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thereby demonstrating a well-educated, informed, probing, and critical mind. He was familiar with various Berber dialects, as well as Celtic-Iberian nomenclatures and, through Ibn Juljul, Latin. He cited a number of unknown sources including one, simply, as “a Byzantine”. In his introduction he said that he had studied pharmacy in the city of Marrakesh where, through his teacher, he became familiar with ‘Abdallāh, who was critical of both Dioscorides and Ibn Juljul. The value in Dietrich’s outstanding scholarship lies in identifying the understanding of plant drugs and in discovering the detailed, critical, and empirical spirit of these various Arabic commentators, most especially ‘Abdallāh and the “Anonymous”. In his preface, the Anonymous explained the necessity for a knowledge derived from experience about drugs that must be known by their proper name in one’s mother tongue, in various other languages, and *how each relates to the other*.

For each chapter Dietrich gives the Arabic transliteration, the Greek term, and a German translation. He adds copious references to various editions of Dioscorides, including one in Arabic, and identifies most fragments, some (e.g., Juljul) from manuscript sources. The identification of the sources is well done and a tremendous hurdle considering that Ibn Juljul alone cites nine authorities, among them Galen, Hunain b. Ishāq, and Rhazes. In addition Dietrich identifies plants by modern, scientific citation, and he asks experts for their insight in the various vernacular dialects, such as Berber, that the anonymous author was precociously interested in learning. Dietrich’s scholarship is meticulous and thorough in respect to the Arabic transmission but less complete in respect to the broader picture of Dioscorides’ work. Dietrich’s introduction has a discussion of what is known of the author and his sources, the sources that the Anonymous, Ibn Juljul and ‘Abdallāh employed, an analysis of the commentary’s structure, linguistic analysis (especially of aetiologies and various dialects), a discussion of the errors and misunderstandings in the text—this is an important section—and a glossary of unusual Arabic words.

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TONY HUNT, *Popular medicine in thirteenth-century England*, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 1990, 8vo, pp. xi, 466, £39.50.

The main body of *Popular medicine in thirteenth-century England* consists of editions of recipes and antidotaries written mostly in Anglo-Norman, a language that Tony Hunt, Reader in French at St Andrews, rightly points out is slighted by medical historians. All chapters but the first print thirteenth-century texts, preceded by descriptions of the manuscripts that contain them. The editor prefaces his editions with an introduction that surveys the written recipe from earliest times through the fifteenth century. The editions are followed by glossaries giving modern identifications for plant names. Hunt’s texts are presented here for the first time, and he is to be congratulated for giving exposure to medicine in a neglected language.

Reservations about a work that fills an important gap in the field can only be regarded as minor. The first stated purpose of the book is to rescue Anglo-Norman *materia medica* from “oblivion”, and Hunt achieves this. But other objectives are unevenly realized. The editor’s definition of popular medicine as “non-theoretical medicine exclusively concerned with the therapeutic administration of naturally occurring *materia medica*” will strike some as eccentric. It is, for one thing, at war with the texts Hunt edits, which contain charms and prayers. More than once he adopts the positivist stance of former days by evaluating early writers according to the amount of magic, superstition, and the irrational he finds. By “popular”, Hunt seems to mean what others have meant by “practical”. In any case, a less limiting definition derived from Hunt’s own sources might have served his readers better.

The way Hunt explicates the thirteenth century is curious as well. Most of the editor’s introduction concerns periods before and, surprisingly, after, the time when his texts were written. Considerable attention is devoted to Oxford’s most famous medical doctor, John of Gaddesden, and to the medical and religious writer John of Mirfield, neither of whom could be

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said to be “popular” (they wrote learned Latin texts) and both of whom lived in the fourteenth century. Seemingly more relevant figures from the previous century, some with French associations, like Arnald of Villanova, Bartholomaeus Anglicus, Gilbertus Anglicus, and Roger Bacon, are either given less space or omitted.

Hunt footnotes books, dissertations, and articles by the hundred, but again his odd sense of proportion may disturb some readers (as will the lack of a bibliography or detailed index). Works by major historians like Michael McVaugh, Vivian Nutton, and Nancy Siraisi are badly neglected. On a related front, while *materia medica* during the period after Hunt’s texts were written is a can of worms the editor opens himself, his coverage of the topic is eccentric. In his list of edited recipes in Middle English, for instance, the editor inexplicably includes Huling Ussery’s biographical survey of fourteenth-century learned physicians but omits the two largest collections of recipe and antidotal material yet edited in the field: English translations of Guy de Chauliac’s *Grand surgery* and Gilbertus Anglicus’ *Compendium of medicine*. And, given the editor’s stated wish that scientists use his material to further a quest for “Green Pharmacy”, one wishes that he had provided translations of his most interesting recipes for them to employ. Modern plant identifications are helpful, but unless the way in which *materia medica* was used is understood, whatever secrets writers like Hunt hope to reveal will remain hidden.

In short, Hunt’s book deserves praise for the efforts he has expended to make thirteenth-century medical texts better known. His analysis of medieval medicine and pharmacy, however, leaves something to be desired. A more tightly-focused study of the important texts the book prints, in attempting less, might have achieved more.

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JOHN WALTER and ROGER SCHOFIELD (eds.), *Famine, disease and the social order in early modern society*, Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy and Society in Past Time 10, Cambridge University Press, 1989, 8vo, pp. xiv, 335, £35.00, \$49.50.

Andrew Appleby, who died in 1980, devoted the whole of his tragically short academic career to the study of the complex relationships between disease and diet, epidemic and famine, population crisis and economic change in England and France from the early sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century. This volume of essays by friends and colleagues provides a set of invaluable summaries of subsequent research in these fields, together with many new insights of potential and significance. As a synthesis of recent research, the introductory chapter by John Walter and Roger Schofield is particularly valuable.

As Walter notes, “The impoverished repertory of English folktales lacks those tales, common in other early modern European societies, in which peasant culture confronts the dilemma of too many mouths to feed and in which supernatural salvation so often took the form of a super-abundance of food” (p. 75). Why did England so early escape from this kind of “harvest vulnerability”? The book offers a range of answers. Some are primarily economic, as in E. A. Wrigley’s stress on the difference between gross and net agricultural output, and various discussions of market integration and crop diversification and substitution. But much of the difference must be attributed to social factors. Walter and Schofield sum up their review by concluding that “The social order mattered: as a critical determinant of demographic change, and as the basis of political as well as economic institutions, it fashioned the conditions of death, no less than those of life” (p. 73). In a provocative essay, Paul Slack argues persuasively for a new look at the role of social controls, including quarantines, in the disappearance of plague. For high-price years, Walter points to the mediating roles played by a range of social mechanisms. Some improved the access of the poor to food (formal or informal sharecropping, live-in service, or payment in kind). Some increased disposable incomes in hard times (the widespread use of credit or the sale of food to members of the local community at below market prices). Some, for those with the right to claim such community privileges, legitimized claims for local collective support, through toleration of begging, or through charity and the Poor Law, features which, as