

in Nuremberg, he helps us to see that a story such as hers is at the very heart of social history. Mindful of a mother's life, Charlene Villaseñor Black argues on behalf of utilizing images of the Madonna and Child to measure changes in breastfeeding and maternity in early modern Spain. Hers is an eloquent argument, illustrated by reproductions of Spanish painting and altar art. Retha Warnicke's meditation on marriage and female rulers in Britain concludes this volume, leaving no doubt that sexual nature influenced destiny in the arena of politics and power.

The essays collected here obviously differ in method and approach. Yet all are distinguished by rigorous scholarship and historical insight. To read them together is to see that the story of human sexuality was as complex and compelling in medieval and renaissance Europe as it is today.

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Katharine Hodgkin, *Madness in seventeenth-century autobiography*, Early Modern History: Society and Culture Series, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. vi, 266, £50.00 (hardback 978-1-4039-1765-2).

This study on madness in seventeenth-century England is based on three autobiographical accounts. Katharine Hodgkin starts with an exposé of madness in a historical context including a useful discussion of ideas that have developed during the last decades. She stresses not only how blurred the border is between madness and its opposite, but also how closely madness and religious inspiration were connected in the seventeenth century. The discussion on autobiographical writing in the past is less elaborate. This subject is elusive because of changing definitions and blurred borders with other genres, in particular between fiction and described realities. Tales of madness and religious autobiography seem to overlap to a great extent.

Three texts are analysed. The first was written by Dionys Fitzherbert, daughter of an Oxfordshire landowner. Her tale of recovery from mental disorder was written around 1610. Besides the surviving autograph, there are fair copies still kept in libraries. She described a delirious condition lasting several months which is, however, not presented as madness but as spiritual affliction. The second author is Hannah Allen, daughter of a Presbyterian merchant family living in Derbyshire and London. She descended into melancholy in the 1660s, after she was widowed and left with a child. Her life story was published in 1683. She tells her readers about her conviction that she was damned, worthless and monstrous, and how at one point she refused to eat. This is all a familiar part of a conversion story, but her sufferings are not presented as a punishment by God, but as an illness from which she recovered. George Trosse, the third author, also had a mercantile background, and after his spell of madness became a nonconformist minister in Exeter. He wrote his *Life* in 1693, which was published after his death in 1713. He describes his hallucinations, deliriums and violent behaviour, which in this case are all seen as God's punishment for his sinfulness. This text even more resembles a conversion story, especially with the happy outcome.

Besides belonging to the same genre, the three stories have another thing in common: all the authors were cured of their madness. They give some information about the physical and spiritual help they received. In the end, guidance was more important than medicines. Fitzherbert thanks the wife of her doctor for her counsel, without even mentioning his medicines. Hannah Allen was cured by an unnamed minister. A kinsman also proposed to bring her into contact with the nonconformist divine, Richard Baxter. Trosse was cured by a lay woman, maybe also a doctor's wife. The escape from madness was in all three cases through conversation.

How the process of healing should be phrased, is a point of discussion. Hodgkin stresses the metaphor of travel as well as, in

the case of Trosse, actual travelling through Europe. Writing down this experience was perhaps of help too. Unfortunately, little is said about the authors themselves and their texts. Is it important that the first has survived only in manuscript and the two other texts were published in print? In fact the existence of fair copies of a manuscript point to a form of manuscript publishing still common in the seventeenth century. In the other two cases, the possible role of an editor or publisher is not even mentioned. The text of Trosse is obviously studied only from a modern edition. The important work by Michael Mascuch in this field is mentioned, but not really used. However, the next publication by Katharine Hodgkin will be an edition of the manuscripts of Dionys Fitzherbert, which will offer an opportunity to return to this aspect of madness and autobiographical writing.

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Lucia di Palo, *Le Recherches physiologiques sur la vie et la mort di François Xavier Bichat: un lessico fisiologico*, Bari, Cacucci Editore, 2005, pp. 224, €25.00 (paperback and DVD 88-8422-398-9).

The situation of the history of science and, in particular, of the history of medicine in Italy reflects some contradictions that are typical of the discipline. Researchers from a variety of fields work in the history of medicine. Doctors, biologists, historians, sociologists, philosophers and philologists are the main actors in the discipline. Very often in Italy the different methodologies are not harmonized into an interdisciplinary approach, with the result that there are various strands to the history of medicine that have not yet come together. On one side there are the histories written by doctors, which focus mainly on medical ideas, theories and technical concepts; on another there is a more general approach to the history of ideas, in which medical theories are studied in relation to philosophy and culture; and on

yet another there are some historians—still rare in Italy—that concentrate on sociology or philology. In general these three approaches, of the technical and the more general history of ideas, and the history of the conditions of the production of such ideas—that is, the history of society and language—have not yet converged.

The University of Bari is one of two institutions in Italy that offers a PhD in history of science (the other is Florence and there are also some possibilities at Bologna and Naples). As a consequence, Bari has the advantage of appealing to many researchers from a variety of fields, and of supporting an interdisciplinary approach in history of science and medicine. Over the last few years, the Interdepartmental Centre of History of Science in Bari has promoted a computational analysis of scientific languages for historical purposes. Researchers at the Centre have created software that allows users to take a document converted into an electronic format (txt) and scan it for exact word position and frequency.

The first two significant publications resulting from the application of this type of software are: *Jean-Martin Charcot e la lingua della neurologia* by Liborio Dibattista (Cacucci, Bari 2003), and *Le Recherches physiologique sur la vie et la mort di Francois Xavier Bichat*, the text reviewed here, which studies Bichat's physiology. Charcot and Bichat are considered the founders of two disciplines: neurology and physiology respectively. The basic hypothesis of both texts is that the creation of a new discipline corresponds to the creation of a new language, the analysis of which can give us further indications of the processes by which the new discipline has arisen.

The software that Lucia di Palo has used is INTEX (created specifically for the French language), by which it is possible to find, for each word, the more frequent correspondences with other words, verbs or constructions. By analysing the words *function*, *organ*, and *ownership*, which appear very frequently in Bichat's *Recherches physiologiques sur la vie et la mort*, di Palo tries to analyse how Bichat built a new physiology. This physiology