

social and intellectual contexts within which he produced his work. Hunter's volume thus becomes a crucial text for all who wish to study Boyle's contributions to seventeenth-century natural philosophy.

Rose-Mary Sargent,
Merrimack College

Andrea Carlino and Michel Jeanneret (eds), *Vulgariser la médecine: du style médical en France et en Italie*, Cahiers d'Humanisme et Renaissance, vol. 89, Geneva, Droz, 2009, pp. 352, €37.95 (paperback 978-2-600-01263-8)

The popularization of medical texts in the early modern period has not hitherto attracted very much detailed investigation. It is certainly worthy of the attention it receives here from a group of scholars at all levels, from the very senior to the doctoral student. The case histories address a number of fascinating figures whose publications fall in the ambivalent area between the scholarly and the popular. These include writers of scientific poetry (Pierre Bailly), professional translators (Troilo Lancetta), *poligrafi* (Leonardo Fioravanti), university or court physicians (Pierre Tolet, Prospero Borgarucci, Laurent Joubert, André Du Laurens, Jacques Ferrand), and humanists (Barthélemy Aneau). Through these essays, we learn about the role of Italian academies in the development of the vernacular, the emergence in French and Italian of logical and medical treatises published to enhance the status of non-university practitioners of health (surgeons and apothecaries), and the uses of rhetorical strategies in medical discourse (the extended metaphor, preterition as a means of discussing taboo topics, poetry as mnemonic, and paradox in its early modern sense). Each of the essays brings new light to bear on its subject by close reading and stylistic analysis. One could have hoped in some cases for a wider cultural context. No mention is made of

André du Laurens's religious views and his discreet employment of the unpopular Ramist approach to learning through the *via divisiva* which set the Faculty of Medicine of Paris against him. The use of metaphor as an explicative device in Galen and Avicenna prior to the early modern period is not noted; nor is the use of anatomy as a proof of divine providence, which was made popular by Philip Melanchthon in his textbooks on natural philosophy. The translation of texts into the vernacular could, moreover, be seen not only as a movement towards the democratization of knowledge, but also as a contribution to the precise determination of the meaning of texts. It is striking that even the libraries of learned doctors at this time (for example, those of Caspar Peucer, Girolamo Mercuriale, and Jeremias Martius, all men with impeccable linguistic credentials) contain translations of standard texts. This is, I believe, to ensure that semantic ambiguity is removed as far as possible by a process of cross-checking: a strategy found also in the medieval collection of core pedagogical materials known as the *Articella*, which contained more than one Latin version of Hippocratic and Galenic treatises which could be read alongside each other.

Andrea Carlino's introduction brings the threads of these essays together, and teases out common themes. He stresses the mission of the writers to bring dignity to their own vernacular and to expand the field of recipients of medical knowledge. He claims that in spite of their different motivations, socio-cultural positions, and targeted readerships, these writers all contribute to the re-alignment of the frontiers which divide popular and learned culture, medical theory and practice, and the various inherited disciplines or practices which deal with health. While placing all this in the context of humanist rhetoric, Carlino concedes that these writers present themselves as practising a "*style nu*", the best to express their commitment to public utility and truth. I would also be inclined to say that they relate their enterprise not so much to "*le magma*

humaniste” as to the late medieval university discipline of medicine, and to the advances made in the fifteenth century by a group of Italian practitioners who wrote broadly about medical and surgical procedures, and who, as even medical hellenists such as Symphorien Champier and Otto Brunfels concede, had surpassed the ancients in their grasp of pathology, therapy and pharmacopoeia. The book ends with an essay on Théophraste Renaudot’s extraordinary medical initiative of 1642 entitled *La présence des absens* which is reproduced here in facsimile: a publication designed to bring health care to the illiterate and the poor through the exercise of diagnosis at distance. The essay which accompanies the text throws a powerful light on early modern institutions and attitudes, and is a fitting coda to a very interesting and well-presented volume.

Ian Maclean,
All Souls College, Oxford

Sandra Cavallo and David Gentilcore (eds), *Spaces, objects and identities in early modern Italian medicine*, Oxford, Blackwell in collaboration with the Society for Renaissance Studies, 2008, pp. 123, illus., £19.99 (paperback 978-1-4051-8040-5).

This volume republishes a collection of essays that first appeared in print in *Renaissance Studies*, 2007, **21** (4). The essays exemplify the recent trend for the history of medicine to broaden its scope to encompass diverse aspects of social and cultural life. The essays focus on Italy in particular, but will be of interest to anyone studying the social history of early modern Europe.

The papers by Elizabeth S Cohen and Filippo de Vivo both study the commercial spaces of apothecary shops in the seventeenth century. Cohen’s essay is a superbly researched microhistory of a criminal trial from Rome. The apothecary alleged that an intrusive guild search for counterfeit

confectionary had provoked his wife’s miscarriage and subsequent death. The case incidentally reveals much intriguing detail about the spatial and social organization of shop and home, the role of women in a family business, and the policing activities of guilds. It is a fascinating case that repays such close examination, casting light on many aspects of medicine, culture and society. De Vivo’s essay is a brilliant study showing how apothecary shops in Venice were not simply spaces for buying products, but also centres for socializing and exchange of information, constituting a “public sphere” before the better-known coffee-shops and salons of the eighteenth century. Such was the social importance of these spaces that the security council, particularly concerned that dangerous ideas might spread across social levels, set spies to keep a close eye on the flow of customers.

Other papers centre on the body, addressing the relation between science, society and religion. Gianna Pomata’s study of the role of doctors in canonization proceedings, looks at the case of the body of Saint Catherine in Bologna. This is a very interesting exploration of cooperation between religious and medical authorities in the scientific investigation of purportedly miraculous cures and instances of bodily “incorruption”, often flying in the face of popular cults. Related themes appear in Lucia Dacome’s essay on Anna Morandi, an unusual case of a female anatomist and maker of wax anatomical models in Bologna. The essay provides enthralling details of one of the lesser-studied aspects of empirical science in the eighteenth century, and the opportunities open to a woman in this field. It also contains interesting reflections on the particular qualities that made wax such an effective substitute for flesh, and its associations with religious practices, such as death masks. A similar emphasis on the socially embedded nature of scientific research and medical practice is found in Silvia De Renzi’s essay, a comparative study of the careers of two doctors in seventeenth-century Rome. She examines the various factors that determined