity of the Christian community. Henceforth, witchcraft was regarded as both heretical and criminal. In periodizing magic thus, Jolly draws our attention to the fact that witchcraft was a uniquely European phenomenon shaped by the changing economic, political and theological conditions of western Europe.

Jolly is also aware of the methodological problems of describing the practice of medieval magic. Limiting herself to practices that contemporaries identified as magical, Jolly outlines the popular and courtly traditions of magic; protective formulas and rituals; amulets and talismans; popular divination; sorcery

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and necromancy; and magic as entertainment. Readers of this journal will be particularly interested in her section on medical magic. Jolly explains that this was an especially “fuzzy” area. Medieval medicine embraced both a material and spiritual understanding of illness in which physical and religious factors played a part. Within this context, it is often difficult to distinguish magical medicine from religious healing. Both the materials of medicine (herbs, animal parts and stones) and the ritual performance of words and signs (prayers and charms) provided occasions for the use of medical magic to cure and ward off illness.

The second part of the volume contains Catharina Raudvere’s discussion of *trolldömr*, or witchcraft, in early medieval Scandinavia. She analyses uses of the term *trolldömr* in two groups of Old Norse texts, the sagas and the mythological narratives. Composed during the thirteenth century, these mainly Icelandic and Norwegian texts are written accounts of an oral tradition stretching back to the ninth century when Christianity first reached Scandinavia. Raudvere is primarily interested in exploring mentalities concerning *trolldömr*, that is, the widely held beliefs and associated rituals concerning certain individuals who, it was assumed, could influence the physical world around them. This, of course, is a literary rather than an historical exercise, but in so far as the texts constitute a collective social memory, they embody an ideal of the past in which magic played a part. This literary analysis, then, is designed to illuminate the cultural past of Scandinavian magic.

Raudvere points out that *trolldömr* could be used for either good or malevolent ends. For example, public rituals such as the *seiðr* served to ward off various sorts of evil, including physical or mental disease, and runic verses were chanted to bring about healing or secure the safe delivery of a baby. As in many other pre-Christian societies, Scandinavian beliefs about the medical efficacy of witchcraft merged imperceptibly into broader attitudes concerning folk medicine.

The volume ends with Edward Peters’ excellent survey of the Church and State’s

attitude to magic from the fifth to the sixteenth century. Drawing upon his extensive knowledge of the sources, Peters fleshes out the tripartite periodization of medieval magic outlined by Jolly. Although this essay does not directly address medical magic, Peters does underline the importance of healing miracles in medieval hagiography and the role they played in distinguishing the legitimate use of God-given supernatural powers for good purposes (*miracula*) from the mere wonder-working of magicians (*mira*). This superb piece of synthetic intellectual history will be essential background reading for students of medieval magic.

Admittedly, these are three rather diverse essays, but their different perspectives (and their excellent bibliographies) will definitely be appreciated by students and scholars of medieval magic alike.

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Lawrence I Conrad and Dominik Wujastyk (eds), *Contagion: perspectives from pre-modern societies*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2000, pp. xviii, 224, £45.00 (hardback 0-7546-0258-3).

The purpose of this book is to question the importance of the notions of contagion in pre-modern societies. It could perhaps be summarized by a sentence in Vivian Nutton’s lucid paper, “On almost all ancient schemata, contagion, whether in the strict sense of a disease transmitted by touch or in the wider one of a disease of contiguity, was only rarely invoked to explain the origin of an illness, and even when it was, it formed only one part, and not necessarily the most important part, of a complex of overlapping alternatives” (p. 161). Indeed all the nine papers in this useful book agree on this point and most warn against the danger of modern biomedical concepts of contagion being read into pre-modern texts.

The book contains three papers on China by Kuriyama, Chang, and Cullen; two on India by Das and Zysk; two on the Middle East by