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is drawn precisely. This is the very model of scrupulous scholarship.

Murray groups his suicide accounts according to the sources from which they are drawn. He systematically works his way through chronologies, judicial records and religious sources, sub-dividing each category as he goes. First, he examines chronicles of public figures and private individuals, town chronicles and chronicles of religious orders. Then, he investigates the legal documents: Eyre rolls, coroners' records and rolls of the King's Bench in England; French ecclesiastical and secular court rulings and the Parlement's Letters of Remission; and town judicial records from the Empire. Finally, he analyses biographies of saints (*vitae*), accounts of miracles (*miracula*), and stories told for the sake of moral instruction (*exempla*).

Murray offers excellent descriptions of all these genres. This is important, he explains, because knowledge of the literary conventions involved helps us to appreciate how each suicide account has been shaped. Murray rightly reminds us of the methodological principle that these legal and literary records were not designed to record suicide cases for historical purposes. Instead, each case involves an intricate piece of historical reconstruction, in which the processes generating the suicide account are examined in an attempt to reach back to the historical event that stood behind it.

The years of effort that went into this task have paid rich dividends. When all the necessary qualifications have been made, Murray is left with a database of 700 suicides, the details of which are summarized in a fifty-page Appendix. Three hundred and ten of these cases are recounted in the first fourteen chapters of the book. The final two chapters attempt to make statistical sense of this information, with calculations of the rate of suicide, the proportion of suicides to other homicides, and whether the rate of suicide increased in the sixteenth century. Information is also provided on the victims' gender, wealth, occupation, age, family status, and preferred method of suicide.

Readers of this journal will be interested to know that Murray reports only one case of a *medicus* having attempted suicide. This was the Englishman Richard Blofot of Cheddestan who, having killed his wife and children, attempted to hang himself and was eventually imprisoned in Norwich in 1270 (p. 444). More importantly, Murray reports that physical ailment does not seem to have been a major cause of suicide, or at least this was not the sort of thing that the sources recorded. But judicial and religious sources do cite mental illness as a major factor in suicide. Recognized psychological problems included derangement, madness and insanity (*frenesis, alienatio mentis, insania*) on the one hand and sadness (*tristitia, aedia*), depression (*melancholia*) and despair (*desperatio, taedium vitae*) on the other. Cases in which these factors are mentioned are noted in Chapter 14, but Murray does not investigate these concepts in detail. Presumably he will return to the issue in the third volume of his trilogy.

This volume provides us with by far the most detailed record of medieval suicide to date. The only problem is that the reader is left wondering what it all means. But maybe this is Murray's way of holding us in suspense for the second and third instalments of this epic project.

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Jean-Pierre Bénézet, *Pharmacie et médicament en Méditerranée occidentale (XIII^e–XVI^e siècles)*, Sciences, Techniques et Civilisations du Moyen Âge à l'Aube des Lumières, Paris, Honoré Champion, 1999, pp. 794 (hardback 2-7453-0001-6).

Until recently, histories of pharmacy in the Western Mediterranean from the late Middle Ages to the early Renaissance have mainly consisted of positivistic studies of

theoretical texts and the evolution of pharmaceutical literature, as well as editions of pharmacists' statutes and inventories. Attempts at placing the apothecary in the medical market place of the time have tended to rely on anecdotes and bare facts rather than on a critical and contextualized analysis of the available sources. There are a few notable exceptions to this type of writing, such as Ivanna Ait's *Tra scienza e mercato: gli speciali a Roma nel tardo medioevo* (Rome, 1996). Nevertheless, until very recently we lacked a much needed picture of the reality of the practice of pharmacy during that important period, as well as a work which positioned the use of drugs in its social, cultural and economic environment.

This is why Jean-Pierre Bénézet's compelling book is so welcome. By focusing on two important issues: the pharmacist and his work, and drugs and health concerns, he provides us with an account of pharmacists and pharmaceutical therapy set within the wider framework of the medical and economic world of the Mediterranean from the thirteenth century to the sixteenth. Drawing on material such as inventories, account books and legal records that contain much information related to the daily life and work of pharmacists in major cities in the area (among them Aix-en-Provence, Barcelona, Marseilles, Palermo, Grasse and Zaragoza), he manages to build up a convincing corpus of sources, which are continuously and carefully analysed. Bénézet uses the pharmacy shop ("*le carrefour de la vie sanitaire*") as his point of departure. He presents many refreshingly original views on health care, which are firmly based in the social and economic environment of the area and of the period.

The first part of the book is devoted to the pharmacist and his work. Bénézet gives a detailed account of the apothecary's task. He then looks at such issues as competition, power, solidarity, work hierarchies and wealth in relation to apothecaries in both larger cities such as Aix-en-Provence and

smaller ones like Martigues. By focusing on the activities of an Arles pharmacy as preserved in very complete account books, he builds up a picture of health care in that Mediterranean community. This is followed by a study of apothecaries' links with other medical practitioners who were their clients: the types of drugs demanded by such consumers, drug use according to social status, sex and the use of drugs, as well as the apothecaries' merchandizing strategies. Bénézet gives a nice and, to the best of my knowledge, the first important account of the libraries of some pharmacists, revealing an aspect of their professional culture hitherto unknown.

The second part of the book is a magnificent statistical study of drug use. He traces the evolution of drug therapy from simples to compounds, raising important issues such as the interaction between learned literature and lay attitudes, and the relationship between drugs prescribed in theoretical texts and those available in apothecaries' shops. One could argue that the last chapter on pharmacology and the sick, which focuses on the treatment of pain and plague, verges on the positivistic, as he tends to use the present to explain the past. Nevertheless, his descriptions of the drugs found in account books are useful.

The appendices listing the many, in some cases unpublished, archival and bibliographic references for the inventories consulted (soon to be published in a single volume), provide an excellent resource for historians of pharmacy. The bibliography is very extensive, although, surprisingly, both Michael McVaugh's *Medicine before the plague*, and Katherine Park's *Doctors and medicine in early Renaissance Florence*, are missing.

All in all, Bénézet has produced a work which is undoubtedly a *terminus post quem* for anyone interested in pharmacists and drugs. He closes a historiographical tradition built upon anecdote and opens the door on "an intimate history" (to paraphrase Theodore Zeldin) of drugs and

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pharmacy in Mediterranean countries. The gaps in his argument (a price worth paying for a work covering such a wide sweep of time and place) provide scope for others who wish to approach the subject in the same rigorous and interdisciplinary way.

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Cornelius O'Boyle, *The art of medicine: medical teaching at the University of Paris, 1250–1400*, Education and Society in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Leiden, Brill, 1998, pp. xv, 330, €104.00, \$121.00 (hardback 90-04-11124-7).

Any good general history of medieval medicine will tell the reader briefly about a collection of short medical texts later known as the *Articella*, saying that it provided an introduction to medicine and established the authority of Hippocratic and Galenic medicine, and that it became the core of medical teaching in medieval universities. Cornelius O'Boyle explores what it meant at the university of Paris up to 1400, first describing the origins and development of the medical faculty and the origins and careers of medical students, before analysing the origins and various forms of the collection. The collection had three main stages and names. (1) The *Art of medicine* (*Ars medicinae*), started out with five texts, the *Isagoge* (*Introduction*) of Johannitius, the Hippocratic *Aphorisms* and *Prognostics*, and two texts of Byzantine origin on urines and the pulse. (2) The much larger *Commented art* (*Ars commentata*) also included Galen's commentaries on three Hippocratic treatises and Haly Ridwan's on Galen's *Tegni*, while (3) the *Little art* (*Articella*) contained only these last four commented texts. O'Boyle's database is about 180 manuscripts of the *Art*, and these enable him to chart in detail these three manifestations and their many

and various subordinate forms. The origins of the *Art* and its earliest form are linked to translations at Monte Cassino and Salerno in the eleventh century, twelfth-century teaching at Salerno, and (possibly) the development of scholastic techniques in the schools of northern France, while later forms are linked to the later development of university teaching and also to regionalism, with the *Commented art* triumphing in Paris and the *Articella* in Italy. O'Boyle concludes with chapters describing how the *Art* was acquired, taught and learnt.

O'Boyle is always firm in his view and clear in exposition, witness, for example, his careful summary of conflicting modern theories about the origins of the *Art*. His concern for detail and the concrete is already seen early in the book, in the chapter on Parisian medical men. While necessarily relying on Ernest Wickersheimer's biographical dictionary of medieval French medical practitioners and Danielle Jacquart's supplement and prosopographical study of them, he reworks the material to bring named individuals closer to the reader. The concern is even more striking in the middle and later chapters. These parade before the reader's eyes the *Commented art* as a folio book, physically much larger than the *Art of medicine*; they show where a copy could or could not be borrowed; they reveal how much a copy cost and how long it took to copy it out. In two splendid concluding chapters O'Boyle looks at the layout of texts and various sorts of emendations, marginalia, diagrams and notes, and uses these to bring back to life the teaching and learning of the text in those now remote classrooms. Most readers will be impressed and some may be moved by O'Boyle's intellectual passion: to demonstrate as *tangibly* as possible what his manuscripts show.

I have only two caveats, both minor and neither of them serious criticisms of the author. One is that more active copy-editing was needed, and the other that the reader