

The *Frenchness* of this development makes *Childbirth and the display of authority* an inherently national study (if one can safely use the word “national” in an early modern context). McTavish diligently compares (when possible) French texts with those of other countries, but emphasizes that she is concerned overwhelmingly with Gallic conventions. Indeed, one wishes she had pursued the French connection a little more boldly; perhaps the story of medicine is more localized (nationalized?) than we generally have been led to believe.

It remains to consider McTavish’s method. Like many scholars reliant on interdisciplinary perspectives, her conclusions often make the historical empiricist squirm. “Yes,” we muse, “it *might* have been that way, but then again, perhaps not.” And McTavish is eclectic in her use of theory—picking from history, anthropology, and semiotics. Sometimes one feels that theory is conjured up to support a point for which evidence is otherwise thin or ambiguous. Still, one cannot but admire her ability to bring into our sightline possibilities that had previously—like the child in the womb—remained unseen. It struck this reviewer, however, as slightly peculiar that despite her plea for visual sensitivity to sources, she relies more heavily on words than images. But these are quibbles. McTavish offers us a stimulating range of interpretations to ponder and explore.

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Christine Hillam (ed.), *Dental practice in Europe at the end of the 18th century*, *Clio Medica* 72, Wellcome Series in the History of Medicine, Amsterdam and New York, Rodopi, 2003, pp. 518, €135.00, US\$150.00 (hardback 90-420-1268-4); €55.00, US\$61.00 (paperback 90-420-1258-7).

This book represents the culmination of a project which started with the author’s early doctoral research into the development of dental practice in the English provinces from the late eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth. During this work she discovered, as

others have since, that this is not a story which can focus unblinkingly on England alone. The clue is in the job title: in Britain, we have “dentists” rather than “toothists”, just as we have “opticians” rather than eye-doctors. Traditional, often practitioner-led studies in the history of dentistry have usually failed to make this connection, and routinely failed to investigate it with any degree of thoroughness. Recent years have seen a change, however, and Christine Hillam helped to pull together both professional historians and practitioners from across Europe to assist her in expanding the view of treatment for the teeth most effectively before her untimely death in 2000.

Dental practice in Europe opens with a twenty-page introduction by Hillam, which addresses a number of issues that should be considered to be of central importance to any history of dentistry. The biggest, and thorniest, of these is the use of the words “dentist” and “dentistry”. The writer makes the point that “denter” or “toothist” may be a more appropriate term for those treating teeth, as “dentist” now carries implications and connotations which can gravely distort the picture being viewed. At the other end of the scale of perception, she argues that the terms “charlatan” and “empiric” do not correspond to a scale of competence—to use these terms for practitioners of the period is to risk implications of ignorance whilst ignoring potential knowledge, and perpetuating myths of incompetence and bungling. The introduction offers a clear and concise view of the problems facing historians working in this field, as well as linking the technical activities of those involved with elements of motivation, the desire for treatment as an expression of consumerism and the shape and character of the marketplace.

Part I of the book focuses, perhaps appropriately, on France, via a team of researchers led by Pierre Baron. An introductory chapter examines those offering to treat teeth, placing them within the political, medical and academic contexts of the period. Following this, selected areas of France provide material from a wide range of sources including advertisements, licences and publications. Practitioners are

categorized according to their activities, and a series of biographies is included. A chapter on Paris is followed by a discussion in which Baron, too, addresses problems of terminology, drawing heavily on the usage of titles reflected in contemporary dictionaries.

Anne Hargreaves lays out her table for dentistry in the British Isles admirably in Part II. Again, political, industrial and entrepreneurial contexts are examined, along with a discussion of the contemporary concept of “dentistry”. She moves on to a discussion around advertisements, trade directories and terminology, with some technical analysis which has a tendency to ascribe modern diagnoses and can occasionally be judgemental. A review of dentists by area follows, which is clearly built upon the foundations laid by Hillam’s painstaking work of the 1990s.

Part III, in which Frank Huisman examines the Netherlands, also discusses terminology, and usefully comments on French influences, specifically of Paris. Huisman focuses on the town of Groningen, and, although brief, this chapter has a clear and concise analytical nature, balancing the techniques of treatment with demand.

A similarly brief section on Hungary by Judit Forrai is followed by Thomas Nickol and Curt Gerhard Lorber’s chapters on Germany. The first examines the relationship between the nobility, townsfolk, artisanal and rural areas, education, literacy, citizenship and religious tolerance. Chapters on German dental literature and biographical detail follow, with a detailed study of dentistry in Halle. This part accepts that it can in no way be representative of Germany as a whole, not least due to the difficulty of defining “Germany” in this period: but nevertheless, it gives an interesting view of a time during which it would appear that the position of the “professional dentist” deteriorated.

Dental practice in Europe pulls together the previously unpublished transactions of this group of workers into a more coherent and balanced whole. This has been, of course, a monumental task, and such a project will always suffer from omissions (a chapter on Italy, for example, would

have been welcome). Nevertheless, this book is an extremely valuable presentation of a series of wide-ranging, thorough investigations of hitherto untapped primary sources, and David Hillam should be congratulated on enabling his wife’s work to gain exposure to the wider audience it has always deserved.

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Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds), *Reading the early modern passions: essays in the cultural history of emotion*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004, pp. xv, 384, illus., (paperback 0-8122-1872-8).

This collection forms a significant contribution to a growing body of early modern emotion history, addressing evidence from various sources, including English lyric poems, paintings and music. Benefiting from a strong editorial team, the introduction provides a critically-aware historiographical review that addresses such problematic issues as whether early modern emotions exist as a coherent field. The collection is sub-divided into three sections, the first of which addresses how modern narratives “fail to match entirely the twists and turns of early modern emotion scripts” (p. 18). In Richard Strier’s ‘Against the rule of reason’, for instance, we find a welcome antidote to the “reason versus passion” argument that has become unjustifiably commonplace in historical thinking. Strier demonstrates that anti-Stoicism was as influential in the Renaissance as Stoicism and that both humanist and Reformation traditions defended the “validity and even the desirability” of emotions. In ‘Compassion in the public sphere’, John Staines makes a similar case for passions in political rhetoric. Eighteenth-century scholars are aware of the role of compassion in political debates; Staines reminds us that even before the rise of sensibility “proper”, reason was not so idealized or sanctified in the public sphere as Habermas has claimed. Likewise rejecting the constraints of scholarly convention, Michael Schoenfeldt