

European translations of Hernández's work, making it possible to gain a sense of how his writings from the New World were interpreted and used: included are selections from the work of Johannes de Laet, John Ray, and others—even an excerpt from Erasmus Darwin's poem *Botanick Garden*. There are reproductions of some sixty-four illustrations and a chronology of Hernández's life and work. There is also a detailed history of his original manuscripts; assumed lost or destroyed, they were rediscovered in 1790 on the shelves of the Escorial, where they had been, in the words of Juan Bautista Muñoz, quietly "doing battle with worms and cockroaches" (*MT*, p. 27), only to be lost and found repeatedly over the next several hundred years.

The companion volume of historiography, *Searching for the Secrets of Nature*, helps put Hernández's work in perspective, with essays covering everything from medical training in sixteenth-century Spain to the persistence of native herbal and medical treatments in present-day Mexico. Of particular interest is a biography detailing the reception of Hernández's work in Spain, as well as a chapter on the nature of medical practice in early colonial Mexico. These varied perspectives combine to provide a close look at not just Hernández's life and work, but the practice of medicine and science in both Spain and the New World. Although far from Europe, Mexico was no backwater: the Aztec Empire toppled by the Spaniards was complex and highly sophisticated, as was the colonial empire that followed. New Spain featured not only an established system of hospitals and universities, but a number of ongoing scientific investigations like Hernández's that sought to combine native and European knowledge of the world.

While the discovery of the Americas is little more than a footnote in the history of science and medicine, it has been a major topic of interest for historians of the Americas and Europe for centuries. This set of books, with its impressive collection of material and commentary, should go a long way toward broadening the outlook of both scholars and students of the history of medicine and science on the impact of the New World on the Old.

Kenneth A. Brown
Johns Hopkins University

Louise Boursier. *Récit véritable de la naissance des messeigneurs et dames les enfans de France, Instruction à ma fille, et autres textes*. Critical edition by François Rouget and Colette H. Winn. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2000. 166 pp. Ill. Sw. Fr. 42.00 (paperbound, 2-600-00460-2).

This compact, but rich, volume contains a number of primary texts written in the first half of the sixteenth century by Louise Boursier (better known as Louise Bourgeois), the midwife who attended the births of all six children of Marie de Medici and Henri IV. The editors provide a well-documented introduction placing

the texts in the context of the ideas and practices of Bourgeois's time and relating them to crucial events in her life. The texts are framed by a chronology of historical events, a chronology of early modern obstetrical texts, the Oath of Saint Quentin required of early modern midwives, and a bibliography of relevant primary and secondary sources. According to the catalog of the Bibliothèque Nationale, this edition is the first to be published since the nineteenth century and the only one to assemble this particular selection of texts in a single volume.

The two central texts, Bourgeois's narration of the births of the royal children and her advice to her daughter, are of value for their contribution to the history of mentalities and customs as well as to the social history of medicine. Bourgeois served as Marie de Medici's midwife from 1601 to 1609 and was particularly well placed to observe and divulge secrets of court life that would highlight the humanity of the monarchs and the competence and fortitude of their midwife. The narration provides insight into the intrigue that lay behind her ascent to the position of midwife to the queen at the expense of another midwife, Mme. Dupuis. Dupuis had served as midwife to the king's mistress, and it was his wish that she be the midwife to Marie de Medici as well; the queen was widely rumored to be displeased at this prospect, and Bourgeois describes her own maneuvers to gain the queen's confidence and the acquiescence of the king. Securing recommendations from highly placed clients and medical figures was crucial. Another important step was to assure the queen that her first child would be a boy—a prediction based on the queen's good complexion and Bourgeois's own sense of historical destiny.

Bourgeois goes on to describe many details surrounding the birth of the dauphin, including rivalries among the ladies at court over who would announce the sex of the child, the king's great concern over the queen's twenty-two-hour labor, and the abandonment of the usual protocol at court in the general jubilation over the birth. The editors point out that Bourgeois focuses on emotions and relationships in her account, in contrast to the physician Jean Héroard, who provides more explicit physical details about the birth and about the difficulties that the newborn experienced in nursing.

But if the narration traces Bourgeois's ascent, the other documents show a darker side to the career of even such a distinguished and favored midwife. Bourgeois went into retirement after attending the labor in 1627 of the duchess of Orléans, Mme. de Bourbon Montpensier, who died four days after giving birth. The autopsy, signed by numerous physicians and surgeons, implied that Bourgeois was responsible for Montpensier's death. Bourgeois responded sharply, and the exchange reveals their mutual suspicion. Bourgeois's advice to her daughter, who would also become a midwife, discloses her ambivalence about the career. She notes the close relationship that develops between the prospective mother and the midwife, but also the tension and room for distrust that can arise between them. Too often, she laments, midwives are taken for granted, blamed for stillbirths, and deceived by women pressured to declare themselves pregnant even if they are not.

Bourgeois ends her advice to her daughter with the assertion that lies often

obscure the truth, but that the truth will ultimately prevail. Her struggle to tell her side of the story is depicted poignantly in these texts, which are not well known to scholars, but deserve to be. This new edition is a valuable resource for historians of midwifery and of early modern France.

Lindsay Wilson
Northern Arizona University

Johanna Geyer-Kordesch. *Pietismus, Medizin und Aufklärung in Preußen im 18. Jahrhundert: Das Leben und Werk Georg Ernst Stahls*. Halesche Beiträge zur Europäischen Aufklärung, no. 13. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000. viii + 283 pp. €68.00; Sw. Fr. 121.00 (paperbound, 3-484-81013-0).

Johanna Geyer-Kordesch is well known to American and English historians of early modern medicine for her many and wide-ranging contributions to the work of the Wellcome group in England. This recently published monograph on Stahlian medicine and medical theory goes back to an earlier stage of her work. It is both valuable and welcome, although it ignores much of the more recent literature on the linkage between medical and religious reforms at the end of the early modern period. Whatever the reason for this omission, there is still much to be done to elucidate how these reforms affected specific aspects of Western medicine in general, and German medicine in particular. In contrast to previous English-language work on Stahl—in particular, Lester King's classic studies—Geyer-Kordesch was able to work from a wide range of archival sources and of forgotten or neglected secondary literature to fill some of the gap.

Subtitled *Das Leben und Werk Georg Ernst Stahls*, the study provides a partial biography of Stahl (1659–1734) and a valuable if not exhaustive bibliography. The major focus is on Stahl's medical philosophy, and on his experience-based epistemology and his faith as inseparable strands of this philosophy. Using both a social history framework and a very detailed reading of his works, the author undertakes to tease out the essence of Stahl's rejection of mechanical and dualist models of human nature in favor of a dynamic and synergistic understanding of the interaction between body and soul. This is no easy task, in view of the difficulty of doing justice to Stahl's writing through the complexities of his Latin, noted by both Lester King and the author (p. 31), and through the numerous translations into the similarly complex German of the period.

The historical context is set out in terms of Stahl's role in and personal connections to the German Pietist movement of religious renewal, which enabled much of the reform of medicine under Pietist auspices at the new and Pietist-dominated University of Halle in Brandenburg-Prussia from its founding in 1694 to roughly 1740. Many medical practitioners and medical thinkers were profoundly disturbed by the various mechanistic models of bodily function and