folio highlighted the developing importance of the author and the role of the book as mediator between audience and writer. On the other hand, publishers also used visual devices to identify *sententiae* which might be memorized to be used elsewhere, lines which might be regarded as rhetorical amplifications out of the context of the play itself. Finally, by analyzing the first known printed prompt book of *Hamlet* Chartier moves in a contrary direction from what has come before and shows how the printed page can teach us a great deal about the recreation of theatrical events in differing historical contexts.

As Chartier concludes, in order to understand the mobility of publishing drama in early modern Europe it is necessary to intertwine case studies, close readings, and general reflections. In doing this in his lectures he has also succeeded brilliantly in his goal of mingling "bibliographical analysis, cultural history and literature." This little volume is a tour de force, a superb example of the potential of the new bibliography, McKenzie's sociology of the text. As read text it is dramatic in the extreme; this reviewer can only regret having missed the performances and I do wonder if, like Giles Barber's fourth Panizzi lectures, they were accompanied by appropriate sound and fury, signifying something that has been lost in the subsequent printed form.

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*Medicine, Mortality and the Book Trade* is the eighteenth publication in the Publishing Pathways series edited by Robin Myers and Michael Harris. This volume contains seven essays from the annual conference on book trade history at the University of London. Its theme is novel, its title intriguing. As with any collection of essays, however, this is a difficult work to review because the title barely scratches the surface of its subject and because the compilers rely on conference submissions that range widely in time frame and quality.
Probably the best essay is the first by Michael Harris, "Printer’s Diseases." Here Harris provides riveting details of the print trade in London during the 1860s through analysis of rich material from unusual sources: the Medical Department of the Privy Council, and a Royal Commission on Child Labour. From eyewitness accounts, he depicts the horrendous conditions in which printers worked and the occupational diseases they suffered from claustrophobic quarters, long hours, gas lighting, and lead and bronze dust. Most interestingly, he is able to retrieve the experiences of young boys who would otherwise be lost to memory: ten-year-old Peter George MacClelland, for instance, worked 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.—and often to 10 p.m., when, in his own words, he “runs home then and gets there by half-past 10 p.m., and has my tea [supper] there” (12).

Vanessa Harding similarly examines an unusual document, this one from the seventeenth-century London book trade: a list assiduously maintained by Richard Smyth over the course of his life on the deaths or burials of almost two thousand people known to him—including those in the book trade. Harding appends an alphabetical index of printers and booksellers and the context for their mention in Smyth’s record.

An exploratory essay by Lotte Hellinga outlines the medical component of the *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue*. Identifying over one thousand medical items—a term she appropriately defines broadly to embrace fifteenth-century notions of medicine—Hellinga suggests ways in which the list can be analyzed with profit; for example, a surprising discovery was the prominence of Augsburg as a primary location for printing medical texts.

Two essays focus exclusively on historically significant book collectors. Sylvia De Renzi looks at Robert S. Whipple as a collector of science books; his collection of rare books and scientific instruments formed the basis for the History of Science Museum at the University of Cambridge. John Symons discusses the sly collecting habits of Sir Henry Wellcome, whose collection became both the library of the renowned Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine and the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum in London. Wellcome insisted on using his own staff, usually junior members, to bid at book auctions in order not to be recognized and charged too much for his acquisitions.

Finally, two essays by Peter Isaac and, surprisingly, Roy Porter (the great mind of history of medicine), compile historical descriptions of their respective subjects: the involvement of booksellers and printers
in the sale of medicines; and views on the harm of reading and writing. Isaac’s comment at the end of his essay that modern pharmacies sell books and, “perhaps the ultimate degradation,” supermarkets sell both books and medicines seems out of place both for its condescension and for the fact that he himself notes the long tradition behind this “full circle.”

On the whole, this volume has a catchy title to encompass the broad notions presented in these essays of medical publishing and collecting, and health conditions posed by reading, writing, and working in the trade. Yet instead of presenting insights into a new area of investigation, as apparently verbatim conference papers it leans toward light reading. Not that there is anything wrong with that pastime—especially in travel or in teaching. To this end, Roy Porter’s witty and glib contribution provides the most entertainment by far and delightfully concludes the volume: caveat lector.

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After the introduction of high speed steam presses in the mid-19th century, the hand composition of type remained a major impediment to rapid, mechanized production of printed matter. Composition became, in the words of Thomas Hughes, historian of technology, a “reverse salient,” the trailing edge of advancing technique. Printing proprietors, particularly in daily newspapers, could not realize the full profits of mechanized printing until the composition of type proceeded with the same dispatch as the process of impression. For this reason, inventors set their minds to developing type-composing machines. Without doubt the most successful of these individuals, at least in terms of commercial acceptance, was Ottmar Mergenthaler, inventor of the Linotype.

The life of Ottmar Mergenthaler is a classic story of American ambition and know-how. It has all the elements: humble origins, ingenuity, determination, greed, betrayal, even tragedy. Much of this story can be found in Mergenthaler’s thinly veiled autobiography, The Biography of Ottmar Mergenthaler, which was edited and reissued