

These criticisms are in no way intended to detract from what has been achieved. These volumes deserve all the praise that has been heaped upon them. They mark a major step in the rehabilitation of renaissance medicine, and add to the reputation of Vesalius as well as of all those involved in this memorable production.

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Peregrine Horden, *Hospitals and healing from antiquity to the later Middle Ages*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008, pp. xii, 338, £65.00, online £58.50 (hardback 978-0-7546-6181-8).

The Variorum Collected Studies Series has a long-standing tradition of presenting the best articles by individual established scholars in an easily accessible and useful format, and this volume continues that tradition. The sixteen essays collected in this book highlight the impressive breadth of Peregrine Horden's interests and abilities. The materials are largely focused on the early Middle Ages, mostly Byzantine and some western, but also include brief forays into the ancient Hippocratic and medieval Arab worlds. Documenting a quarter century of studies, the essays display a number of innovative approaches to the history of hospitals, as well as other subjects, by a major scholar in the field of early medieval medicine.

The volume is divided into two sections, the first entitled 'Hospitals and institutions of care' and the second 'Sickness and healing'. In some ways, the book's title and divisions do not do justice to the variety of subjects under discussion. Firstly, the term "hospitals" is problematic because too narrow; instead Horden deftly and appropriately connects hospitals with many types of social organization, including confraternities and

families. In contrast, the terms used to categorize the second half of the volume, 'Sickness and healing', are too broad and vague to capture the specifics of each article, which range in topic from the Justinianic plague to late medieval and early modern music therapy.

Some of the more intriguing articles involve topics that had previously received little attention. Essays IV and XVI address the connections between music and medicine, essay IX deals with the issue of travel and medical treatment, and travel *as* medical treatment, essay XII analyses feigned insanity through the lives of early Byzantine saints, and essay VIII considers the meanings of pain in the Hippocratic corpus, a topic which has only recently begun to receive the attention it deserves. A theme common to many of the essays is the complex relation between the spiritual and the curative, whether it be, for example, saints healing the possessed (essay XI) or the importance of emotions, the "accidents of the soul", as part of the non-naturals which influence both health and illness (essays IV and V).

When approaching a subject, Horden is concerned with the possible as much as the clearly demonstrable. He sometimes argues his points from conjecture, often in revealing, fruitful and entertaining ways. Most of the material here is not centred on archival research, but such an observation misses the point: these are essays in the sense of Montaigne's works as explorations of a topic, its epistemology and (in this case) its historiography. This method can lead to kaleidoscopic snapshots across time and place, bound together by a theme, as in essay VI, 'Family history and hospital history in the Middle Ages', which manages to incorporate the thirteenth-century miracles of St Louis, Hellenistic Egyptian letters, imperial Roman oratory, and early modern Italian charity. While at times disconcerting and decontextualized, such an approach more often uncovers new avenues and new connections to be pursued.

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Essay XIII, 'Disease, dragons and saints in the Dark Ages' is a good example: despite the fact that the sources for his primary narrative (the dragon that St Marcellus vanquished) are silent on this score, Horden creates a highly plausible and intriguing argument about dragons as markers of pestilence in the early medieval world. Here, as in essay III on 'Ritual and public health in the early medieval city', he uses cultural, medical and ethnographic anthropology to move beyond the earlier cultural historical analysis by Jacques Le Goff; Horden understands tales of dragons and their taming by holy men not only as Christian control of a pagan countryside but also as a reflection of fears over diseases and their ecology (marshes and riversides). The emphasis on ecology appears throughout the more recent essays in the volume, as part of Horden's interest in material environment, whether it be the architectural layout of a Byzantine hospital, travel to saints' shrines in search of a cure, or the geography of plague outbreaks.

Horden is expert at muddying the waters, seeking out the complexities of each topic and pushing beyond the limits of the sources. When asking "how medicalized were Byzantine hospitals?" (essay I), he acknowledges the hard task ahead of him: the term "medicalization" is difficult to historicize and define, few sources—both textual and archaeological—are extant and those that remain are not easy to interpret. Such problems are of course common when studying any aspect of Late Antiquity or the early Middle Ages, but are particularly acute when dealing with this subject. The essay provides a much-needed corrective to earlier views of the Byzantine hospital as approximate to a modern medical institution.

Peregrine Horden's essays are insightful, valuable and a good read. Whether analysing a historiographic tradition (essay VII) or addressing a specific historical theme, the articles in this volume point us in new directions that will benefit scholars in fields as

varied as the history of medicine, ecology, spirituality and medieval culture.

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Danielle Westerhof, *Death and the noble body in medieval England*, Woodbridge, Suffolk, Boydell Press, 2008, pp. xii, 190, £50.00 (hardback 978-1-84383-416-8).

Danielle Westerhof's study examines the relationship between death and the aristocratic (male) body in England from the twelfth to the fourteenth century. Bringing together an unusually diverse collection of source material, including medical treatises, legal codes, and theological doctrines as well as romances, chronicles, and surviving material culture, Westerhof investigates how the concept of nobility came to be encapsulated in the aristocratic body and illustrates the consequences of this belief on aristocratic culture and funerary practices, and on the judicial punishment of aristocrats for treason. Religious teachings on the corruptibility of flesh and the unchanging nature of saints' bodies were, as Westerhof demonstrates, fundamental to the formulation of practices associated with the preservation and burial of cadavers, while the liminality of death was reinforced by both religious doctrine and by the centrality of commemoration in elite medieval society.

Despite its title and with the exception of the final chapters, Westerhof's study is more frequently concerned with "the dead" than with "death" itself. She only briefly introduces the socially regulated process of dying "a good death" before moving on to positioning the cadaver within medieval discourses on death and considering the role of putrefaction in contemporary understandings of cadavers. A chapter entitled 'Embodying Nobility' has very little