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*Hospital Politics in Seventeenth-Century France: The Crown,
Urban Elites and the Poor* (review)

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William Cecil as a royal servant but also as the promoter of legislation which theoretically allowed for conciliar rule without a monarch at the head of council (p. 75). His idea of paradox resonates strongly with Collinson's argument for the very notion of a royal republic being paradoxical yet also possible.

While much of this collection deals with political theory and therefore with the realm of the elite, regional manifestations of republicanism are also addressed. Ethan Shagan's chapter argues that there were two republics in early modern England, one concerning central government and the other being participatory local government (p. 35). His arguments again follow Collinson's lead, especially the latter's analysis of the Swallowfield case of 1596, a case of apparent republicanism emanating from regional England.

More than anything, this collection of essays, by mostly North American scholars, is a tribute to the richness and originality of Collinson's original essay, in that so much further analysis and interpretative argument can be extrapolated from it, including the study of humanism and philology. The substance of their arguments resided in Elizabethan London, regional England, in the reigns before and after Elizabeth's and even in the early colonies in North America.

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McHugh, Tim, *Hospital Politics in Seventeenth-Century France: The Crown, Urban Elites and the Poor* (The History of Medicine in Context), Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007; hardback; pp. 191; frontispiece; R.R.P. £55.00; ISBN 9780754657620.

Tim McHugh's aim in this book is 'to reassess the relationship between the central government and the local elites responsible for the deliverance of assistance to both the sick and able-bodied poor'. Using 'under-utilised or ignored' hospital records for Paris, Montpellier and Nîmes, the cities at the centre of this study. McHugh's study innovatively and successfully demonstrates the central place the local elite had in the management and development of hospitals in Early Modern France. Most significantly, it also establishes why more in-depth research of the hospital archives must be undertaken in order to broaden our understanding of the history of the early modern hospital.

In Chapters 1 and 2, McHugh provides a fresh discussion of the contemporary attitudes toward charity and poverty, how they shaped poor relief and led to *enfermement* (enclosure) of the poor in the seventeenth century. By this time, though the act of charitable giving had retained its traditional quality of redemption for the elite, poverty had come to be viewed as a fault of the poor themselves, attributable to their lack of morality and unwillingness to work. Traditionally, French poor relief and hospitals were managed at the local level, the crown's involvement taking the form of a largely absent overseer. As McHugh demonstrates, however, the crown made occasional attempts to prevent the reform or establishment of new hospitals when such plans conflicted with royal interests. With the Edict of Nantes (1598) effectively ending the Wars of Religion, Catholic reformist groups, such as the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, and local elites believed *enfermement* to be the solution to the social, moral and religious problems assailing the kingdom.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the Hôtel-Dieu and Hôpital Général of Paris, with McHugh originally locating his discussion within the context of the hospitals' own records, sources greatly under-utilized in earlier studies of hospital reform and management. This is particularly so in the case of the Paris Hôtel-Dieu which was the largest hospital of its kind in France and viewed as the model institution for the rest of the country. What makes McHugh's chapter 'The Reform of the Paris Hôtel-Dieu' so welcome is that despite the hospital's importance, it has not recently had the lead role in a historical study (its last starring roles being in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), nor have its extant records been the focus of an in-depth analysis.

In this study, McHugh has blown the dust off the records and successfully utilized them in order to demonstrate the dominant role the elite had in the governance and reform of the Paris Hôtel-Dieu in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was they, not the crown, who kept strict watch over medical appointments and practices within the hospital, dismissing anyone whose actions compromised the care of the poor and undermined the reputation of the hospital and its governors. Using the same approach with the Hôpital Général sources, McHugh again demonstrates that it was the elite who succeeded in creating 'the most important social welfare institution in the kingdom', despite Louis XIV's claims to the contrary.

Chapters 5 and 6 examine the cases of Catholic Montpellier and Protestant Nîmes in the seventeenth century. One important fact that emerges from these chapters is that crown edicts concerning hospitals and poor relief reform were

not always followed outside of Paris, regardless of whether under Protestant or Catholic rule. It is the similarity of their paths toward hospital reform that makes these case studies so interesting. The elite of both cities ignored crown edicts they judged to be irrelevant to their individual religious and economic circumstances. In direct contravention of the Edict of Nantes (1598), the Montpellier hospital authorities denied Protestant inmates the ministrations of their own priests and actively sought to convert them, a practice the crown made no endeavours toward correcting. Nimois Protestants established their own hospital in 1653 for these very same reasons; the Catholic monopoly of the Hôtel-Dieu had led to conversion attempts on Protestant inmates. The elite of the Montpellier and Nîmes hôpitaux généraux ignored the crown dictates regarding hospital operations and opted for the less costly practice of assistance to the poor within their own homes, despite the crown's wish to hide away the morally-corrupt and unruly poor in institutions of confinement.

McHugh's book is a refreshing and informative contribution to the growing annals on hospital and poor relief reform in the Early Modern period.

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Mulder-Bakker, Anneke B., ed., Margot H. King and Hugh Feiss, trans., *Mary of Oignies: Mother of Salvation* (Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts 7), Turnhout, Brepols, 2007; hardback; pp. xii, 260; R.R.P. €60.00; ISBN 9782503517032.

Mary of Oignies (c.1177-1213), more usually known in her own day as Mary of Nivelles, is often known today as the first of the Low Countries beguines. Of course, she was by no means the first, but she was the one whom James of Vitry singled out from among the 'many women in the diocese of Liège' who exhibited 'shining sanctity' when he responded to Fulk of Toulouse's request to write about holy women in the Liège region. Writing his *vita* of Mary (this 'pearl of Christ') in around 1215, at a time when heresy was a clear problem and strict institutionalization of religious life was seen by some as a solution, James (as Anneke Mulder-Bakker argues) seemed to see Mary and her fellow *mulieres sanctae* as an alternative solution. That is, James presented these holy women as positive examples of everything that was