

SARAH STAR, ed. *Henry Daniel and the Rise of Middle English Medical Writing*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022. Pp. 212. \$55.00 (cloth).  
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2023.157

In 2020, E. Ruth Harvey, M. Teresa Tavormina, and Sarah Star published a representative edition of Henry Daniel's late fourteenth-century treatise on uroscopy, *Liber Uricrisiarum: A Reading Edition* (University of Toronto Press). Central to medieval medical training and diagnostic practice, uroscopy involved far more than just examining urine: it incorporated astronomy, calendric computation, physiology, humoralism, and human anatomy. The significance of Daniel's treatise is evidenced by its survival: thirty-seven manuscript copies (and two print editions) identified thus far represent several recognizable versions and numerous hybrid texts, abridgments, adaptations, and excerpts. Beyond its apparent usefulness, what is most notable about Daniel's work is that it was the first substantial medical treatise composed in Middle English.

*Henry Daniel and the Rise of Middle English Medical Writing*, edited by Sarah Star, is an important companion volume that further explicates what is known about the sources, contexts, contents, and legacies of Daniel's work. Star's introduction touches on Daniel's motivations, first for writing his treatise in Latin and then for translating it into the vernacular: not for profit but rather to make uroscopy "more openly taghte" and thus accessible to those without a Latinate education (4). She also dispels misconceptions in earlier scholarship by demonstrating that, while modeled on and drawing from older texts, Daniel's treatise is an original piece of writing and not, as long assumed, simply a translation of someone else's work. The subsequent essays explore two main themes: the broader context in which Daniel produced his work and the authorities that underlay it, and the textual contents (and variants) of the *Liber Uricrisiarum* and its literary heirs.

Faith Wallis opens the first set of essays with a detailed look at how the Latin tradition of uroscopy evolved, the tensions between urine science theory and practice (including the latter's increasingly important role in medieval medicine), and the specific sources from which Daniel drew most of his material. Wallis clearly has fun with her material, playing with the liquid nature of urine by pointing to "watershed" moments in the uroscopy tradition and "the stream of Latin literature on urines that flowed past the shores of *Liber Uricrisiarum* [which] had its headwaters in the Greek medical tradition" (19). Jest aside, Wallis's treatment of the complicated development of uroscopy's finer details, especially variations in colors, qualities, and thus meanings of urine, and their interpretation by subsequent generations of writers, affords scholars better understanding of Daniel's efforts to position himself as both the heir to and vanguard of uroscopy practice.

Winston Black turns to the sources underpinning another of Daniel's writings: an herbal. Black focuses primarily on Daniel's use of two works that, in effect, required him to engage in a process of double translation—Latin into English and verse into prose. Black's masterly knowledge of the eleventh- and twelfth-century herbals by Macer Floridus and Henry of Huntingdon shines through here, and his essay offers an exemplary appraisal of how Daniel understood, translated, adapted, explained, and incorporated various entries from Macer and Henry's poems into his own text. Peter Murray Jones rounds out this section by exploring Daniel's place among contemporary medical authors and compilers. Jones notes that, although "Daniel belonged to a constellation of identifiable English writers on medicine between 1370 and 1425" (68), most of whom evidenced an awareness of each others' work, none of them appears in Daniel's *Liber Uricrisiarum* or herbal and nor does Daniel appear in their works. This, Jones argues, is likely because Daniel wrote in Middle English for charitable reasons, while the others wrote in Latin primarily for their peers. Daniel's was also the only work devoted to uroscopy, while the other writers primarily addressed topics that Daniel ignored

(for example, surgery, therapeutics). Even the encyclopedic handbooks produced by fellow friars disregarded Daniel and his work, just as he did them.

E. Ruth Harvey's examination of how Daniel revised his work and the connections that run between various versions opens the second half of the volume. As Harvey demonstrates, tracing these many textual and stylistic revisions enables us both to appreciate the intricate layers that comprise the *Liber Uricrisiarum* and to gain insight into how Daniel's thinking processes, ideas, and understanding evolved over time. M. Teresa Tavormina further examines Daniel's revisions before demonstrating how later alterations and abridgements drew on his *Liber Uricrisiarum*, sometimes in its entirety and sometimes using only the "good bits" (124). Despite the numerous surviving copies of the *Liber Uricrisiarum*, however, Tavormina reaffirms Jones's observation that the only direct medieval references to Daniel appear in his own later works. Hannah Bower then reorients the focus to four anecdotal case studies that appear in later versions of the treatise. Taken together, these anecdotes offer a different glimpse into contemporary medical practice by shifting attention away from what Bower calls the academic "act of looking" at urine and towards "the polyvocal nature of real medical encounters" and "other modes of knowing" (152). Daniel's desire to reach a non-Latinate audience is evidenced here by his inclusion of patients and lay medical practitioners with "uncertain or questionable origins, education, and authority" (153).

Star completes this impressive volume by demonstrating Daniel's unrivaled contribution to Middle English through his creation of hundreds of Anglicized Latin—in Daniel's terms "almost-Latin" (158)—words. More than 1,000 English words appear for the first time in writing in the *Liber Uricrisiarum*, predating or contemporaneous with their earliest records in the *Middle English Dictionary* and *Oxford English Dictionary*. Daniel's influence thus stretched beyond the medical sphere: it significantly affected the English language itself, both its "ortographic" (161) and fifteenth-century vernacular literary culture, including the works of John Lydgate—who uses "Danielian" (166) words but fails, as did Daniel's medical contemporaries, to give him credit.

The *Reading Edition* broached many of the topics addressed here in a preliminary manner. Yet what becomes immediately clear in this current volume—and is emphasized by the contributing authors—is that much more remains to unpack about Daniel's contribution to medieval medicine and the milieu in which his work appeared. The Henry Daniel Project team (based at the University of Toronto) has many years of fruitful research ahead of it. This is possibly only the first of what could, and hopefully will, become a series of exceptionally valuable companion volumes.

Lori Jones 

University of Ottawa and Carleton University

[lori.jones@uottawa.ca](mailto:lori.jones@uottawa.ca)

THOMAS M. TRUXES. *The Overseas Trade of British America: A Narrative History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021. Pp. 464. \$40.00 (cloth).  
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2023.143

Despite the richness of British American economic historiography, Thomas Truxes is correct to note that "the history of colonial trade has never been brought together in a single work" (ix). In *The Overseas Trade of British America: A Narrative History* he provides this much-needed concise narrative. Truxes successfully translates a field traditionally dominated by quantification and arcane terminology into a readable wide-ranging story. His narrative, though, skirts some of the most fertile areas in the recent resurgence of scholarship on the history of