

The emblematic interpretation of monsters is less convincing. An emblem combines an apothegm, an illustration, and an epigram to convey a moral precept in more or less concealed form. Emblems were concrete expressions of poetic imagery; self-referential, their meaning could be puzzled out by comparing the three elements. Monstrous births, on the other hand, were signs, not images. Whether interpreted as divine punishments, as portents of disaster, or as the product of natural causes (interpretations that were not mutually exclusive), monsters pointed outward, not inward. Bates makes too much of the formal resemblance between emblems and printed broadsheets announcing monsters; the headlines on the latter scarcely correspond to the apothegms or mottos on the former. At the same time he downplays the semantic differences between them. The late seventeenth-century anatomical preparations of Frederik Ruysch are the clearest instance of an emblematic setting of monstrous births—but they come at the very end of Bates's story.

A few other claims go beyond the evidence. Bates contrasts Protestant accounts of monsters as wonders and signs, with Catholic writers who treated them as the product of natural causes. But Bates's Protestants are sixteenth-century writers of wonder books, while the Catholics he considers in depth are medical authors, largely from the seventeenth century. Chronology and genre must explain some of the difference; moreover, sixteenth-century Protestants insisted that God produced signs by natural means, not miracles. Bates suggests that printing contributed to the popularity of both emblems and monster descriptions, but the first emblem book was published over eighty years after printing was invented. And in two different chapters, Bates argues against Martha Ornstein's 1938 claim that early modern universities contributed little to scientific developments—a claim that was long ago laid to rest by more recent scholars. The cautious reader can learn much from this book but only if its broader claims are weighed judiciously.

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Kathleen P Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*, Women and Gender in the Early Modern World Series, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006, pp. x, 268, illus., £50.00, \$100.00 (hardback 978-0-7546-5609-8).

Hermaphrodites fascinated early modern scholars, poets and physicians, yet few studies have taken a broad view of their place in Renaissance culture. This book promises an interdisciplinary approach: updated versions of four of Kathleen Long's previous articles and new chapters on hermaphrodites in Renaissance France (despite the title, the rest of Europe is mentioned only in passing) explore early modern thinking on sex and gender, through diverse accounts of "the ultimate sexual dissidents" (p. 243).

The first three chapters, on the "scientific" and medical works of Ambroise Paré, Caspar Bauhin and Jacques Duval, focus on the difficulties of accommodating the hermaphroditic body within a "two sex" system, where it was forced to fit, as science did not admit "a more complex continuity of nuanced genders" (p. 55). While medical writers struggled with ambiguity, others celebrated it: chapters four and five consider the hermetic androgyne, the alchemical rebis sacrificed and reborn in the works of Paracelsus and Clovis Hestean de Nuysement, where the hermaphrodite is a symbol of hope, a theme further explored in lyric poetry from the court of Henri III. Contrasting hermaphroditic imagery from poems and pamphlets satirizing Henri as a royal hermaphrodite is then used to link ambiguous sexuality and hermaphroditism, and a concluding chapter on Thomas Artus's novel *L'Isle des hermaphrodites* summarizes the protean symbolism of the hermaphrodite in turbulent times.

Long effectively conveys the ambiguity of hermaphrodites through a sort of Zen-like paradox—the hermaphrodite is "not identical to itself" (p. 4) and all speech about it is necessarily a lie (p. 234)—though this device is less happily employed in textual analysis, for example when Artus's language of hermaphrodites is described as "at once a richly abundant and inventive self-supplement, and a sort of annihilating anti-supplement" (p. 233).

Despite an occasional lack of clarity, the densely argued chapters on hermaphrodites in literature do justice to the complexity of the subject and are one of the book's strengths. The analysis of medical accounts of hermaphrodites fruitfully explores the influence of cultural attitudes (observers steeped in alchemical imagery looked at conjoined twins and "saw" hermaphrodites) but gives less weight to empirical observation. While detailed anatomical description is acknowledged as a prerequisite for the shift away from a simple male-female dichotomy, Long sees such knowledge as "a sort of violation" (p. 79), as though the culturally charged subject of sex is altogether too subtle for the anatomist's unsophisticated gaze.

The link between hermaphroditism and homosexuality, which furthers comparison with latter-day sexual dissidents, is perhaps over emphasized: the bisexual Henri III was depicted as an hermaphrodite and a sodomite, but he was also accused of heterosexual rape, witchcraft and murder, and it was not unusual for calumniators of great men to hurl every unnatural charge they could think of. A poetical hermaphrodite crucified, drowned and transfixated by a sword—the "threefold death" of ritual sacrifice—is linked to homosexuality because crucifixion was "eventually inflicted on homosexuals" and his/her death is interpreted in accord with the Freudian dogma that hermaphroditism "expressed a fear of castration" (p. 10). Tales of hermaphrodites put to death in antiquity are adduced to show they were ostracized and feared, though greater use of witness accounts (such as the primary sources listed in the works of Dudley Wilson and Irene Ewinkel) might have revealed a more varied response in early modern Europe.

Readers with a background in gender studies will find this book a rich source of material on early modern theories of sex and gender. For medical and social historians it offers a fresh approach to well-known and less well-known sources on monstrous births in Renaissance France.

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Barbara S Bowers (ed.), *The medieval hospital and medical practice*, AVISTA Studies in the History of Medieval Technology, Science and Art, vol. 3, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007, pp. xiv, 258, £55.00, \$99.95 (hardback 978-0-7546-5110-9).

Medieval medical history has emerged over the last three decades as a flourishing discipline, notable for its broad approach and the wide range of sources used by those who study it. After years of neglect, and not a little academic condescension, the long period between Galen and Vesalius has been subject to sustained scrutiny and radical reassessment, as the fifteen essays presented in this volume testify. They were first given as papers at the thirty-sixth International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, Michigan, in 2001, and are here grouped into four sections devoted to research methods, physical evidence, the reinterpretation of documentary sources and monastic connections. Inevitably, in a collection of this size and provenance, the quality of individual contributions varies considerably, although most reflect the lively, original and often revisionist nature of recent scholarship.

Lynn Courtenay's splendid account of the hospital of Notre Dame des Fontenilles at Tonnerre uses topographical, architectural and archival sources to explore the symbiotic relationship between healing and religion. The creation of a pious and affluent female patron in search of salvation, this remarkable hospital offers a striking example of the practice of "medicine without doctors" examined by Peregrine Horden. As he explains, in a stimulating reassessment of the nature of medieval therapeutics, an anachronistic preoccupation with twentieth-century concepts of "medicalization" has led historians both to misunderstand and to denigrate the type of treatment on offer in such places. Paramount among the pragmatic concerns of founders was a desire to eliminate the noxious effects of miasmatic air, although, as Renzo Baldasso shows, few, if any, achieved the sophisticated marriage between architectural design and medical theory apparent at the fifteenth-century Ospedale Maggiore, Milan.