

Medicine and the Inquisition in the Early Modern World. Maria Pia Donato, ed. Leiden: Brill, 2019. viii + 208 pp. \$144.

This collection of essays articulates the relationship between the Inquisition and the medical professions between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, with a foray into the nineteenth century. In the introduction, Maria Pia Donato writes that “the aim of this volume is the presentation of new research that specifically addresses anew the role of the Inquisition in various areas of medical theory and practice” (11). With no exception, the contributors perform this goal remarkably well. They explore different aspects of the interdependencies between the Holy Office and physicians in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and colonial America as they expressed themselves through clashes and resistance, collaboration, and mutual support. The contributors provide a much more nuanced view of the nature and goals of the Inquisition in Europe and colonial America, puncturing its image as a ubiquitous and repressive entity. As Donato and Keitt state while discussing Italy and Spain, it was a creation of the Enlightenment.

In this context of reassessment, physicians appear not only as victims but also as active agents, defying the Inquisition openly (Celati), operating in synchrony (Marcus, Giglioni, Baudry, Walker, Few) or opposition (Bouley) with the goals of the Inquisition, or navigating the complex and treacherous waters of the debates between Inquisitors and natural philosophers on the rising importance of corpuscular and atomic theories (Donato). Some physicians decided to become censors of books, including their own, as Marcus details in her essay treating the life and work of Girolamo Rossi. Others took the challenge of emendating their own books by giving them a new countenance, while keeping in place some of the original, problematic traits, as Giglioni shows in his analysis of Juan Huarte de San Juan’s project to “re-adapt” his treatise *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*. Others curtailed and repressed potential competitors under the aegis of the Inquisition, such as New Christian doctors and native and folk healers, both in Europe and Mesoamerica (Walker and Few).

An exciting line of research running through several essays in this collection is the link between the humanistic habit of reading to annotate and analyze and the censorial activity of reading to cut and erase, which Marcus terms “the dark side of commonplac-ing.” Another consequence of the humanistic practices of reading texts in their original version and critically approaching ancient medical knowledge was that early modern physicians applied this reading practice to the Holy Scripture, spreading heretical ideas and religious dissent, especially in a fertile ground like sixteenth-century Venice (Celati). Linked to this line of research is the assimilation that some scholars in this collection—Marcus, Baudry, and Giglioni—undertake of the practices of textual censorship, auto-censorship, and emendation, as actions of bodily mutilation and

modification in line with the bodily metaphor of “expurgation,” a term that censors used when approaching a prohibited text.

This assimilation is reminiscent of the metaphor of the body politics, which Keitt explores in his study of physician Martinez y Fernandez, who appropriated the figure and work of Juan Huarte, whom he depicts as a martyr of the Spanish Inquisition, in order to advance medical and political reforms in nineteenth-century Spain. Citing George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who argue that metaphors “are central to human cognition and are rooted in embodied experience” (156), Keitt states that one can trace how “the body as a source domain has changed over time in the context of our cultural history” (156). Scholars in this collection employ the bodily metaphor to describe as surgical operations what early modern physicians did on their own books and those deemed prohibited by the Inquisition. Since the Inquisition believed that books, like people, could become agents of contamination (Baudry), the infected members needed to be subjected to operations like those that a surgeon would perform on a sick body.

This collection is a precious resource for historians of early modern medicine and the Inquisition, and for scholars interested in examining the roles physicians played in the intersecting interests of members of the secular society and the Inquisition, in the negotiation of overlapping disciplinary boundaries, and in the application of learned theories to the practice of a multifaceted social context.

Monica Calabritto, *Hunter College, CUNY*
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The Poison Trials: Wonder Drugs, Experiment, and the Battle for Authority in Renaissance Science. Alisha Rankin.

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With her sophisticated second book, *The Poison Trials*, Alisha Rankin deftly weaves into a single narrative central questions in the history of early modern science and medicine, focusing on the German and Italian regions. Challenging the periodization of experimental thinking, the author argues that already in the sixteenth century physicians engaged with what constituted proof and evidence, and presented human poison and antidote trials as learned experiments. While ethical concerns are usually placed in the later seventeenth century, Rankin illustrates that sixteenth-century physicians not only devoted attention to methodology but also carefully considered ethics. Finally, the crafting of these trials was profoundly influenced by charlatans’ public demonstrations. Because charlatans, alchemists, and Galenic physicians competed on the market, physicians remained “open to empirics’ ideas” (5). These intertwined arguments rest