

efforts of the Medici dukes of Tuscany to control the Arno, and an account of the way in which water from the aqueducts of Rome was administered, bought, sold, and traded from the 1560s onwards.

Part IV, 'Ingegneria, infrastrutture, scienza e tecnica', concentrates on theoretical and practical aspects of hydraulics and its associated technology, while Part V, 'Giardini, feste e spettacoli' describes the use of the Arno as a vehicle for spectacle from 1305 onwards.

Besides their interest as a collection of scholarly articles directed at a common theme, these volumes provide material not easily otherwise available that is relevant to research in other fields. In my case, research on the development of the Borgo Pio and its fortifications in Rome under Pius IV (1559–65) led me into issues relating to Rome's floods, drainage, drinking water, and the politics of the city's water supply. Katherine Rinne's article in these proceedings (followed by her book *The Waters of Rome* recently published by Yale) helped resolve a number of important questions. There are other unexpected insights: Giuseppe Adami's paper, for example, throws fascinating light on the cultural interests of P. P. Floriani who is better known as a military engineer. I am sure many other scholars will make similar 'finds'!

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**Cislo**, Amy Eisen, *Paracelsus's Theory of Embodiment* (The Body, Gender and Culture Series), London, Pickering & Chatto, 2010; hardback; pp. 166; R.R.P. US\$99.00; ISBN 9781851969951.

Paracelsus has always been an enigmatic figure: a physician, botanist, alchemist, astrologer, and occultist, with a reputation for both extreme drunkenness and piety. In his system of thought though, the body was the microcosm of the macrocosm. He believed that the body could suffer from chemical imbalances of mercury, sulphur, and salt and was affected by astrological powers. Amy Eisen Cislo extends knowledge of these connections in Paracelsus's work by a close study of the relationship between his concept of the physical body and those aspects of the body that were invisible and divine. Through a close reading of his texts on conception and gestation, she reveals his theory of the natural body as being separate from the spiritual self.

According to Cislo, Paracelsus struggled to come to terms with religious ideas about the body and theorized that it was a scientific object not subject to divine control. In a time when women were perceived to be easily swayed into pacts with the devil through coitus, fears of witches and monstrous births

were prevalent, and the topics of conception, gestation, and birth occupied the thoughts of many. These concerns drew attention to understandings of pregnancy and the workings of the female body. Since in the Bible women were created from Adam's rib they were considered physically the same as men, but, for instance, with the womb considered as an inverted penis. The learning of the day on reproduction followed the classical texts of Hippocrates, Aristotle, and Galen: men were warm and women were cold or men were agents and women were receptacles for the man's seed. However, Paracelsus rejected classical teachings and developed a unique theory of embodiment.

Cislo examines three groups of Paracelsus's texts through time: the first group of texts is on conception; the second on the body of Mary; and the third on the bodies of Adam and Eve. Her studies of the texts show inconsistencies in his theory; however, there are fundamental ideas that underpin these three groups of texts. They are that birth involves a divine element and that men and women play different and significant roles in the process of reproduction. There was a relationship between the spiritual being and the physical self in the human body. This raised questions on the nature of the bodies of Mary, Christ, Adam, and Eve, whom Paracelsus claimed had physical bodies possessing different earthly or chemical qualities from those of ordinary human bodies.

*Paracelsus's Theory of Embodiment* is an extremely interesting and scholarly study and Cislo has untangled Paracelsus's complex theory of embodiment with a good deal of clarity.

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**Cregan, Kate**, *The Theatre of the Body: Staging Death and Embodying Life in Early-Modern London* (Late Medieval and Early Modern Studies 10), Turnhout, Brepols, 2009; hardback; pp. xvi, 349; 35 b/w illustrations; R.R.P. €70.00; ISBN 9782503520582.

The aim of this book is to demonstrate some of the ways in which the understanding and experience of embodiment changed during the seventeenth century in London. Dr Cregan approaches this topic by analysing the performative aspects of death in three specific contexts: judicial, medical, and theatrical. Her attention is therefore directed to those corresponding sites of practice that involved a straightforwardly public dimension – the courtroom and scaffold, the anatomical theatre, and the urban playhouse.