

Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent, eds. *Governing Masculinities in the Early Modern Period: Regulating Selves and Others*.

Women and Gender in the Early Modern World. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011. xiii + 328 pp. \$124.95. ISBN: 978-1-4094-3238-8.

This stimulating collection of essays, which grew out of a symposium at the University of Western Australia on the masculinities of governing men, explores the relationships between masculinity and government in a wide range of contexts and places in early modern Europe. The essays range from the late fourteenth to the early nineteenth century; they cover England, Scotland, the Netherlands, France, Italy, and Germany. Governors are defined in multiple ways, from governing the household, or a printers shop, to professional responsibilities, to more conventional models of political governance. Furthermore, the governing examined is both outward — the governing of others — and inward — governing the self. The collection as a whole creates a convincing argument that indeed masculinities are plural, and that masculine governance is never simple, but always contested. Men have multiple responsibilities, and interact with each other, and with women, from multiple positions. Defining men's responsibilities in governance was never straightforward. As in most collections of essays, the contributions vary in quality. But the coherence of the collection is such that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The range of the essays ensures that while everyone will find ones that cover familiar territory, almost everyone will find themselves surprised by an essay on an unfamiliar subject. For instance, attention to visual culture is provided in the essays by Jennifer Spinks (“Codpieces and Potbellies in the *Songes drolatiques*: Satirizing Masculine Self-Control in Early Modern France and Germany”), Peter Sherlock (“Militant Masculinity and the Monuments of Westminster Abbey”), and Susie Protschky (“Between Corporate and Familial Responsibility: Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen and Masculine Governance in Europe and the Dutch Colonial World”). By comparing French and German editions of the *Songes Drolatiques*, Spinks is able to show that the French satires focused on lust as the dominant disruption of male self-government, while German ones focused on gluttony. Sherlock argues that the valorization of military prowess over and above other achievements is a product of English participation in the wars of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Protschky illuminates the different demands on men of military command in Europe and colonial authority: she demonstrates that Johan Maurits experienced his domestic and colonial roles as most congruent in military contexts, and that it was as a military commander that he chose to have

himself painted. In each of these cases, visual culture provides a new way of tracing values of masculinity.

Other essays take on familiar subjects from an unfamiliar angle. E. J. Kent focuses on how male witches are described, and develops the useful concept of the “patriarch’s toolbox.” She finds that accounts of male witches focus on ways they misuse the tools that patriarchal men are expected to deploy in leadership, thus emphasizing the ways in which witchcraft represents an inversion of expected behavior. Robert Weston’s account of medical consultations by letter in eighteenth-century France shows how illness and pain alter the relationships of power between elite patients and more modestly situated medical practitioners; and, indeed, how the hierarchy of medical practitioners is itself mobilized to treat illness. And while medical practitioners had some authority by virtue of their training, many laypeople, particularly women, had sufficient medical experience that they felt able to challenge medical judgments and prescriptions. Here professional authority was severely circumscribed. Similar complexity is visible in Rosa Salzburg’s account of early sixteenth-century Venetian printshops: here printers might claim to be equal participants in the republic of letters, but their concern with profit set them apart from the ideal disinterested scholar. Aldo Manuzio, who printed a series of important humanist tracts, was adamant that he was part of the scholarly conversation, but Erasmus’s satirical account of the workshop of Manuzio’s father-in-law suggests that he was in fact a subordinate, with little power to make real choices in the workshop.

The success of this collection lies in the finely-grained attention given to particular contexts in which men exercised authority. The essays in this collection help to broaden our understanding of the ways in which men’s authority was defined, experienced, and exercised. They make a useful contribution to the ongoing exploration of meanings of manhood in early modern Europe.

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