

December 1648, with the preparation for the trial of Charles I in progress, the Baptist Elizabeth Poole was invited to speak before the Army Council. Her “vision” of England’s future was warmly received and she was invited a second time, just days before the King’s execution. This time her visions, much to the Council’s dismay, recorded God’s command that the King’s life be preserved. As Font demonstrates, this anti-regicidal challenge to the Army was taken seriously and it “elicited a sustained negative response” (69). This time, unlike Poole’s first visit wherein she maintained common cause with the Council, her status as a prophet was questioned. What gave this woman the right to question the authority of men? Her visions garnered the Council’s respect just as long as she stayed within their accepted opinions.

The chapter on Poole is in Part I of this book on prophetic politics during the 1640s. In Part II, Font examines the prophetic content of devotional literature during the Interregnum, focusing on Anna Trapnel, Jane Turner and Sarah Wright, and An Turner. Part III concentrates on the language of prophecy and its ability to foster a personal, female authorial center through the writings of Eleanor Davies, Jane Lead, Ann Bathurst, Joan Vokins, Kathleen Cheever and Katherine Evans, most of whom (with the exception of Lady Davies) were active during the second half of the seventeenth century.

This is a book of many ideas and insights and not everyone will agree with all that Font puts forth. There are also times when the book’s arguments seem more suggestive than realized. Still, this is certainly a richly textured and complex study, written with sensitivity, clarity, and care, and it adds to our growing understanding of women’s understanding of themselves and their ability to affect change in the early modern era.

Bonnie Lander Johnson and Eleanor Decamp, eds. *Blood Matters: Studies in European Literature and Thought, 1400–1700*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. x + 354 pp. \$89.95. Review by CELESTE CHAMBERLAND, ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY.

Typically associated with barber-surgeons and leeches in late medieval and early modern Europe, the language of blood has long

featured prominently in studies of medical practice and humoral theory that have emphasized blood's connection to phlebotomy, battlefield trauma, and the balance of bodily humors. As the essays in *Blood Matters* demonstrate, however, blood performed a much broader array of semiotic roles from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Associated with potent symbols of corruption, desire, and transubstantiation in literature, aesthetics, and stagecraft, the language of blood functioned as a fluid metaphor for the human condition and inspired a diverse array of figurative representations of political reform, liturgical controversies, and colonialism. According to Bonnie Lander Johnson and Eleanor Decamp, investigating these larger cultural implications not only necessitates a great deal of methodological fluidity, but also requires the expertise of scholars from a wide range of disciplines. Inspired by Carolyn Walker Bynum and Gail Kern Paster's analyses of medieval and early modern conceptions of blood and their intersections with gender, religion, and the body, the central premise of *Blood Matters* is that blood represented far more than a red fluid coursing through human veins in the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries. Based on methodologies drawn from literary criticism, new historicism, and cultural anthropology, these interdisciplinary essays provide an innovative and engaging assessment of the heretofore largely overlooked figurative capacity of blood in an era straddling the divide between the medieval and modern eras.

Organized thematically rather than chronologically or geographically, each of the five sections in *Blood Matters* focuses on a specific semiotic function of the language of blood: circulation, wounds, corruption, proof, and signs and substance. This scheme of organization effectively connects interdisciplinary and inter-period essays on a variety of otherwise unrelated topics, ranging from pedagogical theory to textile stains. By providing a coherent thematic focus, blood and its metaphors serve to connect seemingly disparate methodologies in new ways that shed much light on the nuances of late medieval and early modern symbolism. Based on analyses of a wide range of source materials, such as calendrical images of pig slaughter, legal theories of cruentation, and the plays of William Shakespeare, the essays in this volume effectively engage the many contradictions and complexities of blood's role in early modern thinking.

The book's first section, which focuses on circulation, features essays delving into the political implications of Harvey's discovery, along with representations of circulation and containment in the writing of Dante, Catherine of Siena, and Shakespeare. Although William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood serves as an initial frame of reference, *Blood Matters* does not adhere to traditional medical narratives that lionize Harvey as a hero of modern science and political radicalism. Rather, the political implications of Harvey's anatomical observations form the focus of essays that explore the figurative connotations of the language of circulation. In her assessment of seventeenth-century physiological theories, for example, Margaret Healy challenges long-held assumptions about the political ramifications of William Harvey's anatomical investigations. She asserts that scholars such as Christopher Hill have traditionally interpreted Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood as a destabilizing narrative that called into question the heart's role as king of the body. However, as Healy points out, Harvey's rhetoric of circulation was inherently conservative and promoted harmony and the prevailing political order by reinforcing the traditional Aristotelian insistence on the heart's primacy in the body.

Whereas Healy explores and challenges prevailing interpretations of blood's symbolism in early modern medical and political theory, other essays in this collection delve into the gendered, religious, and aesthetic implications of metaphors related to blood. Gabriella Zuccolin and Helen King's essay, "Rethinking Nosebleeds: Gendering Spontaneous Bleedings in Medieval and Early Modern Medicine," for example, offers an innovative assessment of nosebleeds within the context of early modern medical theory. Zuccolin and King contend that although they seem ostensibly mundane and gender-neutral, nosebleeds were closely linked to menstruation as a means of evacuating excess menstrual blood from the body, and were, in some texts, gendered in ways that directly challenged the one-sex anatomical model associated with Aristotelian and Galenic theory.

Like Zuccolin and King, Ben Parsons explores the gendered implications of the language of blood in pedagogical treatises of the late medieval period. Based on his analysis of texts such as Vincent de Beauvais' *De erudition filiorum nobelium*, Parsons asserts that

pedagogical texts commonly drew links between students' behavioral shortcomings and blood's role as a central component in the constitutions of young men. Although blood's influence generated the potential for unruliness in students, its fluidity also served as a marker of their malleability in the classroom. By addressing the ways in which blood functioned metaphorically and physiologically in late medieval educational texts, Parsons sheds much light on the ways in which constructions of young male masculinity were shaped by notions of blood's essential characteristics.

Although many of the collection's essays explore the ways in which representations of blood intersected with ideas of the body and gender, other chapters focus on the connections between blood and material or alimentary culture. Frances Dolan's essay, for example, incisively explores the longstanding associations between blood and wine in Christian Europe. Rather than investigating this relationship solely through the lens of the Christian Eucharist, however, Dolan demonstrates that blood and wine were also analogous in medical theories that emphasized the visual resemblance of the two fluids and their respective associations with vitality. Reinforced by the doctrine of transubstantiation, the interchangeability of wine and blood in medical theory and religious belief led to concerns about wine's purity in England. As Dolan contends, fears about the impurity of imported wine and its lack of suitability for English blood led to a growing emphasis on proto-nationalist campaigns promoting the production of English wine—notwithstanding the limitations of the English climate—based on prevailing medical theories that emphasized the connections between “place, body, and plants” (221).

By laying emphasis on blood's unmistakable visual appearance, which was rooted in its distinctive color and viscosity, Dolan's essay connects images of blood to popular notions of vitality and regeneration. The striking visual similarity between blood and wine undoubtedly evoked a powerful response from early modern people well acquainted with the interchangeability and transgressive potential of the two fluids, which were typically connected through the ritual of the Eucharist. Although Dolan's essay calls attention to the ways in which early modern people responded to blood's distinctive appearance, analysis of the visual culture of blood is notably underrepresented in

this volume. The lone investigation of visual representations of blood in *Blood Matters*, Dolly Jørgensen's astute essay, "Blood on the Butcher's Knife: Images of Pig Slaughter in Late Medieval Calendars," explores depictions of pig slaughter associated with the month of December in medieval books and calendars. As Jørgensen points out, although such imagery had appeared relatively sanitized in earlier iterations, by the late medieval period, images of the pig slaughter became increasingly graphic and bloody. This bold shift towards explicit imagery, according to Jørgensen, was infused with spiritual meaning and functioned at a highly symbolic level that was tied to a rise in late medieval piety in which the pig slaughter not only symbolized the feast season, but also simultaneously functioned as a transgressive symbol of human sacrifice and salvation. Jørgensen's essay provides that exemplifies the innovative interdisciplinary synergy that pervades this volume. By challenging traditional narratives and schemes of organization, the authors of this collection have created fertile ground for understanding a powerful trope that permeated literature, stagecraft, and intellectual culture in the medieval and early modern periods.

Although one of the great strengths of this volume is that it does not adhere to conventional medical interpretations of blood that lionize William Harvey as a transformative figure in the shift from medieval to modern understandings of the body, notably absent is any reference to Andreas Vesalius and the ways in which he and his anatomist contemporaries began transforming attitudes toward dissected bodies from revulsion to wonder. Further investigation of the extent to which shifts in the cultural role played by dissections influenced literary and aesthetic representations of blood might contribute further insight into the impressive body of scholarship assembled by Johnson and Decamp.

Despite the predominantly literary orientation of this text, its innovative thematic structure and methodological ingenuity will undoubtedly be of great interest to scholars across a range of disciplines. Not only does *Blood Matters* challenge medical historians to approach assessments of anatomical knowledge and the body with a broader disciplinary perspective, but it also offers bold new insights into a powerful and widespread literary trope that has been largely overlooked by social and cultural historians. By connecting ostensibly

disparate topics and methodological approaches through the language of blood, this text underscores the valuable synergy of inter-period and interdisciplinary analyses in medieval and early modern studies.

Tristan Alonge. *Racine et Euripide; La révolution trahie*. Genève: Droz, 2017. 414 pp. €69.00. Review by DENIS D. GRÉLÉ, UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS.

In *Racine et Euripide; La révolution trahie*, Tristan Alonge retells the literary meeting between three eminent authors: Aristotle, Euripides, and Racine. Deeply influenced by Georges Forestier, Alonge argues that the confluence of these three exceptional minds gives birth to the “révolution racinienne”: the propensity to privilege the character over the plot. In order to explain this “révolution”, Alonge is led to analyze Racine’s composition in light of three main sources: history, literature, and seventeenth-century French culture. Regarding the historical approach, Alonge exposes how Racine interacts with his Greek models by looking at translations and notes Racine left in the margins of his Greek texts. By examining Racine’s library, Alonge is also able to relate the various possible French influences, especially on plot and characters. Alonge explores likewise how seventeenth-century culture weighs increasingly on Racine’s writings and determines how the tragedian had to modify his plays in order to fit with the expectations of the public and censors.

The first chapter deals with the importance of Greek language and culture in the education of Racine. Many educated people were able to read Latin, but few knew Greek and, in particular, Greek tragedies, and then only through less than trustworthy translations. Racine, however, was able to read the Greek masters without any interference. This direct contact with Antiquity helped him better understand Aristotle and Euripides. Alonge discovers that Racine did not just copy his Greek masters, but actively studied the Greek tragedies and their structures. In looking at Racine’s translations and at the notes in the margins, Alonge is able to show that Racine did not interpret Aristotle loosely, as Corneille did, but was careful to understand what the Greek philosopher was trying to convey, in particular regarding the notion