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Finucci, Valeria. The Prince's Body: Vincenzo Gonzaga and Renaissance Medicine

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displayed in their intended domestic contexts has been largely overlooked in Renaissance and baroque art historical studies. There are important precedents in Renaissance studies for much of what is discussed here. For example, the section on *studioli* and *camerini* makes no reference that I can see (there is no comprehensive bibliography) to Dora Thornton's masterful and detailed *The Scholar in His Study* (Yale 1997), which even made use of the same illustrations found here. Similarly, the authors who discuss relationships between décor and display make no reference, to name just one example, to Clifford Malcolm Brown's *Isabella d'Este in the Ducal Palace in Mantua* (Bulzoni, 2005) in which Brown traced the migration of her collections from their original setting in one of the medieval towers of the Castello di San Giorgio, to their reinstallation in the ground floor apartments of the Corte Vecchia, to their final move upstairs into the Domus Nova wing—a book, in other words, entirely devoted to the study of a collection *in situ*. In terms of patterns of acquisition and theories of consumption, Evelyn Welch's *Shopping in the Renaissance* (Yale, 2005) is not mentioned. Even in terms of Rome itself, one could expect more than a passing reference to Kathleen Wren Christian's recent *Empire without End: Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome, c1350–1527* (Yale, 2010), with its important catalogue of collections in Roman houses before 1527. I know this is not a book about the Renaissance, but there has been much Renaissance scholarship on issues germane to the analyses here, and it's slightly disappointing that so much of it is unacknowledged in this volume.

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Finucci, Valeria.

The Prince's Body: Vincenzo Gonzaga and Renaissance Medicine.

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015. Pp. 273 + 17 ill. ISBN 978-0-674-72545-4 (hardcover) \$39.95.

We tend to think that contemporary culture's fascination with the aesthetics of the body (i.e., its beauty, its sexual performance, and youth maintenance) is typical of the modern-day mindset. After reading Valeria Finucci's book, we may need to re-evaluate this collective assumption. Finucci examines four

periods (1581, 1595, 1601, and 1608) in the life of the fourth duke of Mantua and Monferrato, Vincenzo Gonzaga (1562–1612). The study comprises four chronologically and thematically related chapters, and introduction, a thematically unifying epilogue, endnotes, a list of cultural illustrations, and a detailed bibliography of manuscript sources, newspaper and magazine articles, as well as primary and secondary sources.

The first chapter, “Staging the Body,” introduces the major theme of the book: why Vincenzo Gonzaga at the time of his death felt the need to be buried “sitting up with his sword at his side on a marble chair prepared for this purpose” (2). The book seeks to clarify the reasons Gonzaga “chose to define himself for posterity with a last bravado choice, a sword” (27), and how this stance reflects his own as well as his culture’s fascination with, and celebration of, self-image.

Methodologically, each chapter starts with and subsequently replicates the identical temporal, status, and medical affliction-intervention indicators. This structure diachronically orients the reader through Gonzaga’s life and its defining medical circumstance and the treatments sought for it. Each chapter is framed by the following formula: “Sometime in (*month, year*), Vincenzo Gonzaga I, future fourth Duke of Mantua and Monferrato and munificent sponsor of art, music, and theatre—a Renaissance prince in every sense of the word—realized that he had a (*medical, aesthetic, sexual affliction*) that required (*different adjectives are placed here depending on the type of medical intervention, whether curative or aesthetic, and/or social sensibility*)” (28, 63, 96, 121). This repeated pattern contextualizes the duke’s progressive medical predicaments and the medical advancements they triggered. Thematically, it also serves to define, develop, and reinforce the predominant concept of the book: how a Renaissance prince’s life-long preoccupation with the welfare and politico-aesthetic image of his body reflected the idea of beauty, princely power, and self-image delineating Renaissance court life and values, as well as generated interest in the development and advancement of medical science for aesthetic and curative application.

Chapter 1 features the duke’s problems in his sexual congress with his first wife (Margherita Farnese in 1581) and the medical research it inspired. The medical and public scrutiny this conjugal union drew to both the girl’s sexual anatomy and to the politics of Gonzaga’s public image of begetting a potentate galvanized further medical research into aspects (and parts) of female

anatomy that had hitherto not been studied sufficiently or about which little was known prior to the Gonzaga-Farnese affair. As Finucci explains, “[i]n a period in which mostly older women and midwives performed manual exams, Margherita’s case, with the lineup of hymens that it required, was manna for scientific research” (45).

Chapter 2, “The Aesthetic Cure: Skin Disease, Noses, and the Invention of Plastic Surgery,” details the year 1595 and the aesthetic-medical condition of a “disfiguring facial infection, an erysipelas” (63). Gonzaga’s search for a cure or treatment for this facial predicament inserts itself within the wider Renaissance medical-aesthetic narrative of medical-aesthetic research and development: “In this chapter I connect Vincenzo’s relentless search for a way to address his skin problems to the invention of reconstructive plastic surgery of the face as delineated in *De curtorum chirurgica per insitionem*” (64).

Chapter 3, “The Comfort Cure: Managing Pain and Catarrh at the Spa,” details the year 1601 and the pain management predicament of “rheumatism or catarrh of the knee,” the pain of which had become “excruciating during his stay abroad and no relief suggested by the doctors in his retinue had provided more than palliative alleviations of symptoms” (97). Hydrotherapy at a spa was suggested. As Finucci observes, spa treatments in both Italy and Europe at the time were part of the cultural discourse: “At the time of Vincenzo’s visit, there was already a guidebook that illustrated the benefits of a hydrotherapy treatment” (112). Although Gonzaga’s hydrotherapy sessions did not help in alleviating his leg pain, Finucci argues that the duke’s patronage of hydrotherapeutic locales to treat a variety of conditions, as well as the fact that there were guidebooks published on spas, reflected early modern culture’s preoccupation with alternative cures for real (justifiable) pain as well as with pursuing maximum pleasure: “At the same time spas offered plenty of entertainment and relaxation. Musicians with bagpipes and other string instruments often entertained their sick patrons [...] waiters floated luscious food and wine on trays” (98).

Chapter 4, “The Sexual Cure: Searching for a Viagra in the New World,” details the year 1608, the period of time coinciding with Gonzaga’s world-wide search for libido-enhancing remedies. As with his other medical predicaments of 1581, 1595, and 1601, the 1608 predicament generated advances in medical science. This medical predicament—erectile dysfunction—hurled the duke to many exotic places, like the New World. The significance of this itinerary of discovery is that it reflects early modern culture’s dedication to the industry of

sexual therapies, pharmaceuticals, and academic publications on the subject. Thus Gonzaga's "relentless searches" reflect an empirical mindset inspired by the discovery of the New World and thus interested in the exotic. As Finucci explains, Gonzaga's "apothecary," Evangelista Marcobruno, in suggesting various courses of treatment for the duke's "problem in the bedroom," must have consulted "many other books in circulation, [...] such as Juan Frago's text on aromatic medicaments or José de Acosta's encyclopedic *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590), which contained information on geography, climate, plants, animals, and exotica from both Mexico and Peru" (137).

The book's significance—as the unifying epilogue shows—is in elucidating how the human body in a social context is both signifier and signified of a culture's preoccupations, prejudices, epistemological mindset, and aesthetic sensibilities. Valeria Finucci's book reveals a cultural-historical continuity with our culture's aesthetic-medical preoccupation in celebrating images of young-looking bodies and in pursuing medical solutions to aesthetic and physical preoccupations with the body.

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Goldstein, Claudia.

Pieter Bruegel and the Culture of the Early Modern Dinner Party.

Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. Pp. xiii, 173 + 70 ill. ISBN 978-0-7546-6732-2 (hardcover) \$99.95.

In this book, art history professor Claudia Goldstein examines some Bruegel paintings that once hung in an Antwerp dining room in order to provide "a brief glimpse of the complex intersection between visual and material culture and social life during the period of Antwerp's greatest prosperity" (9). The dining room belonged to Jan Noiroet, master of the Antwerp Mint; the paintings were among fifty works he owned that appear in an inventory made of his house in August of 1572. Acquired at the apex of Noiroet's wealth and social cachet, the paintings were dispersed, along with all of his other goods, shortly after he declared bankruptcy and fled his home and family. Other luxury items were also in this *eetkameren*, or small dining room: crystal