

It is toxicology, therefore, that provides the principal interest of this collected volume for the historian of medicine, although this topic quite naturally opens onto the wider issue of the evolution of expert witnesses in court. Unlike many such collected volumes, this one remains focused, with many of the papers dealing with the use of analytical techniques to detect poisoning and the challenges presented by this type of evidence in the trials of suspected murderers. The leitmotiv for this series of papers is the idea of making the invisible (the poison hidden in the cadaver) visible (the sensible signs of tests, which could be olfactory or visual), a task that motivated and associated a group of “professional” toxicologists including Robert Christison (Anne Crowther), James Marsh (Katherine Watson), Alfred Swaine Taylor (Ian Burney), and, of course, Orfila himself. Indeed, while he is mentioned in all the papers, Orfila’s work is most closely examined by Bertomeu-Sánchez with respect to the notorious Lafarge affair. To be a little more precise, the most prominent subject in this collection is one particularly high-profile toxicological conundrum, the proof of the presence of arsenic in a cadaver. Nevertheless, while Bettina Wahrig situates Orfila in the context of German toxicology, Sacha Tomic adds an interesting complement in his treatment of the development of analytical techniques for identifying alkaloids as poisons, illustrating new technical responses to new toxicological threats. Not all the papers are strictly about toxicology, however, there are also contributions by María José Ruiz-Somavilla and Ana Carneiro that are of interest to those studying the institutional development of biological or medical chemistry, treating the considerable influence of Orfila in these arenas. There are also articles that take on other aspects of Orfila’s work, notably Antonio García-Belmar’s paper on Louis-Jacques Thenard’s chemistry lectures, which deals with the teaching and research practices of one of Orfila’s Parisian professors, and Ursula Klein’s contribution on Orfila’s plant and animal chemistry.

Returning to the issue of toxicology, there is an interesting history that emerges around the notion of “normal arsenic”, which constitutes a technical, legal, and professional problem. After championing the validity of the very sensitive Marsh test for the presence of arsenic, Orfila later suggested that it might be detecting arsenic that was a natural constituent of the human body. This problem provides a nice example of the precarious nature of any test before it is “black-boxed”, rendering the meaning and value of its results incontestable. Indeed, it is precisely its use in the antagonistic environment of the courtroom that destabilized the validity of a test that in the purely scientific context of the chemistry laboratory was accepted as a tricky, but essentially uncontroversial analytical technique. Thus, this history of the Marsh test and “normal arsenic” offers a nice case for those interested in the fate of scientific techniques outside the controlled confines of the laboratory.

Apart from its coherence, another thing that recommends this book is its presentation, with a high standard of editing and an attractive dust jacket. The editors managed to do all this and still offer a hardback at a reasonable price; quite an achievement in these days of the plunging dollar. Overall, I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in either this central figure in the history of toxicology or the development of scientific expertise in the courtroom.

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Kay Peter Jankrift, *Krankheit und Heilkunde im Mittelalter*, Geschichte Kompakt, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003, pp. ix, 148, SFr 25.90, €14.90 (paperback 3-534-15481-9).

This is a very good introduction to the study of medieval medicine. In this concise volume, Kay Peter Jankrift manages to cover most of the major medical trends over the

entire medieval period, although he concentrates on the High and Late Middle Ages. The text is clearly laid out, with its chapters organized both thematically and chronologically. There is an emphasis on medical trends in the German-speaking world and the author often includes case studies of specific German cities, such as the provision of doctors in Soest or the progress of the Black Death in Aachen. Time-lines appear at the start of each chapter, and short biographical sketches of important medical figures (such as Hildegard of Bingen and Arnold of Villanova) and concepts are scattered throughout the text.

There are no images, which might have been useful for readers unfamiliar with the subject. Nevertheless the book more than compensates for this omission by including a profusion of short selections of primary sources. These are highly readable and are notable for their variety, from the hagiography of Cosmos and Damien in the *Legenda aurea* to a fifteenth-century apothecary's advice to his patient or a contemporary chronicler's account of the "bloody flux" in Osnabrück in 1341. These sources complement and enrich the accompanying text very well.

The volume begins with a very short introduction to Graeco-Roman medicine and then covers the early Middle Ages. Medicine in the monastic orders follows, along with medical education in the school of Salerno and the burgeoning universities. Medical provision in urban areas comes next, with case studies for German cities and details on the establishment of hospitals and the different hospital orders. The final chapter is the longest, and deals with specific diseases that affected the medieval world. The two ailments that are given the most space are plague and leprosy, and both modern medical and medieval perceptions of these diseases are covered. The progress of plague through German-speaking areas is examined, along with specific case studies of certain cities and the ways in which urban authorities tried to handle the outbreak. The section on leprosy concentrates on the provision of leper-houses and care of the patient.

Other diseases covered include ergotism, influenza, smallpox and the "bloody flux", i.e. dysentery, especially the latter's influence on armies. The chapter ends with two "new" diseases that appeared at the end of the Middle Ages: syphilis and the "sweating-sickness". The text concludes with a short appendix of sources and a selected bibliography, a useful starting point for students as, due to the compact nature of the text, only a cursory nod is given to many developments.

Krankheit und Heilkunde im Mittelalter is part of the *Geschichte Kompakt* series, which publishes introductory texts for a variety of historical subjects and periods. As such, Jankrift's text succeeds admirably. This should be a very useful and accessible text for both undergraduates and postgraduates who would like a concise overview of medieval medicine. Scholars of medieval medicine might find certain sections which deal with specific case studies within the German-speaking world interesting as well.

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Arnaldi de Villanova, *Opera medica omnia*, vol. xvii: Abū l-Şalt al-Dani, Umayya b. 'Abd al-'Aziz, *Translatio libri Albuzale De medicinis simplicibus*, ed. **J Martínez Gázquez and **M R McVaugh**; Abū l-Şalt al-Dani, Umayya b. 'Abd al-'Aziz, *Abū-l-Şalt Umayya, Kitāb al-Adwiya al-mufrada*, ed. **A Labarta**; Abū l-Şalt al-Dani, Umayya b. 'Abd al-'Aziz, *Llibre d'Albumesar de Simples medecines*, ed. **L Cifuentes**, Barcelona, Publicacions de la Universitat de Barcelona; Fundació Noguera; Lleida, Pagès Editors, 2004, pp. 625, €55.00 (paperback 84-9779-240-8).**

The *Opera medica omnia* of Arnau de Vilanova is an outstanding monument to the study of medieval medicine over the last quarter century. Nothing else has done as much to illuminate the nature of western scholastic medicine, achieved through the old-fashioned virtues of scholarly textual editing. The latest