Notes

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NOTES

Abbreviations

BHM  Bulletin of the History of Medicine
B.L.  British Library, London
B.N.  Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris
cod.  codex
col.  column
f. fr.  fonds francais
fig.  figure
f. lat.  fonds latin
fol.  folio
JHM  Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences
MS  manuscript
n. acq. fr.  nouvelles acquisitions françaises
r  recto
v  verso

Introduction


2. The story of this child, later to become abbot of Saint Gall, contains these details: “[The mother’s] time drew near; she fell into a sore sickness before her time, and died a fortnight before the expected birth. The child was cut from her corpse and wrapped in the
fat of a new-born pig, until his skin should grow. . . . The boy, who was most comely, was delicately nurtured in the abbey. The brethren called him ‘The Unborn’; and seeing that his birth was thus untimely, and that no fly ever bit him without drawing blood, therefore in his case the master spared even the rod.” The combination of these two privileges is mysterious, but it indicates that those born by Caesarean are singled out for special treatment by both humans and animals. It may be that the fly’s behavior marked the abbot as physically different. In any case, the surname “Unborn” forever signaled the abbot’s essential otherness through his unnatural birth; not only was he not born in the natural manner, but he was cut from a corpse. See Coulton, *Life in the Middle Ages*, 4:80–81. The Latin text is in Goldast, *Rerum alamannicarum scriptores*, p. 40. The detail about the fly’s bite does not appear in any other stories about people born by Caesarean.

3. This is why Shakespeare could, in *Macbeth*, play on the prophecy that “none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth” (act 4, sc. 1). This prophecy becomes the central enigma in the tragedy and is at last ironically fulfilled when Macduff informs Macbeth that “Macduff was from his mother’s womb / Untimely ripp’d” (act 5, sc. 8). Significantly, Shakespeare changed the scene of the prophecy from that in his source, Holinshed. In Holinshed it was a witch who prophesied that Macbeth “should never be slaine with man born of anie woman” (Boswell-Stone, *Shakespeare’s Holinshed*, p. 36). In *Macbeth*, the apparence of a bloody child makes a similar pronouncement. Shakespeare’s picture of Caesarean birth was therefore both realistic and symbolic. The bloodiness of the operation, represented by the child, is, in this scene, tied to its symbolic and mysterious dimensions.

4. Given the conditions of the times, it must be assumed that the mother died during the birth. See Glesinger, “La Naissance de Vopiscus Fortunatus Plempius,” p. 678.


6. For discussion of these questions as they relate to present-day women, see Sandra Blakeslee, “Doctors Debate Surgery’s Place in the Maternity Ward” (*New York Times*, March 24, 1985); Tamar Lewin, “Courts Acting to Force Care of Unborn” (*New York Times*, November 23, 1987); Philip Shabecoff, in “Panel Says Caesareans Are Used Too Often” (*New York Times*, November 3, 1987), states that 24.4 percent of all births in 1986 were Caesarean. The rate has quadrupled over the last sixteen years. Sandra Blakeslee quotes one doctor as saying, “You rarely get sued for doing a C-section. It’s easier to tell the jury, ‘I did everything I could. I did an immediate C-section.’” The preference for C-sections may also be related to class. Blakeslee points out that 80 percent of well-to-do Brazilian women deliver by Caesarean. For a judicious evaluation of the pros and cons of Caesarean birth (focusing also on Brazil), see Marlise Simons, “Babies and Doctors: Whose Birth Is It Anyway?” (*New York Times*, July 5, 1988). On the rights of mothers and fetuses, see Marcia Chambers, “Are Fetal Rights Equal to Infants’?” (*New York Times*, November 16, 1986).

7. Several characters in legend and literature were born by Caesarean, all of them male. (The birth of female babies is usually not described in great detail.) In eleventh-century Iran, the poet Firdusi told of the birth of the hero Rustam by Caesarean section in a moving passage of his *Shahnama*. See Torpin and Vafaie, “The Birth of Rustam.” In the medieval European tradition, Tristan (in the late-twelfth-century German version of *Tristan* by Eilhart) was born by Caesarean on a sea journey. The birth here predicts Tristan’s dark future and can be seen as a metaphor for the destructive forces governing man’s fate from the moment of his birth. Both Rustam’s (= “I am relieved of suffering”) and Tristan’s (“triste” = sad [for the mother’s death]) names commemorate the manner of their birth. A medieval Scandinavian ballad, *The Death of Queen Dagmar*, also tells of a royal Caesarean birth fatal to the mother. Here paradise is the reward for the mother’s sufferings. See Jacobsen, “Pregnancy and Childbirth,” p. 98. In the mythological tradition, the births of Aesculapius, Adonis, and Bacchus are Caesareans. Some interesting inter-
pretations of these births can be found in the fourteenth-century Christianized moralization of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the 72,000-line *Ovide moralisé*. Generally, Caesarean birth is seen there in a negative light (denoting corruption by drink in Semele's [Bacchus's mother] case, for example).

8. The *Faits des Romains* (The deeds of the Romans), the source of most of the illustrations used in this book, was an extremely popular text in the Middle Ages that still exists in several dozen manuscripts. Written by an anonymous northern French clerk in the early thirteenth century, it was a compilation of translations from Sallust, Suetonius, Lucan, and Caesar's *De bello gallico*, also known as the *Commentaries*. This last text was also translated independently into French in later centuries, and its manuscripts also feature some splendid renditions of the birth of Caesar. Other sources for the *Faits* include Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, glosses and commentaries in manuscripts of Lucan, Flavius Josephus's *Wars of the Jews*, Saint Augustine, the Bible (to a very small extent), and some vernacular texts, such as the *Roman de Thèbes* and the *Roman d'Alexandre*.

9. On the uses of medieval illuminations and woodcuts for a reconstruction of the history of women and children see Alexandre-Bidon and Closson, *L'Enfant*, pp. 7–10. Their comparison between images and texts makes a convincing case for the realism of scenes showing births, swaddling, breastfeeding, games, and so on.

10. Previous studies of Caesarean birth almost all have a purely medical perspective and consider medieval and Renaissance Caesareans only in the context of historical progression (see Young, *Caesarean Section*; Newell, *Caesarean Section*; Levens and Sinz, *Die künstliche Geburt*; Trolle, *The History of Caesarean Section*). The most comprehensive study to date is that of Pundel, *L'Histoire*. Although his work is an excellent source book, Pundel makes no effort to analyze the development of the operation and makes no mention of the changeover in the performance of Caesarean sections from females to males. He uses illustrations indiscriminately without any concern for their dates or the texts they come from. The same defect characterizes a number of medical picture books. Zglinicki, *Die Geburt* (chap. 5 on Caesarean birth) has many illustrations (one of them [fig. 139] misidentified) but an inadequate text with several errors. Even MacKinney ("Childbirth in the Middle Ages," p. 234), an expert in the field of medical iconography, makes some incorrect claims when it comes to Caesareans by stating that midwives were not present in pictures of Caesarean birth. Other historians (e.g., Hurd-Mead, *A History*, p. 182), ignoring Flutre's brief 1934 article "La Naissance de César," which clearly shows that the iconographic tradition of Caesarean birth started in the late thirteenth century, propose that a sixteenth-century woodcut of Suetonius's *De vita duodecim Caesarum* is the first illustration of a Caesarean. The same mistake occurs in the catalogue of the British Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology (Cambridge, July 1968). Even in a very recent article, the author wrongly claims that the earliest images of Caesarean birth date from the fifteenth century (Laget, "La Césarienne," p. 180). The iconography of Caesarean birth, in its development as a series of images as well as in its possible symbolic significance, has never been studied before. The male incursion into obstetrics has, of course, been explored in the past, but mostly for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some excellent material can be found in Donegan, *Women and Men Midwives*; Donnison, *Midwives and Medical Men*; Laget, *Naissances*; and *The Male Midwife and the Female Doctor*, a collection of primary sources.

1. **Caesarean Birth in Medical Thought**

1. See the Appendix for medieval thoughts on the etymology of the term "Caesarean section" and Chapter 4 for legends and miracles relating to Caesarean birth.


4. *De universo* libri XXII (*PL* 111, col. 232): “Vipera dicta, quod vi pariat. Nam et venter ejus cum ad partum ingemuerit, catuli non expectantes naturae solutionem, corrosis ejus lateribus, vi erumpunt cum matris interitu. . . . Furtur autem, quod masculus ore inserto viperae semen exspuat, illa autem ex voluptate libidinis in rabiem versa caput matris ore ceptum praecedit. Ita fit, ut parens utraque pereat: masculus dum coit; femina dum parturit” (The viper is called viper because it gives birth by force [vi]. When its belly groans with the impending birth, the little ones do not wait for a natural solution but bite through their mother’s sides and burst forth, thus causing the mother’s destruction. . . . It is said that the male expels the seed while sticking its head into the mouth of the female viper. She is moved by such libidinous and voluptuous frenzy that she bites off the male’s head. Thus both parents perish: the male during intercourse, the female while giving birth.) For details on the viper and the Antichrist, see Chapter 4. For a dramatic picture of Saint Margaret emerging from the split belly of the dragon, see B.N. n. acq. fr. 16251 (thirteenth-century; reproduced by Alexandre-Bidon and Closson in *L’Enfant* as plate 4, unfortunately without folio number).

5. Contraception was of course not unknown in this period. It consisted largely of herbal potions, pessaries, and charms. I will discuss this question in Chapter 3 in connection with the activities of medieval midwives. Details can be found in Noonan, *Contraception*. See Laget, *Naissances*, p. 160, for some remarks on the idea that Mary’s labor was painless because she had conceived without a man and consequently without pleasure.


7. Ibid., p. 499.


10. Noonan, p. 279. Thinkers of the School of Chartres, such as Alanus de Insulis, on the other hand, believed that humans had a duty to procreate. For the School of Chartres, see Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century*.

11. The difference between church attitudes and medical ideas is striking. The medical establishment often saw menstruation, intercourse, and pregnancy as beneficial to women. The conflict between religious and medical views did not necessarily have to be resolved, as one can see in the writings of Albertus Magnus. I will consider some of his statements (especially on contraception) in Chapter 3. For details on the differing views of theology and medicine, see Jacquot and Thomasset, *Sexualité*, esp. pp. 265–68. Although the attitudes of the church were on the whole negative, they were much more differentiated than I am able to show here. For an exhaustive treatment of the subject, see Brundage’s monumental *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*. See also Metz, “Le Statut de la femme en droit canonique médiéval,” *Recueil de la Société Jean Bodin* 12 (1962): 59–113; esp. pp. 60–97. Reprinted in Metz, *La Femme et l’enfant*, section 4.


15. For the problems in getting information on mothers’ experiences (if for a somewhat later period), see Wilson, “Participant or Patient?” pp. 129–32. Alexandre-Bidon and Closson provide many pictorial sources for the depiction of medieval mothers and children, but for the medical aspects of childbirth and motherhood their text is not very detailed.


17. Ibid., p. 29. See also Laget, *Naissances*, pp. 80–97; she discusses in detail the
paradox of emotional distancing (caused by high infant mortality) and the joyous rituals accompanying the birth of a child.


21. *Saints*, p. 47. It seems to me that Weinstein and Bell describe Ariès's position as too extreme, for Ariès states clearly that parental affection existed, that children were not neglected or undervalued. He simply insists on the absence of a "sentiment de l'enfance" (p. 134), i.e., the absence of the consciousness that childhood was a separate stage in life that deserved particular consideration. Children were treated as little adults and had no separate space. One conclusion with regard to Ariès's thesis (drawn neither by Ariès nor by Weinstein and Bell) seems to be that if childhood was undervalued, so was motherhood. In rejecting a separate space for children, society may have effectively denied the special domain of the mother.


27. The education and gradual professionalization of midwives will be discussed in Chapter 3.


30. Ibid., p. 71.

31. Ibid., p. 81.


33. Ibid., pp. 103, 105.

34. Paulus Aegineta, the author of a late antique medical encyclopedia, divides the causes as follows: "Difficult labor arises either from the woman who bears the child, or from the child itself, or from the secundines, or from some external circumstance" (*The Seven Books*, 1:646). Paulus's book is a compilation of ancient authors and he repeats Soranus's advice in many instances. Soranus's remarks are too lengthy to be summarized here. In any case, what interests us primarily is what was retained of Soranus's teachings in the Middle Ages. See the section on Bernard of Gordon (at the beginning of "The Textual Tradition of Caesarean Birth") for details on the reasons for difficult labor.

35. The identity of Trotula (and of the related texts) has been hotly disputed since the sixteenth century. The most recent discussion of the writings and the identity of Trotula can be found in Benton, "Trotula."


39. For some recent speculations on what kinds of guidelines were available to midwives as well as on the midwives' possible literacy, see Green, *Toward a History*.

40. For medical education see Talbot, "Medical Education"; McVaugh, "The History of Medicine"; and Siraisi, *Taddeo Alderotti*, chaps. 4 and 5. I will not go into greater detail on Soranus's successors here, since good overviews of medical traditions regarding childbirth, gynecology, and female physiology exist. Old, but still informative is Fasbender. Diepgen, *Frau und Frauenheilkunde*, is excellent, as are Green, *Transmission of Ancient*
Theories, and Jacquart and Thomasset. Salvat is also useful but concentrates mostly on Bartholomeus Anglicus.

41. "Obstetrix autem dicitur mulier que habet artem iuvandi mulierem parientem ut faculiter pariat et infantus partus tempere periculum non incurat" (Bartholomeus, De proprietatibus, fol. 64v). Note that the word used to describe her skills here is *ars* (or "craft" in the Trevisa translation [p. 305]).

42. Bartholomeus, De proprietatibus, fol. 64v: "[The midwife] membrorum confortationem delinit membra panniculis involvit .... [The wet nurse] fasciis et lintheolis constringit membra puerilia et rectificat ea ne aliquam contrabat parvulus curvitatem ipsum deformantem."

43. Salvat, p. 96. Wilson claims (also without any evidence as far as I can ascertain) that, at least for the seventeenth century, swaddling was an important part of the birth (not only of infant care): "Indeed there was some tendency to perceive the swaddling-clothes as an integral part of the newborn child. It was these clothes which made the child human" (p. 137). David Hunt suggests that in addition to keeping the baby warm, swaddling was designed to keep infants in a correct posture and to prevent animal-like (and hence undesirable) crawling (Parents, pp. 126–30). For Soranus's detailed instructions for swaddling, see his Gynecology, pp. 84–87.

44. See Foucault, La Naissance de la clinique.
46. Forceps are mentioned in the Arabic tradition. See the Cremona translation of Avicenna, 3.23.2.28.
47. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the illustration and a transcription of the marginal instructions.
48. The text of this law is quoted by Trolle as follows: "Negat lex regia mulierem, quae praegnant mortua sit, humari, antequam partus ei excidatur; qui contra fecerit, spem animantis cum gravida peremisse videtur" (History of Caesarean Section, p. 15).
49. Ibid.
51. Young, Caesarean Section, p. 10.
52. Antiquity of Caesarean Section, p. 119.
53. Young, p. 10.
54. Ibid.
55. Fasbender, p. 980.
56. Soucek, "An Illustrated Manuscript," p. 111. For details on al-Biruni see the Appendix. The illustration is on fol. 16 of manuscript 161 of the Edinburgh University Library. Reproduced in Soucek, fig. 3.
57. In rare cases a physician may have been present at a difficult birth. For an examination of the relevant passages in Arabic writings, see Chapter 3.
58. Ullmann, Medizin, pp. 250–51. See Chapter 3 for more details on the role of male physicians or surgeons in gynecological procedures.
59. Salvat, p. 91.
60. See Schipperges's translation (Heilkunde) of her medical writings.
64. Ammundsen, p. 31.
66. Ammundsen, p. 41.
67. Wickersheimer, Commentaires, p. xlvi. The power struggle between university-
trained physicians, surgeons, barbers, and midwives will be discussed in more detail below and in Chapter 3.

68. PL 212, col. 63, no. 6.
69. Hefele and Leclercq, s: 1575.
70. Translated from Hefele, Conciliengeschichte, 6:494. Birkelbach, Eifert, and Lueken, "Zur Entwicklung des Hebammenwesens," p. 88, point out that in the Nuremberg midwifery statutes from 1551 the Protestant city council explicitly ordered that unbaptized children should be buried within the cemetery walls. Laget shows that the orders of burying unbaptized infants in unconsecrated ground were rarely followed: "car il y a une sorte de repugnance à considerer qu'un enfant reellement ne soit ecarter de la vie eternelle: elle se traduit par la resistance a enterrer a l'ecart des autres les enfants morts a la naissance" (people are repelled by the thought that a child once born should be turned away from the eternal life: this attitude is reflected in the resistance to burying separately those children who had died at birth) (Naisances, pp. 312–13).
71. Jacqart, Le Milieu médical, p. 50. The idea of using Caesareans in order to attempt baptism of the infant was pushed to extremes by the eighteenth-century inquisitor Cangiamila who, in 1745, published his Embryologia sacra. He recommended Caesareans for women who died even in the early stages of pregnancy and called down heavenly wrath on anyone who hesitated to perform this operation. The tenor of his work has been dramatically described by Pundel, pp. 85–91.
72. Summa theologiae, 3a.68.11, ed. and trans. James J. Cunningham, 57:16–17. Saint Thomas starts by saying: "Et ideo non debet homo occidere matrem ...." I chose to translate homo as "one" rather than as "man" or "a man," since for the thirteenth century there is no evidence for male participation during the actual birth, not even in the case of a Caesarean. The injunction against killing the mother is thus most likely meant for midwives.
73. Pundel, p. 83.
74. Trolle, p. 21.
77. See MacKinney, Early Medieval Medicine, for details.
79. Cf. Imbault-Huart, La Médecine, p. 94.
82. See Pouchelle, "La Prise en charge," p. 260, for some quotes from the text of the ordonnances of Charles V specifying what barbers were allowed to do.
83. For details see Riddle, "Theory and Practice."
85. For a brief but very useful overview, see McVaugh, "History of Medicine," pp. 250–51.
87. Thorndike, A History of Magic and Experimental Science, 2:479. For the general character of the Compendia in this period, see Demaitre, "Scholasticism."
88. See Jacqart and Thomasset, pp. 31 and 48–52, for some examples.
89. Pouchelle, Corps et chirurgie, p. 140.
90. Jacqart and Thomasset list some examples on p. 31.
91. There seems to be no unequivocal evidence, however, that this practice was in any way common in the thirteenth century. Cf. Pouchelle, "La Prise en charge," p. 263.
92. For details see Alston, “The Attitude of the Church.”
93. Siraisi, p. 110. See also Jacquot and Thomasset, esp. pp. 56–66. They point to the importance of innovative anatomical illustrations (esp. of Guillelmus of Saliceto and Henri de Mondeville, whose work has been studied in detail by Pouchelle in *Corps et chirurgie*). They are cautious to apply the word “progress” to the developments in anatomy, however. Often contradictory findings and texts led to a situation that they describe as somewhat chaotic by the late Middle Ages (p. 49).
94. Siraisi, p. 113.
95. Ibid.,
96. As summarized by Siraisi, ibid., p. 111. For a stunning representation of a medieval dissection, see a fifteenth-century manuscript of Bartholomew Anglicus’s *Des proprietaires des choses* (B.N. f. fr. 218, fol. 218), reproduced in Imbault-Huant, fig. 41 bis. A favorite dissection scene was that of the emperor Nero’s mother. Nero, so a medieval legend goes, had his mother dissected so that he could see where he came from. See Chapter 2, nn. 60 and 63, for references to illustrations of this scene.
98. Ibid., p. 266.
100. Ibid., p. 151.
101. “Theory and Practice,” p. 120.
102. Ibid., p. 118.
104. Gilbertus’s treatise was sometimes called *Laurea anglica*. Together with that work and John of Gaddesden’s later *Rosa anglica*, Bernard’s *Practica sive lilium medicinae* (hereafter referred to as *Lilium*) forms the “flower trilogy” of medical treatises. Undoubtedly the *Lilium* is the apex of the series (see Demaitre, *Doctor Bernard of Gordon*, p. 58, and “Scholasticism”).
106. See ibid., esp. chaps. 2 and 4, for a characterization of Bernard’s work, and p. 52 n. 83 for the text of Bernard’s prologue.
107. Ibid., p. 148.
108. Demaitre is rightly suspicious of “firsts” in medicine (cf. *Doctor Bernard of Gordon*, p. 53), but at the same time he acknowledges Bernard’s originality.
109. “Secundo notandum quod foetus potest vivere matre mortua existente saltem per aliquod tempus, nec caret omnino anhelitu, immo foetus attrahit aerem attractum in arteriis matris et potissimem vivit, quando os matricis manet apertum, ideo matre mortua, aliquid artificium debet fieri, ut os matricis stet apertum, et statim venter matricis aperiri foetusque, extrahi et tali artificio, ut dicitur, fuit primus Caesar extractus, indeque ex illo obtinuit nomen” (*Lilium*, fol. 93r). Of the manuscripts I consulted, B.N. f. lat. 1517 repeats the phrase “os matricis” (fol. 78r). B.N. f. lat. 6965, on the other hand, reads “Saltem per aliquod tempus, nec caret omnino anhelitu ymo fetus trahit aerem attractum in arteriis matris et potissime vivit quando os matris remanet apertum et ideo matre mortua aliquod artificium debet fieri ut os matricis stet apertum etc.” (fol. 115v). MS B.N. f. lat. 16189 has first *os matricis* and then *os matris* (fol. 116r). In my opinion, the version of B.N. f. lat. 6995 makes the most sense: first Bernard speaks of the mouth of the mother, then of the mouth of the uterus. The repetition of either *os matricis* (although in the early MSS, e.g., B. L. Harley 3698, fol. 95v, or Wellcome Institute Library 130, fol. 137r) or *os matris* is not as convincing. (For MSS B. L. Harley 3698 and Wellcome 130, I used Demaitre’s transcription, which he generously let me see before publication.) Bernard uses the word *artificium* frequently. An *artificium* is always recommended when something natural will not do or cannot be obtained. Cf. Demaitre, *Doctor Bernard of Gordon*, p. 153 n. 5.
NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

110. Soranus also mentions the possibility of an inexperienced physician (p. 182). Bernard omits this reference, a proof that all aspects of obstetrical practice were at that time in the hands of women. See Chapter 3 for a more detailed analysis of possible male involvement in gynecology and obstetrics.

111. These passages of Bernard’s work are on fols. 93–94 in the printed edition and on fols. 95 and 96 in B. L. Harley 3698.

112. This passage is followed by the brief remark on Julius Caesar’s birth by Caesarean analyzed in the Appendix.

113. Fasbender, p. 98. See Chapter 3 for references to embryotomy and extraction by hooks in Arabic medicine.

114. Nicaise’s translation contains several pages of illustrations based on Guy’s descriptions; his figures 69 and 70 show razors, one with a mobile blade, the other with a double-edged blade. The latter corresponds to the instruments we can see in a number of manuscript illuminations.

115. “Teneat os mulierum mortue apertum et similiter matrix et hoc ut aer possit ingredi et puer possit evenire. Aperiatur ergo mulier secundum longitudinem ventris cum rasorio in latere sinistro. . . . Ego aliqui feci incisionem a porno granato usque ad os pectoris cum cautela ne intestinam et puer tangantur. Et per istum modum extraxi puerum; verus primus modus plus placet mihi. Et per hunc modum extractus fuit Julius Cesar: ut scribitur in gestis romanorum.” Thus Piero states that of the two ways of doing a Caesarean, i.e., through a lateral or median incision, he prefers the first.

116. “Nam pro pauperculis non multum laborat medicus” (cited by Fasbender, p. 104).

117. Diepgr, p. 201.

118. German text in Ketsch, Frauen im Mittelalter, 1:286.

119. This observation will be confirmed in the discussion of the statutes of midwives in Chapter 3.

120. Translated from the edition by M. Schleissner, lines 1676–78.

121. See Fasbender, p. 134, and Guillemeau’s letter to Rousset discussed below.


123. Ibid., 2:717.

124. Ibid., 2:718.

125. For some observations on the controversy (and especially the anti-Caesarean school of Citoyen Sacombe) in the late eighteenth century, see Laget, Childbirth, pp. 171–72. Apropos of Caesarean section, she concludes that the criteria of what constitutes death were not fully defined and that “surgical procedures [i.e., Caesarean sections] performed on living but exhausted, half-conscious, or crazed women, affected those who witnessed them as a scandalous, barbaric, and traumatic experience” (p. 171).

126. Young, Caesarean Section, p. 25.

127. Ibid.

128. Rousset, Traité, p. 137.

129. Rousset never made good on this promise. His treatise was translated into Latin by Caspar Bauhin in 1582. It was printed in many editions.

130. Rousset, pp. 7, 8.

131. Ibid., p. 11.

132. Ibid., p. 12.

133. Ibid., pp. 16, 18, 19, 21.

134. Ibid., pp. 25, 29.


136. The practice of suturing the uterus after a Caesarean was introduced by Lebas in 1769. The technique became widely known only in 1882 when Max Sänger published his

137. Cited by Pundel, p. 111.


139. Young, p. 23; Pundel, pp. 117–19.

140. The texts chronicling the controversy over Caesareans on living women were available to me on a microfilm from the John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester. They are bound in one volume. They are (1) François Rousset, Dialogus apologeticus pro Caesareo partu cuiusdam pseudoprotei diceria (Paris: Denys Duval, 1590); (2) Jacques Marchant, In Fr. Rosseti Apologiam, Declamatio (Paris: Nicolaus Delouvain, 1598); (3) Jacques Guillemeau, Francisco Rosetio (inserted in the Marchant text just cited, pp. 37–44); (4) Jacques Marchant, In Fr. Rosseti librum de Caesareo partu. Carmen (texts [2]–[4] are paginated continuously); (5) Jacques Marchant, Declamatio III in Fr. Rosseti (there seems to be no Declamatio II unless the poem [4] is counted); (6) Jacques Marchant, Carmen; (7) François Rousset, Responsio ad Jacobi Marchant Declamationem (Paris, n.d.). This last part is in manuscript form in the Manchester copy. I will refer to the texts by the number I assigned them in this note.


143. (2), pp. 18, 19.

144. (3), pp. 39, 40, 42, 44.


146. (6), p. 2.

147. Book 2, chap. 28. For a long time this text had been assigned to the seventeenth century (Fasbender, p. 135). Some of the passages of *La commare* on Caesarean section were translated into Spanish in 1966 by Sanchez Arcas, “Contribución.”

148. *La commare*, book 2, pp. 216, 208, 212 (quotations); 207, 212.

149. P. 4.

2. Caesarean Birth in the Artistic Imagination

1. Cf., e.g., Meier and Ruberg, *Text und Bild; Texte et image*; Curschmann, “Hören”; Miles, *Image as Insight*. Somewhat older but also important is Pickering, *Literatur und darstellende Kunst*.


3. The term “profession” is of course anachronistic in the context of medieval midwifery. I use it here with the understanding that early midwifery exhibited few of the traits one associates with the modern notion of “professionalism.”

4. The images of Caesarean birth are particularly valuable because those of normal childbirth featured no men and thus offer no possibility of comparison.

5. Wilson highlights the distinction between the different female participants in a birth scene: “The mother and the midwife were formally distinct; even though they were both women, this does not imply that their viewpoints were identical; and the fact that we tend to assume a shared ‘women’s view’ may be a product of our late twentieth century feminism” (“Participant or Patient?”, p. 130). See also n. 78 in this context.

6. Jacobsen, “Pregnancy,” p. 93. These categories are meant to refer to the content of the sources, not their “originator or originatrix” (ibid.). This division may be applicable to certain types of texts, such as the ones Jacobsen is analyzing—ballads composed for special occasions in which only women were participating. Jacobsen’s categories are more difficult
to apply to illustrations, but they should be taken into account nonetheless. With regard to childbirth, Jacobsen states, “the sources categorized as women's sources describe the process of pregnancy and childbirth from women's point of view and illuminate the perception women had of their biological functions, whereas men's sources deal with men's views or perceptions of reproduction. Common sources are those which provide a perspective on the topic that is gender-neutral” (p. 93). In an ideal world we would be able to know which type of source we are dealing with in any given case. As it is, we are—especially for the medieval period—often groping in the dark.

8. Ibid., p. 231.
10. See the annotated list of illustrations for any known information on painters.
11. P. 33.
16. A bloodletting man can be seen in Jones, figs. 54 and 55; Imbault-Huart, plate 46. A cauterity man appears in Jones, fig. 43. Wound men are depicted in Jones, figs. 2 and 51. Other types of medical illustrations, not central to our interests here, are listed in MacKinney, *Medical Illustrations*. They include representations of hospitals and clinics; diagnosis and prognosis (by uroscopy, pulse reading, and astrology); pharmacy; external and internal medication; orthopedics; dentistry; bathing; veterinary medicine.
17. A page of this manuscript is reproduced in Jones, plate 9. See also Herrlinger, vol. 1, plate 12.
18. This is MS Ashmole 399. No text is attached to these illustrations and they have given rise to a number of speculations as to their significance. For details see MacKinney, “A Thirteenth-Century Medical Case History.”
21. See Grape-Albers, p. 86.
22. The following is a summary of Sudhoff's *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Chirurgie* 10 (1914), pp. 69–70.
25. Grape-Albers, p. 3.
26. It also was supposed to have many other properties related to contraceptives and aphrodisiacs (cf. Noonan, *Contraception*, pp. 203–18).
30. The illustration from al-Bīrūni's *Chronicle of Ancient Nations* mentioned in Chapter 1 (Soucek, “Illustrated Manuscripts,” fig. 3) was not made for a medical text, but it certainly shows that Arabic illustrators were capable of showing a medical procedure.
32. Lehmann, p. 46.
33. This is MS 3714 of the Royal Library at Brussels. Cf. Herrlinger, vol. 1, p. 22.
Temkin, in his translation of Soranus's *Gynecology*, reproduces two pages of this manu-
script: fig. 1 shows the horned uterus; fig. 2, positions of the fetus.
34. Imbault-Huart, illus. 52, pp. 122–23.
35. Lehmann, figs. 39 and 40.
36. Lehmann, fig. 38.
Roesslin, Imbault-Huart, illus. 53 (B.N. lat. 7096), dated about the end of the thirteenth or
beginning of the fourteenth century.
40. Ibid.
41. Grape-Albers, illus. 187 (B.N. n. acq. lat. 2334, fol. 22v). This picture is in the
collection of Ektachromes of the Bibliothèque Nationale. The illustration in the *Wenzels-
bibel* is reproduced in Harksen, *Die Frau*, p. 94. It shows a fully dressed woman in a
squatting position; her hands are folded. A midwife is receiving a baby from between the
woman's legs. Unfortunately Harksen does not indicate the folio number for this illustra-
tion or which biblical birth it represents.
42. This "propping up" is an iconographic element called "Stützmotiv" by Grape-
Albers. The manuscript in question is Leipzig Cod. 417, fol. 6v. The illustration is number
189 in Grape-Albers.
44. Müllerheim, *Die Wochenstube in der Kunst*; the exceptions are illustrations from the
treatise by Roesslin mentioned in Chapter 1. (There are also illustrations in Jacob Rueff's
*De conceptu et generatione hominis* [Zürich, 1554].)
45. See Müllerheim, fig. 57. Another striking example is a painting from an altar in Tirol
(ca. 1372) that shows the Virgin nude to the waist (Harksen, plate 94).
47. P. 108. Examples can be found in Jones (front of the dust jacket shows British
Library, Royal MS 15 E II, fol. 165); Imbault-Huart, illus. 26 (B.N. fr. 22332), 27 (B.N. fr.
22331), and 42 (B.N. fr. 218).
48. P. 125.
49. Glasgow, University of Glasgow MS Hunter 112 (fourteenth–fifteenth century).
The illumination in question is mistakenly listed by MacKinney as a Caesarean section
(*Medical Illustrations*, p. 128, no. 66.5).
50. This is MS B.N. f. fr. 2030. For an excellent study of Henri de Mondeville, see
Pouchelle, *Corps et chirurgie*.
51. Such as the head operation on fol. 2, reproduced in Jones, plate 9. (The same
illustration on the back of the dust jacket is identified as being on fol. 6 instead of fol. 2.)
52. Jones, p. 28. The manuscript is Bodleian Library, Additional MS 36617, fol. 28v.
Reproduced in Jones, fig. 7. For the correct representation of the speculum, see the Leclerc
translation of Abulcasis, fig. 103.
53. In addition to such schematic illustrations as zodiac women or "disease women,"
Jones, plate 2, shows a woman with the names of internal organs and diseases written over
the figure; "high on her left side is a flask-shaped embryo" (p. 48; from the Wellcome
Apocalypse, MS 49, fol. 38).
54. Jones, p. 34, fig. 9.
55. Probably not a "wife," as Labarge, p. 170, suggests. This illustration is from J. du
Ries's *Quart volume d'histoire scolastique*, B.L., Royal 15 MS D I, fol. 18. It is reproduced in
Ketsch vol. 1, illus. 409; Fox (page for September 13–18); and Labarge, illus. 40.
56. This picture comes from MS 2644, fol. 53v, of the National Library in Vienna. It is reproduced in Fox (December 19–24); Ketsch, plate 44; Cogliati Arano, *Tacuinum sanitatis* (in the English translation by Ratti and Westbrook), plate 41.

57. Jones, fig. 56.

58. The Index of Christian Art at Princeton University has hundreds of entries for the depiction of midwives. They appear in manuscript illuminations, on stained-glass windows and ivory, on sculptures, frescoes, and metalwork. Most of these listings are for the Nativity, the birth of Saint John or Mary or other biblical figures.

59. P. 144.

60. Holländer studied only one image, a woodcut from a 1506 Venetian edition of Suetonius's *De vita duodecim Caesarum* (reproduced in Holländer, fig. 8; Pundel, *L'Histoire*, fig. 7; Huard and Grmek, *Mille ans de Chirurgie*, fig. 154; and elsewhere). This seems to be the most frequently reproduced representation of a Caesarean section. Hurd-Mead, *A History*, p. 182, seriously suggests that this sixteenth-century illustration is the first representation of a Caesarean section. In general, Hurd-Mead’s illustrations are unreliable; in several cases they are approximate sketches from manuscripts. The most glaring error is the illustration on p. 216, which supposedly shows two female surgeons. It is actually a picture from Roland of Parma’s *Chirurgia* (MS Rome Biblioteca Casanatense 1382) showing two male surgeons wearing surgical caps. I thank one of the readers for Cornell University Press for supplying this reference. The usefulness of illustrations for medical history is often undercut by historians of medicine themselves who use illustrations without paying much attention to the texts they come from or to the dates or provenances of the manuscripts. Thus Lehmann gives no clues as to which manuscripts he used; Speert’s picture credits are just as deficient. One also has to beware of pressing one’s own interpretation upon a given illustration. Thus Carstensen, Schadewaldt, and Vogt commit a major gaffe in their *Chirurgie in der Kunst* when they reflect on the supposed bloody realism of what they believe is a Caesarean birth (illus. 5, p. 18). The fact that there is no baby to be seen should have given them pause: the manuscript reveals that the scene shows the dissection of Nero’s mother, performed by a low surgeon and watched anxiously by a bearded Nero. Even such a thorough study as Pundel’s uses illuminations from the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries without discriminating between them.

61. Quoted in the Appendix.

62. For the notion of “conceptualizer,” see Brenk, “Le Texte et l’image.”

63. A good example of this type of intestine can be seen in a fifteenth-century manuscript of a translation of Boccaccio’s *De casibus* (Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, MS fr. 5193, fol. 290v). The scene is the same as the one mentioned above: Nero is watching the dissection of his mother. Another splendid example from ca. 1500 is on fol. 59 of Harley MS 4425 of the British Library (reproduced in Jones, plate 3). Again a short-robed surgeon is performing the autopsy while Nero, dressed as a Roman emperor, looks on. The intestines in all these representations are rolled up in a spiral shape.


65. These figures apply to late medieval Nuremberg and have been worked out by Wiesner (p. 97). See Chapters 1 and 3 for details of midwives’ ordinances specifying the rules they had to follow for Caesarean sections.

66. Keupper Valle, in her survey of Caseareans performed in Alta California between 1769 and 1833, cites two days as the longest survival period of a newborn delivered by Caesarean. The cases of supposedly successful Caseareans discussed in Chapter 1 were clearly the exception.

67. For details see Birkelbach, Eifert, and Lueken, “Zur Entwicklung des Hebammenwesens”; Wiesner; and Chapter 3.

68. The curtain motif connects figures 6, 7, and 8. Figure 8, dated by Flutre in *Les...
Manuscripts as late thirteenth century, shows many characteristics that point to a later date, probably the second quarter of the fourteenth century. (I thank Adelaide Bennett of the Index of Christian Art at Princeton University for her advice on the dating of these miniatures.)

Despite repeated efforts (over several years) I have not been able to obtain reproductions of the illuminations in manuscripts 726 and 770 from the Musée Condé in Chantilly.

The caption of figure 9 as it is reproduced in Fox (illustration for week of July 7) is “Woman surgeon performing Caesarean section.”

On the existence of the “surgeoness,” see Chapter 3.

Since many of the manuscripts of the Fais des Romains also contain a universal chronicle called the Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César (which starts with the creation of the world), the “birth” of Eve was often shown in the same manuscript as Caesar’s birth. An illuminator thus may have been tempted to use an identical pattern for the two births.

One of the early (fourteenth-century) examples falls into neither category. In the only Italian example (fig. 11; Venetian according to Wyss, Die Caesartapiiche, p. 50), from the Biblioteca San Marco in Venice, a male surgeon just delivered the child with the help of a midwife and a female attendant. In Italy, the evolution of the medical profession was different from that in France and consequently the presence of a male surgeon as early as the fourteenth century is not too surprising.

Medieval Medicus, p. 18.

For the former we have one example: fig. 18; for the latter, two examples: fig. 15 and fig. 16. For details on the texts see Flutre, “Li Fais des Romains.”

The crane was thought to be a symbol of prudence and vigilance, wisdom and foresight. For the full symbolism of the crane, see Rowland, Birds with Human Souls, pp. 31-35.

For the sometimes very high salaries of medieval surgeons, see Hammond, “Incomes.”

This picture provides an excellent caveat against stereotypical thinking. Do women have a gentler nature just because they are women? John Benton, “Trotula,” p. 47, observes with regard to the three treatises (wrongly) attributed to Trotula for many centuries: “Though they bear the name of a female author, I must say that throughout these three treatises I see no evidence of the ‘gentle hand of a woman’ or that the medicine prescribed, as another writer has said, is ‘remarkable for its humanity.’ ” As it turns out, the three treatises in question were written by men, so that “the gentle hand of a woman,” apparently detected by Hurd-Mead (in “Trotula,” Isis 14 [1930], pp. 364-65) is no more than a fiction produced by wishful and stereotypical thinking.

Cf. Reis, “Bericht aus dem Jahre 1411.”

Even such skilled artists as Dürer and Leonardo da Vinci made such “mistakes.” As Gombrich points out in Art and Illusion: “Apparently not even Dürer knew what ‘eyes really look like.’ This should not give us cause for surprise, for the greatest of all the visual explorers, Leonardo himself, has been shown to have made mistakes in his anatomical drawings. Apparently he drew features of the human heart which Galen made him expect but which he cannot have seen” (pp. 82-83). As shown in the previous chapter, human dissection did not necessarily lead to the correction of some of the ancient authorities’ misconceptions.

Cf. Gold, p. 61.

Figure 21, from the Wellcome Apocalypse (Wellcome Library MS 49) is the only medical illustration of the operation I could find. The other illustration (reproduced in Pundel, fig. 19) is from a model book (fig. 197* d 2 of the Department of Prints and
NOTES TO CHAPTER 3  173

Engravings of the British Library) of medical scenes but does not illustrate a medical text. It shows the technique of holding open the mother’s mouth (fol. 16). Another scene from the same book can be seen in Jones, fig. 52; it shows an operation for scrotal hernia. Thus, for Caesareans, the same paradox that I described for the iconography of childbirth in general holds true: they were represented frequently and lavishly in historical manuscripts, but rarely in medical manuscripts. The figure of Julius Caesar, who had captured the medieval imagination, clearly inspired illustrators much more than the operation as such, associated as it was with death.

3. The Marginalization of Women in Obstetrics

1. Cf. Donegan, Women and Men Midwives; Donnison, Midwives and Medical Men; Ehrenreich and English, Witches, Midwives, and Nurses. Men may have been present earlier at royal births, as noted in Chapter 1.

2. P. 4.


4. Ibid., p. 25.

5. For an astute evaluation of this type of “tunnel history” for the history of obstetrics, see Wilson, “Participant or Patient?” pp. 129–30.


7. The Medical Man, p. 58.

8. Barstow, from the State University of New York, College at Old Westbury, has analyzed the male bias in the historiography of witchcraft in her paper “On Studying Witchcraft.” I thank her for letting me see this paper in manuscript form. Biased scholarship on midwives is not a male prerogative, however. In Midwives in History and Society, Jean Towler and Joan Bramall seem to be unaware of the ideological biases present in the stories from the Malleus maleficarum. In fact, they seem to “buy” the evidence of treatises on witchcraft when they say, “There is evidence that witches, having summoned up the devil and other evil spirits, indulged in incestuous orgies. . . . If the witches were not midwives themselves, this practice [baking the ashes of newborn babies] would have required collusion (perhaps under threat) with the midwives” (p. 37). I have the impression that Towler and Bramall, in writing a history of midwives, want to exonerate midwives at the expense of “witches.”


10. The Midwife and the Witch, p. 139.

11. One example that can stand for many is Gubalke, Die Hebammme, p. 64.


15. For details, see Rosenthal, pp. 133–37, and Ullmann, Medizin in Islam, pp. 250–51.


17. The translation from the Arabic was supplied by George Saliba from Columbia University. The grammatical forms of the address to the reader indicate that Rhazes is speaking to a man all along. The Latin passage in the Continens reads: “Quod si opus fuerit quod fiat operatio cum ferro sedeat mulier super scamnum quod admodum sedere debet penes partu [i.e., the birth stool]: et post dorsum retrorsum debet extrahere alius cui adheret: deinde medicus sedeat super genu dextrum ut sequens possit quod ad velle erit et aperienda enim vulva cum instrumentu tortuli vel torculi volventis cum inde aperiatur os
matricis et egrediatur secundina” (vol. 1, fol. 196r b). The Arabic text, which is arranged somewhat differently from the Latin, has this passage on p. 100 in part 9. The Arabic mu‘ālij does not exactly correspond to Latin medicus. It is a very general term for a person involved in medical activities. But, and this is the important point, it always refers to a man.

20. This passage is in Canon, 3.21.2.28. (there are no page or folio numbers in the edition I used). This chapter is famous for its mention of forceps (forcipes), which the midwife should use to extract the child. If the child cannot be extracted this way, the midwife should remove the child “by incision” (with hooks) and on the whole proceed as if the child were dead (“regimine fetus mortui”).
22. Ibid., p. 279.
25. This is miracle number 8 in the collection Vierge et merveille. Les miracles de Notre-Dame narratifs au moyen âge.
26. Bullough, The Development of Medicine, pp. 52 and 69.
27. For details see ibid.
29. Bullough, The Development of Medicine, p. 85; Wickersheimer, Commentaires, p. lxxvii.
30. The details of this complicated fight can be found in Wickersheimer, Commentaires. See also Pouchelle, “La Prise en charge,” pp. 258ff.
31. Bullough, The Development of Medicine, p. 86.
32. P. lxxxiv.
34. Hughes, Women Healers, p. 86.
35. Jacquart, Le Milieu médical, p. 47.
36. This information is based on ibid., pp. 48–53. See also Wickersheimer’s Dictionnaire and Jacquart’s Supplément au Dictionnaire.
37. Le Milieu médical, p. 51.
38. Lipinska, Histoire des femmes médecins, p. 182.
40. Jacquart, Le Milieu médical, p. 52.
41. Ibid.
43. Jacquart, Le Milieu médical, p. 79. For some information on the early Middle Ages, see MacKinney, Early Medieval Medicine. On the role of surgery in the education of physicians at Montpellier, see Demaitre, Doctor Bernard of Gordon.
44. Jones, Medieval Medical Miniatures, p. 123.
45. Ibid., fig. 56.
46. Hughes, p. 89.
47. Ibid.
49. See ibid. and Bullough, The Development of Medicine, for details.
51. The following is a summary of chaps. 1 and 2 of book 1 of Soranus’s Gynecology, pp. 5–7.
52. Fasbender, Geschichte der Geburtshilfe, p. 78.
53. Ibid., p. 79.
54. See Benton, "Trotula," for the definitive word on Trotula and other women practitioners in Salerno.
55. On questions of the learning of midwives, gynecological texts, and their audiences, see Green, "Toward a History."
56. See Benton; Green, _The Transmission of Ancient Theories_. For one of the English translations, see Rowland, _A Medieval Woman's Guide_.
57. For details on this text, see Lemay.
58. For the idea of the "sharing of literacy" on the communal level, see Stock, _Implications of Literacy_.
60. For the texts of the relevant canons of several church councils, see Chapter 1.
61. Wiesner, p. 96.
62. A portion of this text is printed (in a modernized form) in Ketsch, _Frauen im Mittelalter_, 1:280–82. In addition to Wiesner, see Birkelbach, Eifert, and Lueken, "Zur Entwicklung des Hebammenwesens," for a study of these regulations.
63. The ordinance is not quite clear on the reasons for such drastic measures. Possibly the text refers to the burial of an unbaptized infant in consecrated ground.
64. The German term is _unterwinden_, a curious but picturesque term, literally meaning "to twist under."
66. See Birkelbach, Eifert, and Lueken, p. 91. See also below.
68. Petrelli, "The Regulation of French Midwifery," p. 277. For the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Gélis, "La Formation des accoucheurs et des sages-femmes."
69. P. 82.
70. Cash, "The Birth of Tristram Shandy," p. 141. See also Wilson: "To call the surgeon was to abandon the ceremony [of childbirth], to surrender hope for the life of the child, and to subject the mother to a terrifying operation. Consequently women put off this step until the last possible minute" (p. 137).
71. Cf. the comments of Eccles: "Obstetrics did of course change profoundly between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, two of the most obvious changes being the invention of the obstetric forceps, and the irruption of men into midwifery practice. It is not so certain that the result was altogether an improvement. The ignorant, harsh and vulgar midwife who first appeared as a verbal cartoon figure in this period was sometimes replaced by the licentious, instrument-happy, self-serving man-midwife who also appeared as a cartoon figure a little later" (Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Tudor and Stuart England, p. 87). See also Laget’s revealing remarks on the subject (Naissances, pp. 208–13).
73. Kieckhefer, _European Witch Trials_, p. 11.
74. The _Malleus_, belonging as it does to the learned tradition, stresses demonic possession as the origin of most witchcraft practices. That most frequently this possession was thought of as sexual possession fits well into the obsessive pattern of sadism and voyeurism that characterizes the _Malleus_ and other later treatises. For a good analysis of the logical flaws and absurd reasoning in the _Malleus_, see Anglo, "Evident Authority and Authoritative Evidence: The Malleus maleficarum." The distinction between the learned and popular (or clerical and secular) traditions is not absolute, of course. _Maleficia_ also appeared in learned (medical) texts.
75. Thomas, _Religion and the Decline of Magic_; Macfarlane, _Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England_.
76. Monter, _Witchcraft in France and Switzerland_, pp. 193–94.
77. Midelfort, _Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany_, p. 12.
78. Kieckhefer, p. 12.
80. Monter, p. 141.
81. Midelfort, p. 184.
82. Monter, p. 124.
83. See Bullough, “Medieval Medical and Scientific Views of Women.” In a remarkable article, Michèle Ouerd examines the similarity between the vocabulary used in the witch trials and that used by nineteenth-century medical writers on female hysteria. The misogynistic imagery, centering as it does on the concept of “possession,” is almost identical in both areas.
84. Midelfort, p. 13.
85. Trans. Montague Summers, p. 41. All references will be to this translation. There is also a good French translation of the *Malleus* by Amand Danet, with a lengthy and very informative introduction.
87. Story cited by Towler and Bramall, pp. 35–36 (Institoris and Sprenger, chap. 13). Towler’s and Bramall’s comments to this story are limited to “Much of this tale seems in present times rather far-fetched but at the time of telling would, in almost every detail, be believed” (p. 36). See n. 8 to this chapter for an evaluation of Towler’s and Bramall’s approach.
89. A radical thesis on the destruction of the wise women of the Middle Ages was published in Germany in 1985 by Heinsohn and Steiger, *Vernichtung der weisen Frauen*. The authors contend that the witch-hunts as a whole must be seen as a campaign (engineered from “above”) against contraception. Since in the fourteenth century Europe lost a large part of its population, they argue, the work force was critically diminished. In order to spur population growth a policy was adopted by the ruling classes whose aim it was to eliminate all knowledge that could curb the birth rate. Heinsohn’s and Steiger’s arguments are intriguing, but their documentation is not quite convincing. Evidence for a coherent “policy” of encouraged population growth is either nonexistent or too late to buttress their argument. Demographic studies do not support their arguments either. A dramatic increase in the European population is not visible until the eighteenth century (Nelson, p. 346). Also, the authors do not take into account the important regional variations in the witch-hunts. In England, for example, the sexual element was much less important than in Germany. Very little remains of their thesis after careful examination, but nonetheless the study has some merits: it confirms that one of the central concerns, if not the only one, of the witch-hunts was the elimination of knowledge proper to the “wise women.” See also Horsley and Horsley, “On the Trail of the Witches,” p. 26 n. 31, for a critique of a 1982 article by Heinsohn and Steiger that presented the same theses as their later book.
90. For a recent comprehensive study, see Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*.
92. For the text see *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*, vol. 42 (Vienna, 1902), pp. 229–30.
95. For an example see Institoris and Sprenger, p. 122.
96. Ibid., p. 119.
97. Contraception has to be distinguished from sterility, which was undesirable in women. Witches were also reputed for “withering the fruit” of pregnant women and
keeping them from becoming pregnant again. These matters are quite different from desired contraception, which would allow women some control over their bodies.

98. Payer, *Sex and the Penitentiaries*, p. 34.
100. Ibid., p. 205.
103. Ibid., p. 365.
104. The authors never address the problem of the proportion between the number of people killed in the witch-hunts and the number of births that took place because of the elimination of contraception and abortion.
106. See his *Quellen*, pp. 416–44. The section is entitled “Die Zusitzung des Hexen­

ahaufs auf das weibliche Geschlecht” (The intensification of the witchcraft mania directed against the female sex).
107. Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law*, p. 170. One should not forget that similar crimes of infanticide and intercourse with the devil were attributed to Jews and heretics in the Middle Ages. For details see Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, pp. 36–37, 64.
108. Institoris and Sprenger, p. 66.
110. Hansen, *Quellen*, p. 542. For medieval views on masturbation and the nature of menstrual blood, see Jacquart and Thomasset, chaps. 2 and 4.
112. Described in detail by Barstow, in an as yet unpublished paper that will be part of her forthcoming study on witchcraft.
113. Brissaud, p. 246.
114. Ibid., pp. 250–53.
116. P. 107. The connection between accusations of witchcraft and possibly real crimes has been explored by Midelfort: “It is sometimes asserted that witchcraft was a *Morderbrechen*, a fashionable crime under which many old-fashioned, genuine crimes were subsumed. There can be no doubt that in the many small, isolated witchcraft trials that went on throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many crimes like fornication, abortion, infanticide, and poisoning were connected to witchcraft. It is another matter, however, to assert that those caught up in severe witch panics were real criminals. One would then be faced with explaining a sudden crime wave of enormous proportions” (p. 187).
117. P. 187.
118. See n. 50.
121. Heinsohn and Steiger, p. 150.
122. This is why there was firm belief in miracles relating to the resurrection of unbaptized newborns. A split-second resurrection would suffice to baptize the infant. The mother’s need for the assurance of her child’s salvation accounts for the large number of miracles related to this problem. Of the fifty-six miracles attributed to the fifteenth-century saint Philippe Chantemilan, for example, almost twenty involved the momentary resuscitation of newborns (Paravy, “L’Angoisse collective,” p. 92). On the question of the midwives’ dispensing of baptism, see also Laget, *Naissances*, pp. 307–12.
4. **Saintly and Satanic Obstetricians**

1. The term *himmlischer Gynaekologe* is used by Ernst Richter in “Die Opferung,” the article from which much of the material on this special cult is drawn.

2. The traditional iconography of Saint Roch shows him standing holding a pilgrim’s staff and wearing a pilgrim’s hat (often with the emblem of Compostella, a scallop shell). At his feet sit a dog and/or an angel. The dog often holds a piece of bread in his mouth: an offering to the shunned sufferer of the plague. Saint Roch’s right hand normally points to his thigh wound, the sign of his suffering.


4. Ibid., p. 82.

5. For the various beliefs and superstitions that surrounded childbirth, see Sanchez Arcas, “Creencias, supersticiones, y mitos.” On saints in charge of childbirth, see Pachinger, *Die Mutterschaft*, pp. 185ff. The most curious “saint” mentioned by Pachinger (p. 187) is surely Saint Expeditus who “expedites” childbirth—a purely verbal creation!

6. This miracle can be found in a note to *PL* 104, col. 251.

7. This miracle has been translated into French by Edmond Albe in *Les Miracles de Notre-Dame de Rocamadour aux XIIe siècle*, pp. 233–35. I use his translation for my translation into English.


9. Without visible proof many miracles could not officially be recognized.

10. The text is in the *Acta Sanctorum* in the entry for March 20, p. 150. Saint Vulframus died in 741.

11. The marginal notation for this passage reads, “mirabili apertura corporis liberatur” (he [the baby] is being freed through a miraculous opening of [the mother’s] body).


13. *PL* 80, col. 130.


15. For medieval conceptions of the Virgin as bride or lover, see Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, pt. 3.

16. Generally, the texts and images have not been studied together. The woodcuts are mentioned mostly in works on chiroxylogographic, xylographic, and early printed books; little attention is given in such works to the texts the woodcuts illustrate. Bing, *Apocalypse Block-Books*, examines the relationship between the block books and their manuscript models. Except for Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages* (which says nothing about
Caesarean birth), the major studies on the Antichrist do not mention illustrations. Weind­ler in Der Kaiser­schnitt, p. 38, was the only scholar even to speculate on the significance of the Antichrist’s birth by Caesarean, but he does so in the vaguest terms (“the Caesarean may signal the birth of a supernatural being”). Just as vague is Zglinicki in Die Geburt, p. 131. Schüssler, in “Studien zur Ikonographie des Antichrist,” describes several scenes of the Antichrist’s birth by Caesarean but is not in the least puzzled by these images. The companion volumes to facsimiles of the German Endkrist (cf. Musper, Der Antichrist, and Boveland, Burger, and Steffen, Der Antichrist) cover just about every angle of the Antichrist’s life except his birth by Caesarean, which is so strikingly depicted in these books (figs. 22 and 23). The recent article by McGinn, “Portraying Antichrist,” though full of fascinating detail, also contributes nothing to the question of the Antichrist’s Caesarean birth.

17. Comprehensive studies on the many theories on the Antichrist’s significance for Western culture are Bousses, Der Antichrist; Rauh, Das Bild des Antichrist; Emmerson.

18. Emmerson, p. 79.
20. Emmerson, p. 64.
22. The text and some of its derivations have recently been edited by Verhelst (see Adso Dervensis, De oru et tempore Antichristi). Verhelst demonstrates that the text by Sackur (Sybillinische Texte . . . ), used by most scholars before 1976, is in fact a composite of different versions.
23. I quote Wright’s translation (append to his translation of the Ludus de Antichristo). The scriptural references in brackets are my addition.
24. The Latin text is somewhat ambiguous here: “ex patris et matris copulatione” (lines 31–32). Whether this means “his mother and father” or “his mother and her father” is not quite clear. In any case, the idea of an incestuous relationship between a father and his daughter became prominent later on, especially in vernacular texts (see below the treatment of Berengier’s De l’avènement Antecrist, Walberg, ed.).
25. This whole passage is also in Bede, In Apoc. 17 (PL 90, col. 574C).
26. Cf. Haimo of Auxerre (d. 875), PL 117, col. 780. Haimo stresses that the Antichrist is the devil’s son not “by nature, but by imitation.”
28. For details on this text, see Lefèvre, L’Elucidarium. Honorius was often called Honorius of Autun, but more recent scholarship identifies “Augustodensis” with a mountainside outside of Regensburg in northern Bavaria.
30. Lerner, The Heresy of the Free Spirit, p. 144 n. 45, quotes an amusing dialogue on the ambiguous meaning of the term between two sixteenth-century Germans: “Franz: ‘What do you think is the Endchrist? / Karsthans: I really don’t know any more than that the priests and the monks preach that he will be a new God and when he comes the world will be destroyed soon after. / Franz: Well, my dear Karsthans, it means something completely different. He is not called Endchrist because he will come at the end of the world, but he is called Ant[ichrist] which is a Greek word.’ ”
31. This is question and answer no. 33; Lefèvre, pp. 453–54.
32. This detail has so far not been noticed. It is a clue to the sources used by the authors of the German Endkrist texts: probably not Adso but either Honorius’s text or one of its translations.
34. The Compendium theologicae veritatis was a staple of medieval theology. Written by
Hugo Ripelin of Strasbourg in the thirteenth century, this text was attributed to a large number of different authors such as Thomas Aquinas, Hugh of St. Victor, Albertus Magnus, and Saint Bonaventure. See Steer, Hugo Ripelin, for details. There is as yet no critical edition of the text, but one version of it can be found in the Borgnet edition of the complete works of Albertus Magnus (Paris, 1893), vol. 34, p. 241. The Antichrist's birth is described as follows: "Hic ex parentum seminibus concipietur: sed post conceptum descendet spiritus malignus in matris uterum, cujus virtute et operatione deinceps puer nascetur, aletur, adolescet: propter quod filius perditionis vocabitur. Nascetur autem in Babylonia de tribu Dan... Post hoc veniet in Jerusalem, et circumcident se, dicens se esse Christum etc." (He will be conceived from the seeds of the parents. But after the conception the evil spirit descends into the mother's womb. Through his power and acts the boy is born, nourished, and brought up: for this reason he will be called the son of perdition. Thus he will be born in Babylon of the tribe of Dan... After that he will come to Jerusalem where he will be circumcised, claiming that he is Christ).


36. Cf. Schüssler, p. 325. The manuscript is no. 579 of the Municipal Library of Besançon.

37. A facsimile has been edited by Karel Stejskal. See also Antonín Matejček Vélislava Bible (Prague: Jan Stenc, 1926). The arrangement of the pages is very similar to that of the German block books: two half-page illustrations with two or three lines of captions.

38. PL 117, col. 780B.


40. De universo libri XXI, book 8, chap. 3 (PL 111, cols. 228ff.). For the text see Chapter 1, n. 4. The belief in the vipers' strange habits of procreation goes back to the antique tradition of natural history. Galen, for example, quotes some verses from Nicander that state that the viper conceives in the mouth, bites off the male's head, and "the young viper avenges its father's death by gnawing its way out of its mother's vitals" (Thorndike, History of Magic, 1:172). For later refutations of this story; see Thorndike, vol. 4, chap. 66: "The Attack on Pliny." The viper's birth was also shown in manuscript illuminations, e.g., in a fourteenth-century manuscript of Bartholomæus Anglicus's De proprietatibus rerum (Bibliothèque Ste Geneviève 1029, fol. 262). The shape of the "incision" resembles the incisions seen in images of Caesareans.


42. "Pour ce qu'il occis sa mere au naistre." There is no critical edition of this text. The quote comes from manuscript B.N. f. fr. 20316, fol. 312v.

43. Rauh, p. 314.

44. Ibid., p. 350.

45. See Gerhoch von Reipersberg, Commentarium in Psalmones, PL 193, col. 821A: "De Babylonia, in quam materiali, seu potius tropica, ut est civitas Roma, dicente Petro: 'Salutat vos Ecclesia in Babylone collecta' (1 Petr. 5:13), quo nomine Romam tropice denotavit."

46. Hind, Introduction to the History of the Woodcut, 1:82.

47. Printing, Selling, and Reading, p. 4.


49. P. 365.

50. This slit may have been a feature of medieval pregnancy dresses (cf. Alexandre-Bidon and Closson, L'Enfant, p. 53). But since the Antichrist's mother is often seen as a parody of the Virgin, one might compare certain representations of the pregnant Virgin, such as Piero della Francesca's Madonna del Parto in the cemetery chapel at Monterchi. The Virgin stands upright and points with her right hand to an elongated opening in her blue dress under which a white garment appears. The shape of the opening is more than
suggestive of a Caesarean. A similar dress can be found on a seated Virgin in a fifteenth-century book of hours (B.N. lat. 1174, fol. 69).


Appendix  Creative Etymology

1. These questions still preoccupy people today, as can be seen in a New York Times article, reflect arguments of a centuries-old debate; it is refreshing to see that some (March 24, 1985), which associated Caesarean birth with Julius Caesar. Several readers raised doubts over this association: Warren Smith from Columbus, Ohio, offered the explanation that the term comes from a law called lex caesarea; Morris Silverman from Yeshiva University cited Pliny's Natural History and the past participle of caedere (to cut), caesus. (These letters, printed in the New York Times letter section a week after Blakeslee's article, reflect arguments of a centuries-old debate; it is refreshing to see that some questions are as hotly debated today as they were in the Middle Ages.)

3. European Literature, p. 495.
4. Ibid., p. 496.
5. Genealogies and Etymologies, p. 44.
6. Ibid., p. 48.
7. See below for similar thought processes in medieval historiography.
10. See Pliny, Natural History, 7.9, trans. Rackham.
11. Trolle, p. 25.
16. For details on the attribution of this translation to Jean du Chesne, see Bossuat, "Traductions françaises."
17. See Flutre, "Li Fait des Romains," and Bossuat.
18. B.N. f. fr. 38, dating from ca. 1482; this manuscript has not yet been edited.
19. In the Fait we have an interesting example of creative—and possibly medically informed—translation. None of the Latin texts, including Isidore, the immediate source in this case, indicates that the birth in question was a prolonged one. The translator, however, inserts the word tant (such a long time), suggesting an unusually protracted birth, with abdominal delivery as a last resort. In later medical texts tedious labor was indeed listed as one of the indications for a Caesarean. Legends such as that of the Nordic Volsunga Saga, which told of a six-year pregnancy ending with a Caesarean, may have been known to the translator and may have suggested a dramatic dimension to the birth quite absent from Isidore. (For the Saga, see Diepgen, Frau und Frauenheilkunde, p. 55.)
22. For Mansel see Flutre, "Li Fait des Romains," chap. 8. Mansel's text is as yet unedited.
23. The misattribution of the description of Caesar's birth to Lucan illustrates another phenomenon related to Roman history and the Fait. Since the Fait was a compilation drawing on a large number of sources without always identifying them, the text as a whole came to stand as a French version of Suetonius, or alternatively a French version of Lucan.
This view persists to this day: two manuscripts listed in the Catalogue des manuscrits of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris as “Suétone” actually turn out to be manuscripts of the Faits (B.N. f. fr. 726 and n. acq. fr. 3650). (They are, however, correctly listed in Flutre, Les Manuscrits.) Another manuscript listed as “Commentaire de César” also reveals itself as a Faits manuscript (B.N. f. fr. 22540).

25. My thanks go to George Saliba from Columbia University for help with the Arabic.
26. For Alfonso, see Prosa histórica, ed. Benito Brancaforte. For Flos mundi, see Graf, Roma, 1:225.
28. See Gumbrecht, “Literary Translation.”
30. For the edition see Schleissner, “Pseudo-Albertus Magnus.”
31. Holtzmann, Geschichte der sächsischen Kaiserzeit, p. 68, mentions the famous legend that gave Henry the surname auceps (der Vogler) but has no details about his birth. Had Henry really been born by Caesarean, this fact would certainly have been mentioned, since it was often construed as an omen for future greatness.
32. This quotation comes from the facsimile edition of the 1513 edition printed in Strasbourg by Martin Flach. Pundel assumes that this “Roman history” refers to Pliny. Since Roesslin does nothing but translate Guy de Chauliac (who most likely refers to the Faits des Romains) for this passage, it is useless to speculate what “Roman history” Roesslin had in mind. In any case, Pliny was primarily known not as a Roman historian but as a natural historian.
34. See n. 1 for some recent discussions.