

## Book Reviews

14 articles, the most reflective is that of an outsider, Jane Lewis of the London School of Economics, who in an overview of the literature suggests, somewhat at odds with the other contributors, that “it is a mistake to see women as passive recipients [of obstetrical care] or as victims of these changes”.

Essays in the volume edited by Valerie Fildes continue this celebratory note of women’s experience, yet utilize a range of evidence—much of it archival—that permits virtually all the contributions to enhance the debate about whether men’s and women’s attitudes to such intimate matters as childbearing have changed at all over the years, or whether only the parameters of repression have changed. In a fluent contribution on “the construction and experience of maternity” in seventeenth-century England, Patricia Crawford concludes that “a powerful ideology of the good mother as caring for children under patriarchal direction existed”. After accumulating a large number of anecdotes—many of them from manuscript sources—she finds that women valued their maternity quite highly. Linda Pollock takes this triumphalist celebration of women’s physical experience to absurd lengths—again, after piling anecdote upon anecdote—in such undifferentiated declarations as, “Pregnancy when it did ensue was a matter for rejoicing”. The author’s enthusiasm permits her simply to kick aside some inconvenient statistical obstacles, dismissing maternal mortality, for example, as “low”. In an essay on the psychodrama of childbirth, particularly on the lying-in month and the practice of churching, Adrian Wilson, taking his lead from Natalie Davis, interprets “the politics of ritual as a matter of contest *between the sexes* [his italics], stressing the active agency of women”. It would not have been possible to come to any other conclusion and still be included in the volume, or for that matter in the first one either.

Three quantitative analyses deserve special mention. In Robert Schnucker’s short but innovative study of literary references to childhood discipline among the Puritans in the period 1560 to 1634, he finds no changes. Many researchers will want to read Fiona Newall’s analysis of a parish in Hertfordshire that received many nurslings and poor children from London. She finds that the practice of sending children *en nourrice* was quite common until the 1720s. Nor does any “massacre of the innocents” seem to have occurred, as often happened in France. To my mind, the most important article in the book is Valerie Fildes’s, on child abandonment from the late sixteenth until the mid-eighteenth century in London, looking at the mothers and families who did the abandoning as well as at care arrangements for the children. Abandonment rose steadily until the early eighteenth century, then declined: the author is at pains to establish that it is not a sign of maternal indifference to children. Finally, Mary Prior has written an intriguing, brief article on romantic love within marriage as seen from the perspective of poetry. She finds a silence, poems by women in particular in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries sooner critical of marriage than embracing it. From this the author concludes—as do several other contributors—that Lawrence Stone’s well-known hypotheses are incorrect. (The present reviewer comes in for hostile comment as well in both of these volumes.)

The book ends with a useful bibliography of the secondary literature, ordered by such themes as “infant care”, “infanticide and child abuse”, “marriage and family life”, and “working mothers.” In addition to being a literate up-date on what is happening at the intersection of women’s history, family history, and the social history of medicine, it may also be assigned with profit to interested undergraduates.

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FREDERIC LAWRENCE HOLMES, *Eighteenth-century chemistry as an investigative enterprise*, Office for History of Science and Technology, University of California at Berkeley, 1989, 8vo, pp. ii, 144, illus., \$16.00 (paperback).

Professor Holmes’s short book is an unedited printing of five lectures he delivered at the International Summer School in History of Science at Bologna in August 1988. This School, which is held every other year in rotation at Bologna, Uppsala, and Berkeley, brings together postgraduate students and lecturers “to hear new interpretations and to consider new material

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about subjects with which they are already familiar". Holmes achieved both these goals by focusing attention on Antoine Lavoisier's French predecessors at the Academy of Sciences and arguing that their rigorous experimental attention to the identification and classification of salts provided material which Lavoisier took over virtually unchanged in the *Traité élémentaire de chimie* (1789), where a salt was defined as a duality of an acidic and basic oxide. Such chemistry—much of it done by French pharmacists searching for drugs in plant extracts—was, Holmes argues, logically self-contained and independent of any theory of phlogiston or oxygen.

Only the final lecture is devoted to exploring the nature of Lavoisier's revolution. Elsewhere, Holmes makes a critical review of the historiography of eighteenth-century chemistry and the chemical industry. A feature of the original lectures and their printing is the deliberate use of pre-Lavoisierian chemical terminology to demonstrate that "the unsystematic nature of the terms . . . did not prevent [eighteenth-century chemists] from thinking coherently about the compositions, relationships and interactions of the substances these terms designated for them". While probably clear enough at the original oral delivery, the unedited text produces some anachronisms or misidentifications concerning which student readers will need to be warned.

Medical historians concerned with Enlightenment science, and with what chemists and pharmaceutical chemists actually did in their laboratories, will find Holmes's monograph a short and provocative review of the latest views on the chief of medicine's collateral sciences.

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*Journal of the Japan-Netherlands Institute*, 1989, 1: *Papers of the Workshop on the History of the Medical Exchange between Japan and The Netherlands, Tokyo, 25–29 November 1985*, Tokyo, 1989, 8vo, pp. 161. illus.

This seems a favourable era for studies of the interaction between Western and non-Western medical systems. What this journal, a product of Dutch-Japanese collaboration, makes abundantly clear, however, is the extent of the difficulty involved in determining the scale and impact of intercultural relations in the past, and moreover, how hard it is for contemporary scholars to find a common language to describe the level of mutual understanding of past cultures.

Through their East-Indies Company trading centre at Deshima, off Nagasaki, the Dutch were from 1639 until the opening up of Japan by the middle of the nineteenth century, the only Westerners granted some contact with the Japanese. Restricted as this contact seemed—with only one annual visit paid by the Dutch to the capital—it did allow locally, at Deshima, for some medical teaching directly to the Japanese, carried out by the Dutch factory surgeon. A few translations from the Dutch of Western medical treatises were undertaken, even in the seventeenth century, but with greater intensity from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, when also a private academy of Dutch learning was established at Edo. After the mid-nineteenth century Dutch medical teaching increased, especially after the establishment of a Western-style clinic and medical school at Nagasaki by the Dutch in 1861.

Several of the Japanese contributions to the journal, such as Yoshida Tadashi's 'Anatomy in Ranguku', follow these developments, providing comments on the perceived character of the "Dutch learning" as they appear in the Japanese sources. The connection between the curriculum of the Military Medical School at Utrecht and that of the Dutch medical school in Japan is nicely demonstrated in the article by Ishida. The Dutch contributions to the journal focus more narrowly on such aspects of the historical Dutch medical system as the development of public health in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the organization of the nineteenth-century hospital system. The journal ends with a most interesting article by Sugimoto on Dutch linguistics from 1603 to 1868, which elaborates the crucial position of small groups of interpreters and linguists in the "translation" of Western knowledge.

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