

Dutch narrative of upcoming mercantile dominance in Asia. Did the De Brys change their message in the Latin editions by combining the texts and images in a slightly different manner? The answer to that question, which Schmidt does not pose, would have deepened our understanding of the publishers' objectives and might have further strengthened her argument. What remains, however, is worthy of praise. Schmidt's book will be of great interest to readers concerned with the way early Dutch expansion in Asia codified European perceptions of the Orient.

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Margaret DeLacy. *The Germ of an Idea: Contagionism, Religion, and Society in Britain, 1660–1730.* xviii + 305 pp., notes, bibl., index. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. £63 (cloth).

This well-documented book on the history of medicine in the context of religion, politics, and society in early modern England represents an important contribution to the current existing literature in the field. The extensive notes and the bibliography (with remarks as to the online availability of primary sources) are in themselves useful resources.

By looking at the history of medicine from the perspective of contagionism (the concept of a disease being contagious), Margaret DeLacy retells the story of physicians and religion from the Restoration of Charles II until 1730, which, according to the author, “does seem to mark a period of transition from an occasional reference to *contagium vivum* to a growing belief in contagion from an unspecified agent as the critical factor in the spread of many acute diseases” (p. xvi). DeLacy argues that during this period there is a consistent relationship between those authors interested in contagion and their status in England as outsiders or religious dissenters. Furthermore, she claims that the concept of contagion in this period played an essential role in “the shift from a physiological to an ontological view of acute diseases” (p. x).

The first four chapters of the book are mainly devoted to outlining the first part of the argument, in which the author shows how the religious environment of Restoration England was divided between Conformists and Dissenters. The latter group, who refused to conform to the Anglican doctrine, were—by rule of the Clarendon Code as set out by Parliament—no longer allowed to take on religious, academic, and medical jobs, nor were they permitted to matriculate at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. According to DeLacy, it was especially medics and natural philosophers from this group who played a major role in the shaping of new medical theories. Together with immigrants from outside England, who were also restricted by the Clarendon Code, these nonconformist physicians reformed English medicine from the margins. DeLacy goes even further in saying that most of the men in this group can be associated with medical reformers such as Jan Baptista van Helmont. His understanding of a disease “as the invasion of a body by a hostile vital force” (p. 47) became essential in the shifting ideas about contagionism. With a perhaps exaggerated notion of clarity, DeLacy tries to force her actors into both a religious and a medical camp. However, her discussions of individual physicians and their thoughts on contagionism helps the reader in understanding the various ways in which this topic was addressed at the time.

In the middle chapters, on the Royal Society and the Royal College of Physicians (Ch. 5) and Sir Hans Sloane (Ch. 6), who was the president of both institutions simultaneously between 1727 and 1735, DeLacy shows clearly the developing theories based on ideas about spontaneous generation, the new microscopic discoveries of “minute organisms” in the blood, and the spread of rinderpest (a cattle plague). It is one of the merits of DeLacy's book that Sloane appears in these chapters as more than a mere collector of curiosities

and a node in a huge network of natural philosophers; he is also an actor in his own right, devoted to promoting smallpox inoculation.

After Chapter 7, on Benjamin Marten's *New Theory of Consumptions* (London, 1720) and his "fully articulated hypothesis of contagious disease transmission" (pp. 125–126), *The Germ of an Idea* finishes with two wonderful chapters on smallpox inoculation (Ch. 8) and the plague (Ch. 9). Several outbreaks of smallpox and the plague in the early eighteenth century provide excellent case studies for investigating how medical practice and theory came together in the discourse on contagionism. By showing how medical theories of the concept of disease and inoculation (the latter mainly from outside Europe) and political decisions regarding *cordons sanitaire* around afflicted cities influenced each other, DeLacy persuasively demonstrates how many different aspects of a political, religious, and medical nature converged in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries to create a fully formed theory of contagionism.

This review cannot do justice to the incredible level of detail displayed in this book, whether it pertains to social connections between well-known and lesser-known actors, their religious and political backgrounds, or their medical interests and theories. Although the book draws predominantly on secondary literature, the result is a very useful survey and review of literature on medical thought and religious and political communities in London at the turn of the eighteenth century. It provides scholars of the history of early modern medicine and science, and of cultural and social history, with an excellent insight into London in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and in doing so draws our attention to the nexus linking religious and political beliefs, on the one hand, with medical ideas, on the other.

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Hubertus Fischer; Volker R. Remmert; Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (Editors). *Gardens, Knowledge, and the Sciences in the Early Modern Period*. (Trends in the History of Science.) vi + 374 pp., illus., index. Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2016. £89.50 (cloth).

Gardens have increasingly become the focus of scholarly attention. Parallel to a new, fascinating philosophy of vegetation, historians of philosophy and science have recently begun to shed new light on this field in re-locating knowledge and science in gardens. This stimulating volume is one of the latest, most relevant contributions.

With many beautiful illustrations that enchant the reader and facilitate comprehension, *Gardens, Knowledge, and the Sciences in the Early Modern Period* focuses on the role that such sciences as botany, horticulture, and mathematics played in the development of garden art, garden culture, and garden landscaping in early modern Europe. A ramifying situation emerges: acquiring botanical and garden knowledge involved diverse materials and consisted in introducing new plants and forcing nature into a geometrically established order. This varied content is coherently organized in five parts. Parts 1 and 2 address the role of mathematical sciences in designing garden landscapes and art; Parts 3 and 4 explore the connection between botany, horticulture, and garden art and culture. In Part 5, Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn addresses the question of how much the twentieth-century reception of early modern garden landscape design shaped German and U.S. *Naturgarten* and reactionary modernism, which were built on theoretical and naturalistic perspectives and conveyed precise political messages.

Volker R. Remmert brilliantly opens the volume by sketching the alignment of landscape and garden design with mathematical knowledge. The construction of the *hortus mathematicus* testified to both the putting of garden art on a scientific footing and the early modern impulse to dominate nature and recreate par-