

Javier Calle-Martín, editor. *John Arderon's De judiciis urinarum: A Middle English Commentary on Giles of Corbeil's Carmen de urinis*. Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies, Liverpool University Press, 2020. Pp. xvi, 176. £80.00. ISBN 9781786942203.¹



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The full title of Professor Javier Calle's scholarly edition of a late Middle English medical treatise includes not just the identification of two works, Arderon's *De judiciis urinarum* and the source which Arderon comments and expands on, Giles of Corbeil's *Carmen de urinis*, it also tells us from the beginning that two manuscript sources have been used to prepare the text: the Hunterian codex, numbered 328 in Glasgow University Library, and the English manuscript found in the Rylands collection of the University of Manchester Library. That there are two works and two texts of the work edited is a rather meta-ecdotic approach that we have to ponder in its just measure.

It is also remarkable that the volume is part of the long-standing series of Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies, being one of the five volumes for 2020. The series started in 1975 under the editorship of Michael Swanton, with W. J. P. Boyd's *Aldred's Marginalia; Explanatory Comments in the Lindisfarne Gospels*. It then suffered a hiatus between 1978 and 1985, but has been continued with regularity to reach by September 2022 the remarkable figure of eightyone volumes, most of which are outstanding works whose influence in English Medieval studies is fully appreciated by the specialists and the students of language and literature, together with historians and culturalists. In that sense, Javier Calle's volume adds a significant highlight to the series, as he is responsible for one of the first editions of technical treatises in the series, the other (though somewhat homiletic) also from 2020: Ralph Hanna's *Malachy the Irishman, On Poison: A Study and an Edition*. This may be a change triggered by the present editors, Vincent Gillespie and Richard Dance, and may be welcome by many readers of the series. One may also point to the fact that Calle is the first Spaniard and one of the very few non-British scholars to publish in this quality series.

Calle's edition of Arderon's *De judiciis urinarum* follows the clear-cut structure of the Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies series: an introduction to

¹ See: <https://liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/books/id/54396/>.

the work (epages 1–37; print 17–54); the text itself (epages 39–112; print 55–128), a translation of the work into Present-Day English (epages 113–21; print 129–38); a glossary (epages 123–70; print 139–86); and references (epages 171–76; print 187–92). It is also a work that reproduces by including three plates and seven figures some of the most relevant elements of the source manuscripts (Rylands 1310 and Hunter 328) to provide illustrations of the copyists' hands and structure of the witnesses to support the author's discussion and study. A very eloquent foreword by Professor Maria Teresa Tavormina (epages xi–xvi; print 11–16), together with the customary acknowledgements and table of contents, completes the volume.

The introduction has six different linked sections that deal with the authorship of the treatise, the English version of *De judiciis urinarum* ("On the judgement or diagnose of urines"), reviews the medieval sources, references and medical authorities on the matter, and the first three. Then, Calle goes on to characterise briefly the language of the texts in the two manuscripts and moves on to the codicological features of the texts themselves. This is one of the characteristic interests of the Málaga research group led by professor Calle,² together with the detailed attention to the palaeography of the texts. This is something that can be easily verified by visiting their online materials at *The Málaga Corpus of Early Modern English Scientific Prose*,³ where a full digitised copy and transcription of MS Rylands 310 is available,⁴ while the Hunter MS 328 codex is also fully available at the research group's site for *The Málaga Corpus of Late Middle English*.⁵ The websites, online publications and ample experience in managing research funding since 2002 also help us to establish that the book we are reviewing is an outstanding work.

In the introduction, I have found particularly appealing Calle's historical review of the sources of the (medical) authorities that John Arderon quoted. The span of time we are talking about starts in the fifth century BC with ancient Greek doctors (Hippocrates, Ptolemy, Galen), then moves on to Latin authors (Saint Isidore, Theophilus, Isaac Judaeus), and through the Islamic medieval authors par excellence (Rhazes, Avicenna, Averroes), to reach the Christian medieval authorities on whom *De juriniis* rests its scientific value at the time of the later Middle Ages: Giles de Corbeil himself, Gilbert of

² See: <https://cleft.uma.es/index.html/>.

³ See: <https://modernmss.uma.es/Theproject/>.

⁴ See: <https://modernmss.uma.es/Library/>.

⁵ See: <https://hunter.uma.es/>.

England, Walter Agilon, Bernard de Gordon, and Jean de Saint Amand. Calle mentions that “it would be desirable to identify the specific sources for individual items attributed to the various authorities in order to ascertain the English medical writers’/translators’ awareness of major medical authorities” (9). He also mentions that such an analysis is not within the scope of his edition. Indeed this may be more in the field of the history of medicine than in philology, but I would not be surprised that the Málaga group may be producing a monograph study on the sources and analogues of Arderon’s treatise.

In the section devoted to the language of the manuscripts, the Central Midland Standard, after the nomenclature of the Helsinki school, seems to characterise the work, and Calle supports this choice with abundant scholarly sources that provide sound foundations to the idea that Arderon’s treatise is part of that concept, at least as far as the Hunterian MS 328 is concerned. He also points out that uniformity in such a standard was really observed more in morphology than in “orthography.” I assume that “spelling” would be a slightly better conceptual approach than “orthography,” precisely because the Standard discussed was still quite incipient, and unless the scribes’ particular spelling is to be considered an orthography, it is not easy to level spelling and orthography here, even if we assume that the Central Midlands Standard characterises the scribes’ practices. The same principle can be applied to the Rylands MS 1310, though we are in the presence of a sixteenth-century manuscript in that case. Calle talks with great accuracy about spelling standardisation rather than about orthography (11), so one may take a rather flexible and lax stance about what we are to understand by orthography. It is hence symptomatic of the section’s mood that it is started by the reference Calle makes to Norman Blake’s 1996 work (though the introductory section of his *History of the English Language* is—logically—somewhat based on the introduction to his earlier CHEL, vol. II),⁶ where Blake discussed the “orthography” of the 1400–1660 period, in a standardising process that derives from Michael Samuels’ *Central Middle Standard* (first published in 1963). All that is discussed in detail by Calle by confronting the emergence of Chancery English and the dialectal features of later Middle English regional standards. Calle reviews thoroughly the case and refers to several

⁶ Norman Francis Blake’s *A History of the English Language* (1996) and *Cambridge History of the English Language: Volume II* (1992) are still standard reference items in all degrees in English Language and Literature around the English-speaking world, some thirty years after their publication.

authors of the Helsinki School and their associates, but does not forget Milroy and Milroy, Rutkowska, or McIntosh and Benskin, among some others.

Professor Calle also assesses the weight of variant spellings from different regional dialects by contrasting the central features of the Central Midland Standard with those found, not just in the main manuscripts he uses for his edition, but also in the abridged versions of manuscripts Hunter 328 and Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College 55 (also labelled as LP 737). The section is finished by the discussion of variants that became successful against those that were discarded in the competitive process that the speakers of English in the period effected in the development of standardisation. The language subsection (1.4), within the scope of what one tends to find in similarly edited texts, is one of the most satisfactory ones for the student of historical linguistics.

The details of the study of the codicology and palaeography of the manuscripts are exemplary, and quite clearly the result of close personal inspection. Historically, this is also the case with punctuation (section 1.6.3), as the pilcrow, *punctus*, colon, slash, double slash (specifically named perioslash, after the practice of the last thirty years or so), comma and parenthesis are successively explained to the eye of the untrained linguist. The study of punctuation marks tended to be relegated in classical nineteenth- and early twentieth-century medieval texts editions, despite being, however, one of the most crucial features to establish scribal and scriptorial practices. Calle masters these items and shows us how to cope with a detailed classification of the significant uses of each one of them. Scribal emendations and abbreviations are also covered minutely, including facsimilar figures that illustrate each contentious element to the dot.

The next section of the book contains Calle's explanations and justifications of choices for his text. Hence, he establishes the editorial conventions of his synoptic edition and does so remarkably well in just a couple of pages. This goes after the Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies practice of almost fifty years, but Professor Calle has taken painstaking attention to his excellent rendering of the texts he has studied and collated to produce the parallel (double column) text of Arderon's *De judiciis urinarum*. This is followed by a modern English rendering of the treatise which, I suggest, is mainly intended for the benefit of readers whose knowledge of and access to Late Middle English is scant; that is, the non-philological readership, and for those interested in history and the history of science together with advanced University students who may pursue a career in Medieval Studies.

It seems that the glossary conventions and the entries themselves in the book are noticeably dependent on the underlying computing tools that help us with the *Málaga Corpus* online. Their structure shows the headword, the part of speech (as defined in traditional grammar), the contemporary meaning of the late Medieval entry, and the different variant alphabetical forms. As both manuscripts were transcribed for analytical purposes in a plain text version and an annotated POS-tagged version, historians of the English language can also use the edition to support their own research and publications as lemma-based searches and data are easily retrieved. This glossary and, especially, its comprehensive explanatory annotations and correct identification of botanical and medical elements is particularly useful for historians of science, especially in the branches of apothecary, kidney and tract infections and general urinary specialities. The glossary is also particularly useful for historical linguists as Professor Calle traces and illuminates some grayish terms whose change or substitution from Middle to later English was not clear enough before reading this edition (see, for instance, the entries for *gromyle*, *Gru*, *popilyon*, or *ylica*).

Finally, a word of praise for the editor and the Liverpool University Press professionals who have also helped the author to reach his readers in a book that has so few typos that one wonders why most national newspapers do not follow their example. All in all, Javier Calle's work on John Arderon's *De judiciis urinarum* is a very significant contribution to improve our knowledge of Late Middle and Early Modern English professional and scientific writings.

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S. I. GONZÁLEZ
Universidad de Oviedo
sigonzalez@uniovi.es