Sandra Cavallo, *Artisans of the body in early modern Italy: identities, families and masculinities*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 2007, pp. xii, 281, £60.00 (hardback 978-0-7190-7662-6).

The artisans of the body in the title of Sandra Cavallo's new book are a wide group of skilled craftsmen and women—barbers, surgeons, jewellers, perfumers—concerned with the care, comfort and appearance of the body in early modern Turin. As she shows, thinking with this new category allows us to understand the lives and work of medical practitioners, particularly surgeons and barber-surgeons, in a different way. The great achievement of Cavallo's study is the compelling case she makes for the significance of the webs of association—based on blood, marriage, business connection, neighbourhood and friendship—that she shows tied together participants in this array of trades and helped to structure their professional and personal lives. The surgeons that are still, in many ways, at the centre of her analysis are convincingly located within a richly illustrated milieu, and it will be difficult (as well as foolish) for subsequent studies of early modern practitioners to attempt to isolate and examine an anachronistic set of medical occupations without considering similar connections.

Cavallo has produced a fascinating and important study with wide ramifications. Under her broad argument about the social and cultural position of surgeons and associated trades, she raises a host of ideas about the structures and practice of work, families, medicine and early modern society in general. Cavallo engages explicitly with a series of models, generalizations and assumptions in the historical literature—that marriage was central to adult male identity; that licences were a fundamental barrier between regular and irregular practitioners; and many others that are of major importance in a range of historical work. It should be emphasized that this is a study aimed at a wide readership in social, cultural, family and gender history, as well as at historians of medicine. Among a number of conclusions that will be of immediate concern to readers of *Medical History* are the strong case Cavallo makes against the reality of barriers of status and practice between surgeons and physicians; her demonstration of the importance of tracing ties of marriage and family between practitioners who together form networks of complementary provision; the way she draws out the form of training, migration and partnership to show how families and households were constructed and adapted to circumstances; and how she is able to uncover the importance of married women's work within medical and related fields.

Underpinning her book is an incredibly detailed examination of Turin barber-surgeons and surgeons in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that uses an admirably wide range of materials. Where most medical historians have neglected families, credit, space and kinship, Cavallo has managed to exploit these for new insights. Her wonderful reconstruction of the surgeons' networks, alliances and identities is also the source of the book's only real limitation—one inevitable perhaps in the nature of this kind of study. Turin's barbers, surgeons and barber-surgeons are a relatively small group of individuals (eighty-nine in the city and sixty-seven in the territory in 1695) who are intimately linked to court society and office holding. Their engagement with the poor seems to be largely via official work, for example. How well they represent other practitioners, and other places, particularly those with less substantial elite establishments, is going to be the test of the conclusions drawn here. But in this excellent and challenging work, Cavallo has set a research agenda that should stimulate a new wave of conceptually engaged and empirically rigorous investigations.

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