

David Lederer. *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe: A Bavarian Beacon*.

New Studies in European History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xx + 362 pp. index. illus. tpls. map. bibl. \$90. ISBN: 0-521-85347-8.

Professor Lederer's focus is spiritual physic — religious medicine applied to sufferers of a range of moral disorders — and he provides a cultural history of early modern psychiatry in seventeenth-century Catholic Bavaria. Included is a panoramic view of the history of mental health theory and practice from the sixteenth-century Aristotelian *de anima* renaissance and moral casuistry, which connected moral comportment with one's spiritual health, to later bourgeois psychiatry, Mesmerism, and, in a provocative closing excursus, to Freud's interest in seventeenth-century demonology.

Spiritual illness was thought to result in fever, madness, terror, despair, susceptibility to demons, and suicide. Early modern theorists linked humoral physiology with Aristotelian faculty psychology, popular cultural practices associated mental illness with immoral behavior and demonic agency, and religious authorities claimed jurisdiction over souls whose disorders might cause humoral imbalances such as melancholy, or maladies ranging from tribulations and fear to raging madness and demonic possession. Lederer argues that spiritual physic's practices were coherent with these three cultures, but that they also conflicted with unofficial healers and the emerging absolutist state.

Case histories of sufferers from spiritual maladies who became penitent pilgrims and were often maniacs (and sometimes demoniacs) are woven into a regional case study. Bavaria's important pilgrimage sites specialized in the cure of spiritual maladies, madness, possession, and the like. An unbroken succession of centralizing political administrations provides a rich documentary record for this study. Building on some 2,000 case histories of spiritual affliction from the *Bavarian Beacon* hagiographic miracle book, court records, and other ecclesiastical, legal, and financial sources, Lederer describes a heyday of ritual pilgrimage, prayer, penance, and saint-cults, which resulted in growing state opposition to clerical treatment of mental-spiritual afflictions.

Mandatory auricular confession (a "talking cure" [97]), a feature of post-Tridentine Catholic renewal, pilgrimage to sites of "the special dead," and relic collecting ("baroque necrolatry" [110]) were prominent features of the sacramental penance promoted by Jesuit teachers and confessors ("consummate dramatists and demonologists" [198]). The political elite of the nascent absolutist state sought to limit increasingly popular and often unruly pilgrimages and unofficial exorcisms. Ironically, the increased scrutiny of individual consciences in this penitential regime produced greater levels of guilt, fear, and despondency, which in turn contributed to rising levels of madness, despair, and, in a minority of cases, demonic possession. Lederer argues that there were lasting psychological effects of "an enduring climate of terror and despair" (101) in this period of general crisis.

The suicide rates which peaked around 1611 to 1635 prompted greater attention to decisions about dishonorable burials and added a political motive for preferring the secular insanity defense to a religious process countering demonic-inspired despair. Shameful burials declined, as did officially sanctioned exorcisms, and this marked a turning point in the diabolical crisis. Nonetheless, communities and Church authorities continued to contest the state's insanity verdicts and other inroads of the Wittelsbach state on local privileges. Ultimately "pragmatic reason of state policies" (203) prevailed.

Spiritual physic was in decline by 1650, as were exorcisms and witch trials. However, pilgrimages and exorcisms associated with spiritual suffering and treatment declined only slowly, and unofficial healers remained popular despite official attempts to control them, making the development of absolutism slow and imperfect. The secular insanity defense was an outcome of this psychological

revolution that grew out of Counter-Reformation struggles over the bodies of the mad and possessed.

Lederer surveys the history of early modern exorcism, from a period of real mania (1560–80) to official routinization by 1614 (largely the work of Peter Canisius) and its decline in the late seventeenth century. Two illustrative cases from the late 1660s, richly documented by the demoniacs and their exorcists, might have ended in witchcraft cases had not a Jesuit confessor to the Wittelsbachs sought other explanations and contributed to the decline of spiritual physic. Despite official policy, neither absolution nor confinement was fully implemented, and spiritual physic coexisted with the insanity defense until nineteenth-century constitutional change marked the victory of the ideology of confinement.

This fine and dense study is an important contribution to our understanding of early modern mentalities, popular culture and religion, pilgrimage, healing, exorcism, sainthood, and state formation.

DAVID O. MCNEIL

San José State University