

The authors provide not only excellent copies of the prints, but also a Latin transcription of the texts, an English translation and extensive footnotes. There are five chapters of commentary, covering the anatomy shown in the prints; the art history of their numerous hermetic and alchemical images; their astronomical and astrological contexts; a horoscope hidden under one of the flaps; and the botany and horticulture of the plants and trees portrayed. The visual problem of presenting the texts of the flaps was solved by including an animated CD-ROM that gives the reader some sense of how the various flaps open to uncover a new layer or new complexity. For instance, the sun of the print for spring is covered by flaps that progressively detail the anatomy of the eye, including its musculature and its vessels. Of course, the programme was not perfect; it did not allow the reader to zoom in on any random piece of text or flap and it crashed several times, but still.

Even with the CD-ROM, the excellent copies, transcription, translation, and commentary, however, I was still left pleasantly mystified by these prints. For instance, for whom were they composed? They seem to be too medically detailed to have been merely a conversation piece, but the medicine (texts and anatomies) is too disorganized and sketchy to have been used by an actual physician or surgeon. Is there some unifying significance to their extravagant use of alchemical symbols? Can these prints have had an occult meaning? Is that, possibly, why all the hundreds of other copies have disappeared? Is the use of a particular horoscope, 22 May 1605 (originally printed in a medical text by Magini) a hint? In short, is the “text” which ostensibly seems to be a kind of visual Family Medical Digest, a seventeenth-century Da Vinci Code?

The authors do not tell us, but no matter. With this fine production of an important and previously unknown work, we can look forward to further research focused on answering just such questions, and more.

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**Florike Egmond and Robert Zwijnenberg** (eds), *Bodily extremities: preoccupations with the human body in early modern European culture*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003, pp. ix, 235, illus., £45.00 (hardback 0-7546-0726-7).

This collection explores the “strong preoccupation with the human body” identified as a “characteristic shared by early modern Europeans and their present-day counterparts”: the former apparently evidenced by such themes as monstrous births and body snatching, the latter by cosmetic surgery and genetic manipulation. Whilst wisely avoiding the tendency to make comparisons between those two vantage points, the book is intended as a comprehensive and interdisciplinary historical investigation of the body “*in extremis*, the crossing of physical boundaries, the transition between outside and inside the human body, and bodily orifices”. Acknowledging that many literary studies of the body suffer from “internalism”, and that embodied experience is often overlooked in favour of the textual or metaphorical, it aims to parallel its account of body-knowledge—as acquired through anatomy, torture and techniques of “othering”—with concern for early modern human bodies as “living, acting and feeling subjects”. The inclusion of several interesting yet eclectic essays—varying in chronology, scope and sources—means that these aims are only partly realized.

A strong theme of the book is artistic representation, including Daniela Bohde’s essay on ‘Skin and the search for the interior’ (focusing on the flaying of Marsyas) and Robert Zwijnenberg’s article on Leonardo da Vinci’s *Saint John the Baptist*. In the former, the relationship between skin and self-hood is addressed, whilst Zwijnenberg is one of the few contributors to consider philosophical issues of identity. This he does by recognizing emotional expressions as mediators of mind and body, self and society. Harald Hendrix’s essay on images of torture in seventeenth-century Naples explores the instructive religious potential of images of pain and suffering and their effect upon the viewer. The book shifts gear with Florike Egmond’s “morphological” investigation of the

relation between execution and infamy in the public events of dissection and punishment. The remaining articles variously consider the metaphorical dissection of the body (in Paul J Smith's account of the rhetorical structure and contemporary medical resonance of Rabelais' 'Quaresmeprenant'); the hierarchizing of bodily difference (through painting and gestures) in Peter Mason's 'Reading New World bodies' the symbolic and political act of circumcision in José Pardo Tomás' account of 'Crypto-Judaism in sixteenth–eighteenth-century Spain' and Esther Cohen's article on pain in the Middle Ages. Cohen's nuanced account of the gendering of discourses of suffering (and her acknowledgement of its medico-scientific and theological context) highlights the absence of such necessary contextualization elsewhere.

What is most interesting, and ultimately most disappointing, about this book, therefore, is its desire to produce new ways of viewing the historical body. As the editors acknowledge, "Books—as textual bodies—are supposed (and required) to have coherence". Yet this collection does not. Rather than a study of "early modern bodies as living, acting and feeling subjects", we have snapshots of objectified bodies at various points in time and space. The editors deny that it is "cultural history" (preferring to view the work as "a historically informed branch of cultural analysis"), and they reject the "context and method" imposed by traditional academic approaches. There is certainly scope for this kind of re-interrogation of sources based on awareness of our own limited sensibilities of what constitutes art, for instance, or "the medical". But to do so satisfactorily requires us to acknowledge the complex and ever-shifting relation between mind, body and soul, rather than relying on such potentially ahistorical categories as "bodily extremities" and "self-hood" without reference to problems of definition. By focusing on baggily defined "cultural themes" and "going about research on the human body in which neither the method nor its contextual field have been determined beforehand", the editors have failed to produce a convincing alternative to the methodological approaches they condemn. The

result is a collection as disjointed and disembodied as its subject matter.

**Fay Bound,**

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**Pete Moore**, *Blood and justice: the seventeenth-century Parisian doctor who made blood transfusion history*, Chichester, John Wiley, 2003, pp. xxiv, 224, illus., £16.99 (hardback 0-470-84842-1).

Using similar image-evoking language to that of Edgar Allen Poe's Auguste Dupin adventures, Pete Moore has also created a tantalizing tale of mystique and macabre. Unlike Poe's account, however, Moore's tale is true. The plot that he reveals scene by scene is that of Jean-Baptiste Denis being called forth in 1667 to perform a blood transfusion in a human subject.

Helpful to the wide audience for which this work is intended (and deserves), the author introduces a cast of over 150 characters before his opening chapter. Readers are then carried into the world of seventeenth-century Europe with sufficient detail to feel that they are present at each of the settings Moore eloquently describes. Such attention to detail is important in delineating this little known history of a significant medical discovery.

Denis, a mathematician and astronomer with a passionate interest in medicine, together with the respectable surgeon Paul Emmerey, were called to the Hôtel de Montmor, home of a fashionable patron of experimental science to perform a blood transfusion into Antoine Mauroy. Mauroy, a local servant widely known for suffering bouts of insanity that provoked outrageous public acts, had been restrained in a chair in the audience-filled room before Denis arrived. A local calf had been secured as the blood donor.

Since blood was believed, at the time, to be "an essential component of who you are" (p. 10), it was reasonable for Denis to adopt contemporary medical thinking that purifying the blood of the ill was a pathway to cure. But instead of letting blood, as had been practised for