



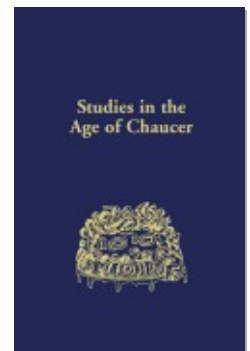
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*A Latin Technical Phlebotomy and Its Middle English  
Translation* . Vol. 74 by Linda E. Voigts, Michael R. McVaugh  
(review)

John B. Friedman

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Finally, Vantuono's glossary supplies pertinent data "for every form of every word, with specific grammatical elements noted in every instance" (1:xiv), not the etymological roots of words. Furthermore, bracketed words—Middle English headwords—direct the reader's attention to the appropriate reference in the *OED* and the *MED*; in many instances the medieval pronunciation of words is indicated by brackets following individual entries. Although the editor's scrupulous attention to detail is indeed admirable, his deletion of "common words" (2:449–55) from the glossary mars an otherwise exemplary effort.

Despite this reviewer's qualified praise for the introductory essay on *Patience* and *Gawain*, the bibliographic citations, and the glossary, Vantuono has produced the most comprehensive edition of the *Pearl* poet's works, a true lodestar for scholars and students of medieval literature.

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LINDA E. VOIGTS and MICHAEL R. MCVAUGH. *A Latin Technical Phlebotomy and Its Middle English Translation*. Vol. 74, Pt. 2, 1984. Philadelphia, Pa.: American Philosophical Society, 1984. Pp. 69. \$10.00.

The present volume contains a Latin technical bloodletting manual written about 1225 and ascribed to the Montpellier physician Henry of Winchester and a Middle English translation made about 1400 and comprising part of a medical miscellany now Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 176/97. These texts, along with a synopsis of their contents, an appendix with another Middle English phlebotomy, a glossary of certain Middle English words, and three miniatures showing the process of venesection, and bloodletting men account for the second half of Voigts' and McVaugh's monograph. The first thirty-four pages consist of a detailed discussion of bloodletting as a medical technique and of the texts themselves.

"Of Phlebotomie" instructs its users in the art of letting blood—since the four humours are contained in the blood—to prevent or control an excessive concentration of a particular humour leading to illness. It also

indicates for which diseases, for example, gout and certain fevers, phlebotomy is indicated as well as appropriate times of the year in which to perform it.

This small book will be the standard work on the subject for some time to come. The introductory matter, together with the texts, gives a clear idea of phlebotomy and is logically presented and well documented, showing the authors' wide reading in the medical literature of the late Middle Ages. As far as is possible to judge without having compared their transcriptions with the originals, Voigts and McVaugh were very careful and rational editors, adhering closely to the rather unsettled orthography of the Middle English, for example, yet not putting an excessive amount of apparatus between the reader and the text.

There are about one thousand works on medicine in Middle English. The authors classify this material into treatises which are essentially academic and those which are remedy books intended for popular audiences. It is to the former class that "Of Phlebotomie" belongs, though, interestingly, the Middle English text seems to have been translated from the Latin academic original by a certain Austin for Thomas Plouden, d. 1413, a London barber-surgeon.

The editors claim that "Of Phlebotomie" can teach us much about the problems which Middle English translators faced in dealing with technical or scientific Latin works, and perhaps this is true, though the work could profit from a longer discussion of this point to support their contention. Voigts and McVaugh show very well, however, the way medieval phlebotomy developed from a debased Hippocratic and Galenic medical tradition. Indeed, there are vestiges of Greek terminology in "Of Phlebotomie" in words like "apofresis" for the technique of successive bloodlettings.

"Henry of Winchester" shows a knowledge of Constantine Africanus's *Pantechni* and *Megatechni* in his discussion of the veins of the arm and of the different sorts of fevers aided by phlebotomy. Curiously, Constantine was a rather old-fashioned source for the period in which the Latin text was composed, and even more so for that of the translation. Its editors feel that the English academic tradition was not as up to date as that of the Continent and that the English universities had far less regulatory power over practitioners than had Continental ones. Thus texts of a somewhat outmoded type might be quite current in an English academic setting, especially among aspirants for several advanced degrees of which medicine might be only one. Though the English university environment was not favorable to theoretical medicine, it did stress surgery, and the Henry of

Winchester text must have appealed to people like Plouden because of its practical and logical structure, indicating which veins to open for what sorts of illnesses. Thus the shift from an Oxford or Cambridge to a London milieu is not as startling as might at first appear.

There are a few misprints, inaccuracies, and omissions in this monograph. For example, "1d" in n. 1 should read "id," "is is" in n. 62 should read "it is," and one wonders whether the Middle English word *scorte* on p. 15 should read *schorte*. One does not "ligature" a limb but rather ligates it. The Milan facsimile of John Ketham's *Fasciculus Medicinae* was edited by Sudhoff and translated by Singer. M. R. James's edition of the York Austins' library catalogue occurs in a work called *Fasciculus . . . dicatus*, and is now being reedited by K. W. Humphreys. Volumes of the Early English Text Society would be easier to find if the letters indicating Extra or Ordinary Series were consistently added before the volume numbers, cf. nn. 54 and 95. It would be less confusing to indicate that Constantine Africanus translated Isaac Israeli or Judaeus, instead of separating "Constantine's *Pantechni*" in the paragraph on p. 24 from the "medical authorit[y]" Isaac Israeli. Moreover, though it does not contain material on blood letting, the edition of book 1 of the *Pantechni* by M. T. Malato and U. de Martini (1961) is the only modern one and should probably be cited. Also, Charles C. Clark, "The Zodiac Man in Medieval Medical Astrology" (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado, 1979), makes a recent companion study to Harry Bober's work on these drawings. Aside from these minor points, Voigts and McVaugh have given us a valuable study of medieval phlebotomy and one which will be very useful to Chaucerians as well as to a variety of medievalists.

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WINTHROP WETHERBEE. *Chaucer and the Poets: An Essay on Troilus and Criseyde*. Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 1984. Pp. 249. \$22.50.

The modest subtitle to Wetherbee's new book masks its importance, its ambition, and its significant originality. We have here not a mere "essay"