

*Bridging Traditions: Alchemy, Chemistry, and Paracelsian Practices in the Early Modern Era.* Karen Hunger Parshall, Michael T. Walton, and Bruce T. Moran, eds. Early Modern Studies 15. Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2015. xxii + 312 pp. \$50.

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This collection of essays in honor of Allen G. Debus (1926–2009) opens with an assessment of the work of Debus by K. H. Parshall in the light of its sometimes contrasted reception: an interesting topic indeed, which will perhaps be worth exploring more fruitfully in some years, with more hindsight than today. What can be safely said for now is that Debus, alongside Walter Pagel, established the history of chemistry and Paracelsianism as a fruitful field of research within the history of science, as recalled by Nicholas Clulee in a nice quotation (12n47).

The book includes an essay by Jole Shackelford focusing on the practice of chemical uroscopy by German physicians such as Johann Hayne (fl. 1620), influenced both by the medieval medical tradition and by Paracelsus. The example of Hayne enables Shackelford to show how “early modern application(s) of Paracelsian chemical physiology to medical practice” (21) may have proven influential up to the eighteenth century, which leads him to draw interesting historiographic conclusions on the status of Paracelsianism between tradition and innovation. Bruce Moran provides very useful insights into the different possible meanings of *chymia* / *alchimia* as examined by Andreas Libavius. His chapter illuminates Libavius’s legacy, especially in the conceptions of the two Zacharias Brendel (father and son), as well as the profound distaste of Libavius for “the realms of the metaphysical, celestial, or supernatural” (76). A chapter by Margaret Garber draws attention to a still largely unexplored German academy, the Academia Naturae Curiosorum, established in Halle in 1652, the rich production of which (annually published in the *Miscellanea Curiosa sive Ephemeridum Medico-Physicarum Germanicarum Academiae Imperialis Leopoldinae Naturae Curiosorum Decuriae*) deserves a real, comprehensive, and in-depth study.

In “The Development and Formulation of G. E. Stahl’s Principle of Inflammability,” Ku-ming Chang discusses in detail the famous phlogiston that, fifty years later, was to be the main target in Lavoisier’s attacks against eighteenth-century chemistry. Mar Rey

Bueno offers a new perspective for alchemy and chemistry in sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century Spain. She demonstrates that King Philip II of Spain institutionalized the profession of distiller, decades before France, by integrating a distiller into the group of his personal physicians, leading the reader to the conclusion that anyone interested in the historical development of chemistry in Europe cannot ignore the new Spanish historians any longer. It will be safer, however, to carefully differentiate the fields of alchemy, distillation, chemical pharmacology, and Paracelsianism properly said. The relationship between alchemical and medical practice is dealt with, in the case of Austria, by Anke Timmermann. It is not possible to mention all chapters of the book, but an important one is "Paracelsus on the Sidereal Powers," in which Dane Daniel revisits "the Historiographical Debate between Walter Pagel and Kurt Goldammer" (209) on such issues as Gnosticism and mostly Neoplatonism in the work of Paracelsus. Another chapter, by Nicholas Clulee, is devoted to John Dee, as it discusses the major monographs published since the beginning of the twentieth century about this "Elizabethan Magus" (as termed by Peter French's *John Dee* [1972], in its subtitle). Clulee concludes, as his title says, that after 400 years, Dee is "still an enigma" (226), despite a number of important studies illuminating parts of his elusive life, works, and thinking.

A welcome book intended to honor a once groundbreaking scholar, *Bridging Traditions* contains important material for historians of Paracelsianism and early modern chemistry, medicine, and magic.

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