

of important achievements becomes evident. Culpeper is described as an outstanding exponent of seventeenth-century medicine and one brave enough to question tradition.

A problem arises with the author's fictional treatment of Culpeper's career. A brief biography was published by Culpeper's amanuensis William Ryves in 1659. Ryves tells the story of the elopement but stated there were reasons for not naming the heiress and her identity remains unknown. Thulesius without any supporting evidence introduces a romance between Culpeper and Judith Rivers, the daughter of Sir John Ryves. Ryves informs us that Culpeper was wounded when serving with the parliamentary forces. There is nothing in Ryves or elsewhere to support the account given in this book of Culpeper acting as a field surgeon at Edgehill and being wounded at Reading when serving as a captain of foot. The brief statement by Ryves that Culpeper fought a duel and fled to France is exaggerated into a narrative of a duel with the royalist John Compton and a visit to Riolan and Gassendi during the short sojourn abroad.

In his Epilogue Thulesius states that wherever parts are added that are not supported by biographical data this has been indicated in the chapter notes. He does so for Culpeper's war service, the duel and the imagined trip as a boy to London. Other matters, such as the assumed relationship with Judith Rivers and the numerous imaginary conversations, are woven into the text in such a way that the reader will have difficulty separating fact from fiction. Biographical sources for Culpeper are scarce. Thulesius has chosen to fill the gaps by guess-work and invention.

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**Sandra Cavallo**, *Charity and power in early modern Italy: benefactors and their motives in Turin, 1541–1789*, Cambridge History of Medicine, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. xv, 280, illus., £45 (hardback 0–521–46091–3); £17.95 (paperback 0–521–48333–6).

Turin in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries makes for an unusual case history in terms of both place and period. What Dr Cavallo demolishes is any notion that the growth of a centralized “absolutist” state brought about a rational centralized system of welfare provision. The complex of changes which she analyses through the imaginative use of unusual documentation stands in delicate balance with some quite remarkable continuities. Rather than the replacement of haphazard private initiatives by centralized public institutions, she identifies (p. 3) a public dimension in traditional forms of provision which has perhaps been obscured by rather crude assumptions that religious motivation made traditional acts of charity private. The boundary between the public and private spheres was therefore a matter of wide and often creative overlap. She carefully acknowledges that there was indeed a shift away from personal and voluntary charity as the princely state asserted itself at the expense of the “smaller world” traditions of the city-state, but this happened only in the mid-eighteenth century and without particularly enlightened results. Even at that late stage, the process was not accompanied by “secularization” but instead preceded by a belated expansion of the role of the Church, virtually a century after the Council of Trent (pp. 118–20). Moreover, Dr Cavallo demonstrates that these late changes are not an indication that traditional structures and mechanisms had somehow been overwhelmed. On the contrary, what is striking about the author's findings is the sheer scale of traditional provision, particularly at times of crisis.

Between 19 May and 30 June 1587, the urban authorities distributed 28,000 lbs of bread (p. 60). The devastating plague of 1630 resulted in the Council having to provide food rations for 3,000 people from the public purse: this in a city population of 15,000 (p. 54). The fascinating—and persuasive—explanation of the durability of “civic” traditions is their lack of rigid categorization in the treatment of the poor. This is surely a fundamental point in the

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history of social policy, for it is all too easy to assume that identification and classification somehow make it easier to “target” areas of special need. What the municipal authorities seem to have taken for granted is the interpenetration of problems such as poverty, health, training and homelessness, acknowledging thereby the social basis of many medical problems and the need to encourage economic structures to spread work opportunities as widely as possible (e.g. p. 64). Dr Cavallo thus adds a valuable Italian dimension to the literature which has examined the close relationship between work and welfare in Flanders and the home towns of Germany in the early modern period. Seen in this light, the workhouse subverted work-sharing as part of a process of “confinement and coercion” (p. 227). This process had important implications for women (chapter 4, ‘Charity and gender’). The identification of prostitutes (pp. 163–4) was not accompanied by their redemption, the confinement of expectant mothers showed little concern for the health of mother and child before the very late eighteenth century (p. 200).

While the book’s findings are of enormous importance, it also presents readers of English with a splendid example of the preoccupations of modern Italian historiography—resources, power and their relation to status—which may jolt some of our own occasionally stodgy notions of social history. The style can sometimes be stridently over assertive (six uses of the first person in one paragraph on p. 108) but the message of the evidence is always clear: historically speaking, the expansion of the state was not the necessary corollary of improved welfare. The reason for this may lie in paradox. For “the state” which assaulted municipal welfare provision was less an expanding public entity than an increasingly introverted court, at bottom no more than the private household of the sovereign, its servants less rational bureaucrats than people squabbling for power and status for themselves (pp. 107–8). Readers are indebted to Dr Cavallo not only for her detailed research but

also for reminding us to what base uses that grandiose notion “the rise of the modern state” may be reduced.

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**Adrian Wilson**, *The making of man-midwifery: childbirth in England, 1660–1770*, London, UCL Press, 1995, pp. xii, 239, illus., £40.00 (1–85728–292–2).

The appearance of Adrian Wilson’s study of the invention of the male birth attendant in early modern England is an important event in the historiography of childbirth. Recent studies have concentrated on the character of midwives, showing that there was nothing inevitable about the male invasion of the birthing room and that England was exceptional in the extent to which this incursion occurred in the eighteenth century. Why and how men seized so much control over normal births has become a more complicated problem than used to be thought. Whereas recent work has revolutionized our understanding of early modern childbirth by looking at midwives, Wilson is the first historian to focus on the varieties of man-midwifery and the characteristics of members of the various groups.

Wilson’s study of the cultural construction of this innovation is unusual in giving attention both to the bodily location of men’s intervention and to its political location within Hanoverian party conflict. He begins his book with a summary of the bodily processes involved in difficult births and a useful overview of what is known about the practice of midwives and its context. Women’s bodies were prominent in the early histories of obstetrics, which sought to present late-nineteenth-century ideas and practices as natural. The purpose there was to show how the new scientific approach and the development of the forceps were crucial in improving women’s lot, by stressing the incidence of abnormal births. Ever since, the use of this tool has been central to explanations