

modification in line with the bodily metaphor of “expurgation,” a term that censors used when approaching a prohibited text.

This assimilation is reminiscent of the metaphor of the body politics, which Keitt explores in his study of physician Martinez y Fernandez, who appropriated the figure and work of Juan Huarte, whom he depicts as a martyr of the Spanish Inquisition, in order to advance medical and political reforms in nineteenth-century Spain. Citing George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who argue that metaphors “are central to human cognition and are rooted in embodied experience” (156), Keitt states that one can trace how “the body as a source domain has changed over time in the context of our cultural history” (156). Scholars in this collection employ the bodily metaphor to describe as surgical operations what early modern physicians did on their own books and those deemed prohibited by the Inquisition. Since the Inquisition believed that books, like people, could become agents of contamination (Baudry), the infected members needed to be subjected to operations like those that a surgeon would perform on a sick body.

This collection is a precious resource for historians of early modern medicine and the Inquisition, and for scholars interested in examining the roles physicians played in the intersecting interests of members of the secular society and the Inquisition, in the negotiation of overlapping disciplinary boundaries, and in the application of learned theories to the practice of a multifaceted social context.

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The Poison Trials: Wonder Drugs, Experiment, and the Battle for Authority in Renaissance Science. Alisha Rankin.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021. viii + 316 pp. \$105.

With her sophisticated second book, *The Poison Trials*, Alisha Rankin deftly weaves into a single narrative central questions in the history of early modern science and medicine, focusing on the German and Italian regions. Challenging the periodization of experimental thinking, the author argues that already in the sixteenth century physicians engaged with what constituted proof and evidence, and presented human poison and antidote trials as learned experiments. While ethical concerns are usually placed in the later seventeenth century, Rankin illustrates that sixteenth-century physicians not only devoted attention to methodology but also carefully considered ethics. Finally, the crafting of these trials was profoundly influenced by charlatans’ public demonstrations. Because charlatans, alchemists, and Galenic physicians competed on the market, physicians remained “open to empirics’ ideas” (5). These intertwined arguments rest

on the refined analysis of published and unpublished accounts, archival documentation, correspondence, medical literature, and publications by charlatans.

The book is divided in three sections, each with two chapters. Section 1 sets the background for sixteenth-century German poison trials—which represent the focus of the book. In chapter 1, the historical overview of Greek, Latin, Arabic, and medieval medical literature shows that there was “an unbroken—albeit limited—intellectual tradition” (24) of testing poisons and antidotes on animals. Some trials also took place in medieval judicial trials and in princely courts. Chapter 2 examines in special detail the 1524 trial executed in Rome on two condemned criminals to test a new antidote, Caravita’s oil. Pope Clement VII ordered the trial, which was carried out by his physician, Paolo Giovio, an apothecary and a senator. Giovio and the other testers were careful to present this rather unusual trial as an ordinary event. Rankin convincingly ties the use of condemned criminals as poison-test subjects to anatomical post mortem investigations, which physicians conducted on cadavers of executed criminals. Because of this anatomical practice, in the eyes of the testers condemned criminals were already only “condemned bodies” (52).

By the 1560s, several poison trials took place in the German region. In chapter 3, Rankin argues that physicians, including the influential Pier Andrea Mattioli (Caravita’s student), modeled their poison trials in contrast to charlatans’ marketplace demonstrations of their antidotes. To distance themselves from those whom they considered impostors, physicians tied their own experiments to the long medical tradition of trials, describing them as learned experiments. Physicians also constructed specific narratives to protect and enhance their authority. For example, they stressed that the condemned subjects gave their consent to participate in the trials. In actuality, condemned prisoners were almost forced to consent to trials, since they were given a choice between certain death and a chance of survival and freedom. In chapter 4, the author concentrates on sixteenth-century medical ethics. Rankin argues that already in the Renaissance physicians carefully considered the limitations of using humans as test subjects, with differences between geographic areas. Both rulers and physicians were cautious and justified the human trials for the public good, suggesting that they were aware they were transgressing an ethical boundary. Human poison trials ceased after the 1580s.

The third section moves on to successful cure-alls, bringing to the forefront charlatans and alchemists alongside Galenic physicians. Rankin argues that charlatans directly effected medical and scientific change. The uncertain conceptual boundary between poison and illness favored the transformation of antidotes into cure-alls. Rankin suggests that the term *panacea* came to signify an alchemical cure-all in late sixteenth-century Germany. While charlatans and physicians did their best to meet a rising demand for health, the Galenic, empiric, and alchemical traditions merged. Both with their antidotes and publications, empirics moved proof and evidence from successful trials to the testimonies of satisfied patients—a move that influenced physicians.

With a lucid and delightful narrative, Rankin demonstrates the centrality of medicine in the methodological shift that is at the core of the Scientific Revolution, reinforcing the arguments of historians such as Paula Findlen, Harold Cook, Michael McVaugh, and others. No less importantly, *The Poison Trials* clearly shows that medical and scientific change resulted from the actions of those holding socially dominant positions, such as rulers and preeminent physicians, as well as of actors coming from below, like charlatans. *The Poison Trials* makes a major contribution to the history of science and medicine and early modern studies.

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A Cultural History of Memory in the Early Modern Age. Marek Tamm and Alessandro Arcangeli, eds.

A Cultural History of Memory 3; The Cultural Histories Series. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. xiv + 208 pp. \$550 (6 vols.).

This volume's chapters provide a broadly conceived and wide-ranging account of early modern memory within the extensive temporal parameters of European cultural history. Its intellectual scope is equally ambitious, reflecting the purpose of the multi-volume set to which it belongs: *A Cultural History of Memory*. This compilation is part of Bloomsbury's Cultural Histories Series, which oversees six-volume forays into the social construction of a given topic (such as animals, dress and fashion, and gardens), pursued throughout six distinct historical epochs: antiquity, the medieval age, the Renaissance, the age of Enlightenment, the age of empire, and the modern age. Focusing on a single epoch, each volume in a particular set covers the same themes from chapter to chapter in an effort to maintain a consistent treatment of the topic for all of the temporal periods and to enable readers to trace a theme throughout the arc of European history by reading the relevant chapter in each of the six volumes. The print series ultimately dances to the tune of the publisher's impressive digital resource, Bloomsbury Cultural History (<https://www.bloomsburyculturalhistory.com>), which archives cultural history reference surveys that are fully cross-searchable for scholars and students alike.

The identified themes for *A Cultural History of Memory* include "power and politics, media and technology, knowledge: science and education, time and space, ideas: philosophy, religion, and history, high and popular culture, the social: rituals, practices, and the everyday, and remembering and forgetting" (xiv). In volume three, a lineup of predominantly seasoned researchers handles the themes, making for individual contributions of high quality and considerable scholarly depth and discernment. As to be expected and as conceded by the general editors (xiv), the chapters readjust the thematic