

Early Modern Europe, 1450–1789

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Primary Sources

CHAPTER EIGHT: INDIVIDUALS IN SOCIETY, 1600-1789

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1. Letter of the Marquise de Sévigné to her daughter, Paris, 1671

The Marquise de Sévigné was one of the preeminent letter writers in early modern Europe; her letters to family and friends were widely circulated and copied, prized for their witty style and for the gossip of Paris they contained. One of the best known concerns the death of the chef François Vatel, who was the chef of the Prince of Condé, a high-ranking nobleman, at his castle at Chantilly. Vatel is supposed to have invented whipped cream (sometimes called Cream Chantilly in his honor), and in the scene reported by M. Sévigné in this letter, to have taken his devotion to serving a good meal to extremes. Vatel's story was made into a movie in France in 2000, starring Gérard Depardieu and Uma Thurman.

It is Sunday, April 26; this letter won't leave until Wednesday; but this isn't a letter, it's that which Moreuil has just told me so that I could repeat it to you, about what happened at Chantilly concerning Vatel. On Friday I wrote to you that he was stabbed: here are the details of the matter.

The King arrived Thursday evening; hunting, lanterns, moonlight, a promenade, the meal in a place carpeted with jonquils, everything that one could wish. Supper was served; there were some tables at which there was no roast, because there were several more guests than were expected. This affected Vatel; he said several times: "I have lost honor; this is a disgrace which I can't bear." He said to Gourville [another cook]: "My head is spinning, I haven't slept for twelve nights; help me give orders." Gourville helped him as best he could. The roast which had been lacking, not at the King's table, but at the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth, kept coming back to his mind. The Prince went to his room and said to him, "Vatel, everything is going fine, nothing was ever as lovely as the King's supper." Vatel answered, "Sir, your goodness is too much for me; I know that there was no roast at two tables." "That's nothing at all," said the prince, "don't fret about it, everything is going fine."

Night falls. The fireworks fail, because of a fog over everything; they had cost sixteen thousand francs. At 4:00 AM Vatel was everywhere, but he found everyone asleep; he ran into a small purveyor who brought him only two loads of fish; Vatel asked him, "Is that all?" He answered, "Yes, sir." He didn't know that Vatel had sent to all the ports. Vatel waited a while; the other purveyors didn't come; his head felt hot, he thought that he would have no other fish; he found Gourville, and said to him: "Sir, I will not survive this disgrace; I have honor and a reputation to lose." Gourville laughed at him. Vatel went up to his room, stood his sword against the door, and passed it through his heart; but that was only at the third stab, for the first two weren't fatal: He fell dead. However, the fish started coming from all sides; they looked for Vatel to distribute it; they went to his room, they started banging, they broke down the door; they found him drowned in his blood; they ran to the Prince, who was in despair. The Duke cried; he had come from Burgundy only because of Vatel. The Prince said to the King with great sadness: "They say it was because of his pride"; people praised him greatly, they praised and blamed his courage. The King said that he hadn't been to Chantilly for five years because he knew how much strain his visits caused. He told the Prince that he should only have had two tables, and not paid any attention to the others. He swore that he would not put up with the Prince's doing things like that any more; but it was too late for poor Vatel.

Gourville tried to make up for the loss of Vatel; it worked: they dined very well, they had their light meals, they supped, they took their walks, they hunted. Everywhere the scent of jonquils, everything was enchanted. Yesterday, which was Saturday, they did the same again; and in the evening the King went to Liancourt, where he ordered a midnight meal like the ones after fasts; he has to stay there today.

That's what Moreuil told me, so that I should send it to you. I throw my bonnet above the mill, and that's all I know of the story. [This was a standard ending to French fairy tales and other stories.] M. de Hacqueville, who was there, will no doubt write to you about it, but since my handwriting is more legible than his, I'm writing anyway. I've written a lot of details, but since I would want them in your place, I'm sending them to you.

2. Memoirs of the midwife Catharina van Schrader, Netherlands 1734

Along with letters, personal journals, diaries, and memoirs provide insights into daily life and the personality of their writers. Catharina van Schrader (1656-1746), a professional midwife in Frisia, part of the Netherlands, kept notebooks of all her cases for more than fifty years. When she was in her eighties, she extracted the most complicated cases from her notebooks, and put them all into a single book, dedicating it to the women she had helped. She was often called in when other midwives had given up on a case, and this book thus contains gruesome examples of difficult births. (Excerpted from *Mother and Child Were Saved: The Memoirs (1693-1740) of the Frisian Midwife Catherina Schrader*. Translated and annotated by Hilary Marland (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1984), pp. 63, 64.)

A.

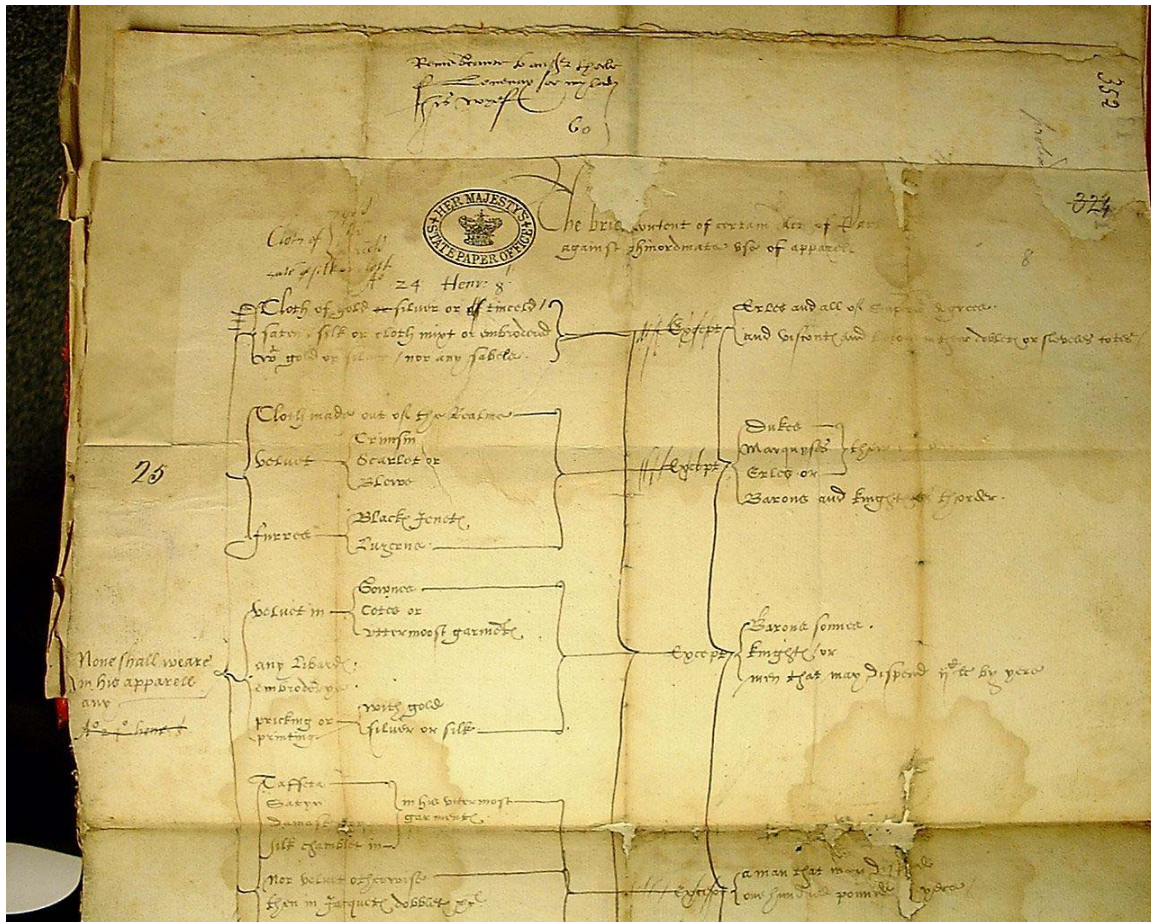
1709 on 27 September fetched to Antic, wife of the brewer, Aate Schoyeles. By The Lord's decree, delivered her two daughters. The first came forth sitting. Broke the water of the other. He presented with his [back]. I had to look for the feet. Got them with great difficulty, though delivered it with its feet. Still all well, by God's blessing, for mother and children. ...

1710, been fetched on 18 October to Hantum to the wife of Pitter Bockes, who had been in heavy labour for two whole days. And assisted by the

midwife from Hantum and surgeon Nicklas, who both gave it over [to Schrader]; I found the arms born to the shoulder. Placed her backwards and not without great difficulty brought the shoulder and arm inside. Looked for the feet. The child was dead when I came. I had heavy work before I could get the feet. But The Lord be thanked. It progressed quickly. And the mother does well. ...

1711 on 20 March fetched to Maykc, wife of Cornelis Jans, Mennonite preacher and thread winder. I was with her three days and nights doing everything which art allowed. The child came presented right, but was grown in fast. Have drawn off her water through a catheter; also given an enema. And everything in the presence of doctor Eysma. It was caused by all that heavy bearing down and the presentation of an arm. That was not good. The child was then already dead. I had to cut off an arm, and delivered it with terrible difficulty. And stuck the hook in the back of his head and got it like this. The Lord be praised, honored and thanked. The woman does well. A healthy childbed. It is a woman who had always been very crippled in her lower body. Such [women] have heavy births and deliveries in general. ...

1711 on 28 April to Mayke, the wife of master Watse, a boat builder. The child came [presented] with his back sideways. She had a heavy flooding. With very great difficulty I pulled the child with its bottom to the birth canal. It was hard for her and myself. And had almost given it up, but the Lord gave deliverance. And had to be born doubled up with his bottom [presenting]. However the child and the mother lived. A healthy childbed.



B.

Actual text of an Elizabeth sumptuary law; “none shall wear in his apparel any...” appears in the first column, then prohibited clothing in the second (“cloth of gold,” “crimson velvet”), and exceptions in the third (“dukes,” “barons”). National Archives (Public Record Office), SP/12 Volume 23, fol. 19v

3. Sumptuary Laws, England 1574

Social distinctions and hierarchies were enforced in many parts of Europe through sumptuary laws, which regulated what various groups could wear and how much they could spend on religious rituals or family ceremonies. Sumptuary laws were difficult to enforce and frequently broken, but they still became longer and more elaborate over the years. This statute issued by Elizabeth refers to earlier regulations passed under Henry VIII, and gives a good indication in its preface about why authorities felt such laws were necessary. [Enforcing Statutes of Apparel: Greenwich, 15 June 1574, 16 Elizabeth I]

The excess of apparel and the superfluity of unnecessary foreign wares thereto belonging now of late years is grown by sufferance to such an extremity that the manifest decay of the whole realm generally is like to follow (by bringing into the realm such superfluities of silks, cloths of gold, silver, and other most vain devices of so great cost for the quantity thereof as of necessity the moneys and treasure of the realm is and must be yearly conveyed out of the same to answer the said excess) but also particularly the wasting and undoing of a great number of young gentlemen, otherwise serviceable, and others seeking by show of apparel to be esteemed as gentlemen, who, allured by the vain show of those things, do not only consume themselves, their goods, and lands which their parents left unto them, but also run into such debts and shifts as they cannot live out of danger of laws without attempting unlawful acts, whereby they are not any ways serviceable to their country as otherwise they might be:

Which great abuses, tending both to so manifest a decay of the wealth of the realm and to the ruin of a multitude of serviceable young men and gentlemen and of many good families, the Queen's majesty hath of her own princely wisdom so considered as she hath of late with great charged to her council commanded the same to be presently and speedily remedied

both in her own court and in all other places of her realm, according to the sundry good laws heretofore provided.

For reformation whereof, although her highness might take great advantage and profit by execution of the said laws and statutes, yet of her princely clemency her majesty is content at this time to give warning to her loving subjects to reform themselves, and not to extend forthwith the rigor of her laws for the offences heretofore past, so as they shall now reform themselves according to such orders as at this present, jointly with this proclamation, are set forth, whereby the statute of the 24th year of her majesty's most noble father King Henry VIII and the statute made in the second year of her late dear sister Queen Mary are in some part moderated according to this time.

Wherefore her majesty willeth and straightly commandeth all manner of persons in all places within 12 days after the publication of this present proclamation to reform their apparel according to the tenor of certain articles and clauses taken out of the said statutes and with some moderations annexed to this proclamation, upon pain of her highness's indignation, and punishment for their contempts, and such other pains as in the said several statutes be expressed.

For the execution of which orders her majesty first giveth special charge to all such as do bear office within her most honorable house to look unto it, each person in his degree and office, that the said articles and orders be duly observed, and the contrary reformed in her majesty's court by all them who are under their office, thereby to give example to the rest of the realm; and further generally to all noblemen, of what estate or degree soever they be, and all and every person of her privy council, to all archbishops and bishops, and to the rest of the clergy according to their degrees, that they do see the same speedily and duly executed in their

private households and families; and to all mayors and other head officers of cities, towns, and corporations, to the chancellors of the universities, to governors of colleges, to the ancients and benchers in every the Inns of Court and Chancery, and generally to all that hath any superiority or government over and upon any multitude, and each man in his own household for their children and servants, that they likewise do cause the said orders to be kept by all lawful means that they can.

And to the intent the same might be better kept generally throughout all the realm, her majesty giveth also special charge to all justices of the peace to inquire of the defaults and breaking of those orders in their quarter sessions, and to see them redressed in all open assemblies by all wise, godly, and lawful means; and also to all Justices of Assizes in their circuits to cause inquiry and due presentment to be made at their next assizes how these orders be kept; and so orderly, twice a year at every assize after each other circuits done, to certify in writing to her highness's Privy Council under their hands, with as convenient speed as they may, what hath been found and done as well by the justices of the peace in their quarter sessions, of whom they shall take their certificate for each quarter session, as also at the assizes, for the observing of the said orders and reformation of the abuses.

A brief content of certain clauses of the statute of King Henry VIII and Queen Mary, with some moderation thereof, to be observed according to her majesty's proclamation above mentioned.

None shall wear in his apparel:

Any silk of the color of purple, cloth of gold tissue, nor fur of sables, but only the King, Queen, King's mother, children, brethren, and sisters, uncles and aunts; and except dukes, marquises, and earls, who may wear the

same in doublets, jerkins, linings of cloaks, gowns, and hose; and those of the Garter, purple in mantles only.

Cloth of gold, silver, tinseled satin, silk, or cloth mixed or embroidered with any gold or silver: except all degrees above viscounts, and viscounts, barons, and other persons of like degree, in doublets, jerkins, linings of cloaks, gowns, and hose.

Woolen cloth made out of the realm, but in caps only; velvet, crimson, or scarlet; furs, black genets [civit fur], lucernes [lynx fur] embroidery or tailor's work having gold or silver or pearl therein: except dukes, marquises, earls, and their children, viscounts, barons, and knights being companions of the Garter, or any person being of the Privy Council.

Velvet in gowns, coats, or other uttermost garments; fur of leopards; embroidery with any silk: except men of the degrees above mentioned, barons' sons, knights and gentlemen in ordinary office attendant upon her majesty's person, and such as have been employed in embassages to foreign princes.

Caps, hats, hatbands, capbands, garters, or boothose trimmed with gold or silver or pearl; silk netherstocks; enameled chains, buttons, aglets: except men of the degrees above mentioned, the gentlemen attending upon the Queen's person in her highness's Privy chamber or in the office of cupbearer, carver, sewer [server], esquire for the body, gentlemen ushers, or esquires of the stable.

Satin, damask, silk, camlet, or taffeta in gown, coat, hose, or uppermost garments; fur whereof the kind groweth not in the Queen's dominions, except foins [marten fur], grey genets, and budge [imported sheared lambskin]: except the degrees and persons above mentioned, and men that may dispend £100 by the year, and so valued in the subsidy book.

Hat, bonnet, girdle, scabbards of swords, daggers, etc.; shoes and pantofles [slippers] of velvet: except the degrees and persons above names and the son and heir apparent of a knight.

Silk other than satin, damask, taffeta, camlet, in doublets; and sarcenet, camlet, or taffeta in facing of gowns and cloaks, and in coats, jackets, jerkins, coifs, purses being not of the color scarlet, crimson, or blue; fur of foins, grey genets, or other as the like groweth not in the Queen's dominions: except men of the degrees and persons above mentioned, son of a knight, or son and heir apparent of a man of 300 marks land by the year, so valued in the subsidy books, and men that may dispend £40 by the year, so valued ut supra.

None shall wear spurs, swords, rapiers, daggers, skeans, woodknives, or hangers, buckles or girdles, gilt, silvered or damasked: except knights and barons' sons, and others of higher degree or place, and gentlemen in ordinary office attendant upon the Queen's majesty's person; which gentlemen so attendant may wear all the previous saving gilt, silvered, or damasked spurs.

None shall wear in their trappings or harness of their horse any studs, buckles, or other garniture gilt, silvered, or damasked; nor stirrups gilt, silvered, or damasked; nor any velvet in saddles or horse trappers: except the persons next before mentioned and others of higher degree, and gentlemen in ordinary, ut supra.

Note that the Lord Chancellor, Treasurer, President of the council, Privy Seal, may wear any velvet, satin, or other silks except purple, and furs black except black genets.

These may wear as they have heretofore used, viz. any of the King's council, justices of either bench, Barons of the Exchequer, Master of the

Rolls, sergeants at law, Masters of the Chancery, of the Queen's council, apprentices of law, physicians of the King, queen, and Prince, mayors and other head officers of any towns corporate, Barons of the Five Ports, except velvet, damask, [or] satin of the color crimson, violet, purple, blue.

Note that her majesty's meaning is not, by this order, to forbid in any person the wearing of silk buttons, the facing of coats, cloaks, hats and caps, for comeliness only, with taffeta, velvet, or other silk, as is commonly used.

Note also that the meaning of this order is not to prohibit a servant from wearing any cognizance of his master, or henchmen, heralds, pursuivants at arms; runners at jousts, tourneys, or such martial feats, and such as wear apparel given them by the Queen, and such as shall have license from the Queen for the same.

Women's apparel

None shall wear:

Any cloth of gold, tissue, nor fur of sables: except duchesses, marquises, and countesses in their gowns, kirtles, partlets, and sleeves; cloth of gold, silver, tinsel, satin, silk, or cloth mixed or embroidered with gold or silver or pearl, saving silk mixed with gold or silver in linings of cowls, partlets, and sleeves: except all degrees above viscountesses, and viscountesses, baronesses, and other personages of like degrees in their kirtles and sleeves.

Velvet (crimson, carnation); furs (black genet, lucern); embroidery or passment lace of gold or silver: except all degrees above mentioned, the wives of knights of the Garter and of the Privy Council, the ladies and gentlewomen of the privy chamber and bedchamber, and maids of honor.

None shall wear any velvet in gowns, furs of leopards, embroidery of silk: except the degrees and persons above mentioned, the wives of barons' sons, or of knights.

Cowls, sleeves, partlets, and linings, trimmed with spangles or pearls of gold, silver, or pearl; cowls of gold or silver, or of silk mixed with gold or silver: except the degrees and persons above mentioned; and trimmed with pearl, none under the degree of baroness or like degrees.

Enameled chains, buttons, aglets, and borders: except the degrees before mentioned.

Satin, damask, or tufted taffeta in gowns, kirtles, or velvet in kirtles; fur whereof the kind groweth not within the Queen's dominions, except foin, grey genets, bodge, and wolf: except the degrees and persons above mentioned, or the wives of those that may dispend £100 by the year and so valued in the subsidy book.

Gowns of silk grosgrain, doubled sarcenet, camlet, or taffeta, or kirtles of satin or damask: except the degrees and persons above mentioned, and the wives of the sons and heirs of knights, and the daughters of knights, and of such as may dispend 300 marks by the year so valued ut supra, and the wives of those that may dispend £40 by the year.

Gentlewomen attendant upon duchesses, marquises, countesses may wear, in their liveries given them by their mistresses, as the wives of those that may dispend £100 by the year and are so valued ut supra.

None shall wear any velvet, tufted taffeta, satin, or any gold or silver in their petticoats: except wives of barons, knights of the order, or councilors' ladies, and gentlewomen of the privy chamber and bed chamber, and the maids of honor.

Damask, taffeta, or other silk in their petticoats: except knights' daughters and such as be matched with them in the former article, who shall not wear a guard of any silk upon their petticoats.

Velvet, tufted taffeta, satin, nor any gold or silver in any cloak or safeguard: except the wives of barons, knights of the order, or councilor's ladies and gentlewomen of the privy chamber and bedchamber, and maids of honor, and the degrees above them.

Damask, taffeta, or other silk in any cloak or safeguard: except knights' wives, and the degrees and persons above mentioned.

No persons under the degrees above specified shall wear any guard or welt [trim] of silk upon any petticoat, cloak, or safeguard.

4. Merchant's love letter, Italy 1625

Non-literary sources that reveal emotions of love are relatively rare in early modern Europe. The following, a love letter written by an Italian merchant, only survives because in 1625, a working woman named Cristina Collari was brought before the Venetian Inquisition on charges of heresy. Chief among them was the accusation that she had had carnal knowledge of a Jew, a charge for which the primary evidence was a collection of letters her Jewish lover, a merchant, had written her when he was away from Venice on business. (Venice: ASV (Archivio di Stato di Venezia), Sant'Uffizio, B. 80, no. 2, document 7 (1625) Translation by Monica Chojnacka)

My Dearest One,

I have already written to you, my soul, and I sent that letter in the same manner in which you will have this one, and you have not deigned to respond, which surprises me, though I fear that, as they say, far from the eyes means far from the heart; nonetheless I remain patient, and there remains the affection and the love that I have always had and have now, and will continue to have, clinging with heartfelt affection to the vivid memory of many precious embraces with sweet kisses In all of my good life I swear to you as fervently as I can that in writing you it seems that I am speaking to you, and that from day into night I am near tears, and sigh from my heart Above all I beg you to write to me and tell me how you are If it pleases you to give my greetings to your neighbor and her husband do so, but do not show this letter to anyone under any circumstances, and with heartfelt affection I kiss your hands and your sweet precious mouth and pure white breast and other things, O my God, how precious and sweet it is to be with you upstairs in the house, in bed, Thus I will wait for your response, begging you to remember who loves and desires you so greatly.

5. A loving letter from husband to wife, Wales 1612

Historians debate the level of affection found in early modern families, and letters such as this one provide evidence for those who argue that many spouses felt strong bonds with one another, even if the marriage had originally been arranged by their parents. This letter was written 35 years into a long and successful marriage, and illustrates the comfort such a union might offer. Sir John is confident of his wife's interest in the small details of his doings and health, and though scarcely a day's journey from home, wishes to communicate with her; she benefits from his affection too. But notice that she needs her husband's permission to leave home to go visit their daughter for the Whitsun holiday. (N.L.W. MS 9054E f.35. April 9, 1612. Sir John Wynn at Wrexham, Flintshire, to Lady Sydney Wynn at Gwydir. Excerpted by Katharine Swett.)

To my dearest the lady Sydney Wynn at Gwydir.

Good Sydney, I am come hither in health I thank god and feel myself the better by travel and I hope will be better and better for I take but small journeys nor will not over labor myself...I have sent thee a token [small gift] by my son Bodvel having no time to write unto thee. pray for me and I will for thee and thy brats [young children]. to god's holy protection I commend us all god send us a merry and joyful meeting. I will not break promise with thee. thou shall [go] to Kylken against Whitsontyde and from thence I mean to have thee to London if my Return be deferred as I fear me it shall. Wrexham 9 April, my birth day. thine own John Wynn of Gwydir.

6. A husband's provisions for his widow, England 1580

Spousal affection sometimes emerges in wills. Though some of the language of wills is formulaic, personal emotions do show through occasionally, and in some parts of Europe, such as England, spouses could also show their love and concern by the economic provisions made in the will. In this will, William Gerard gives his wife a third of his moveable property to use during her lifetime in addition to the income of one third of his freehold lands that was his wife's dower by law. His wife had had bouts of mental illness, and he makes special provisions for her because of this. Gerard's heir is his elder son Gilbert, and his children are all adults. (Prerogative Court of Canterbury. 26 Darcy. February 16, 1580. Sir William Gerard. Excerpted by Katharine Swett)

...Where god has pleased heretofore to visit my wife divers times with such sickness as bereaveth her from all sense & understanding, I foresee that if care be not had to the preservation of those things I have, if god shall please to visit her in that time, the same would be purloined from her & my children. & if she's not looked to carefully in her time of sickness, there is doubt of her perfect recovery ...[for this reason] my will and request to her is to live with her son and they not separate house...if my wife would please I wish Gilbert took charge of the house...[they are to receive all incomes from land jointly and share jointly in all household goods during her lifetime, and Lady Gerard is to have at least four personal servants. Gilbert will inherit the residual goods [when his mother dies] for his better maintenance & ability to welcome his brothers & sisters & others his friends ...if my wife mislikes living with her son & wants to live alone...[provides for half of a house in Chester, with quarterly income]...not less than one third of all my livings farms etc to use....And I charge Gilbert, as he shall answer before God to the contrary, that he serve obey & lovingly treat his mother, & if god please ever to visit her with her accustomed sickness, to see her so kept & used (as though I lived)...

7. Excerpt from a will, Spain, 1658

Disease and warfare wreaked havoc on many early modern marriages. As a result, many men and women married two, three, and even four times during their lifetimes. Such misfortune befell Costanza Forneyra, who was widowed three times while still a young woman. Her last marriage, however, was much longer and happier. In her last will and testament, Costanza expressed her love for her fourth husband, Antonio González, with both kind words and a significant inheritance. (Testament of Costanza Forneyra, Archivo Histórico Provincial de Ourense, caha protocolos, 3669, fol. 134 (1658). Translated by Allyson Poska)

For the love and affection and obligation that I have for him, and for having had more than twenty-two years of marriage, one with the other, during which he has esteemed me and treated me like an honorable man should with much kindness and goodwill ... I leave him a vineyard ... a piece of land ... half of the territory with the chestnut trees ... and the fifth part of all of my possessions... .

Die Neumerley heudt
einer bösen frawen / sambt
iren Neum Eygenſchaften.
Weder das Bitter Süß Ehllich
Leben.



Hans Sachs.

Cover of Hans Sachs' satirical poem, *The Nine Skins of a Bad Wife*. The poet and playwright Hans Sachs frequently based his works on popular tales, one of which was the story of the nine skins of a bad wife. Each skin had the quality of a particular animal, and the husband had to beat through them all to reach her human skin and thus affect her. Such stories of domestic violence are common, though it is difficult to determine the level of actual domestic violence.

8. Wife's legal deposition against an abusive husband, Russia 1659

Not all marriages were happy, of course, and documents like this legal deposition provide evidence for historians who argue that many families were cold or even routinely violent. This legal deposition was submitted in 1659 to the ecclesiastical court of the bishop of Ustiug, a prosperous provincial town in northern Russia. It consists of a complaint filed by Annitsa Osokina against her husband, who abused her, stole her personal property, and abandoned her. Women in pre-modern Russia were empowered to represent themselves in legal action, as Annitsa did here, but often they sought the assistance of their natal relatives. To gain the sympathy of the court, petitioners portrayed themselves in helpless, deferential terms and often exaggerated their dire straits. Even so, the wealth of detail attests to the reality of Annitsa's plight. The outcome of this suit is not recorded. (Akty kholmogorskoi i ustiuzhkoi eparkhii, bk. 3 [Russkaia istoricheskaia biblioteka, vol. 25], (St. Petersburg, 1908), pp. 305-306. Translated by Eve Levin)

Annitsa daughter of Semen, a resident of Ustiug, petitions the Lord Archpries Vladimir and the monks of the Cathedral Church of Dormition... of Ustiug, against her husband, Kliment son of Isak Osoki, a resident of Ustiug.

Lord, last year, in 7166 [according to the Byzantine calendar; this year corresponds to the Western year 1658], during Lent, my husband Kliment got drunk and caroused. In that state, he came home, and beat poor me and injured me to [the point of] death many times. After that, my husband bragged that he would commit murder and all sorts of awful things against me. He took clothing from me, a caftan, linens, a hat, dresses, and shirts, and my trunk, and all the brass and iron and tin and woven housewares [he took] it is unknown where. He sold his house, where he and I lived together on Nikolskaia street in Ustiug. And now I, poor me, have gone into a final decline: I weep all the time; I go naked and barefoot; I am dying of hunger;

and I can no longer go to pray to God in the church at all; and my husband took away from poor me my little bit of clothing and property. And when he sold the house, he gave a donation to the Archangel monastery in Ustiug, and now he lives there, in the Archangel monastery, and he does not provide for poor me to eat and drink, and he does not provide me with clothing and footwear. And I, poor me, pawned my gold-washed silver bracelets, and with that money I bought myself grain: five measures of rye and two measures of oats and half a measure of wheat, but my husband Kliment took that grain that I purchased out of the house and it is unknown where, and he left poor me to perish in the end.

Lord Archpriest Vladimir of Christ and monks, have mercy upon me, poor Annitsa. Order, Lord, that this my deposition be accepted and that my petition be recorded, and that this case be investigated immediately. Lord, be generous, have mercy.

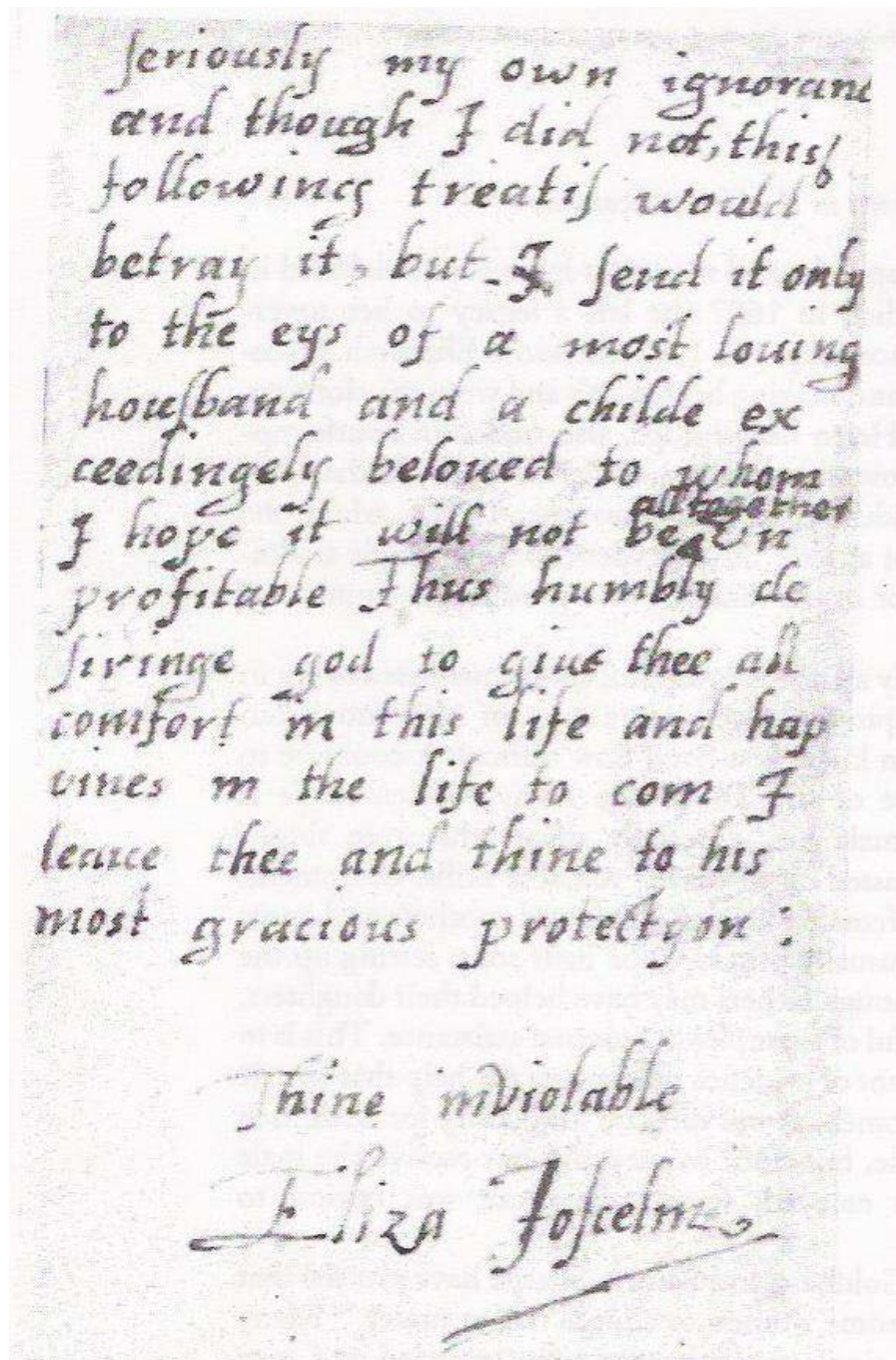
This deposition was given on March 6, 7167.

9. Petition for separation, Spain 1627

Although officially divorce was not an option for Catholics, the Church did allow some parishioners to petition for a permanent separation if their marriage was completely unliveable. Although such a separation ended the misery of living in an unhappy marriage, neither of the parties could remarry as the sacrament of marriage extended beyond this life and into the next. In this petition, Marcos Franco lays out many of the doctrinally- accepted reasons for separation, including the forced nature of the marriage and Marina's consequent inability to bear children. He also mentions her negative personal qualities, which by themselves would not be sufficient grounds for a separation. (Archivo Histórico Provincial de Ourense, caja protocolos 3231, fol.17, 1627. Translated by Allyson Poska)

Marcos Franco, inhabitant of Xinzo ... I am married to Marina Feijóo, a woman of 60 years of age, with whom there is no hope of having children, a troublesome, foul-mouthed woman of very harsh disposition, who provokes quarrels and misfortunes ... And although at the time of the contraction of the marriage, I said some words in which I might have taken her for my wife or she might have consented to me as her husband (or something similar) let it be understood from this point on that I said them against my will and consent and only to avoid scandal and pain ... and I insist on not living with her ... as I have affirmed in other protests and testimonies.

10. Elizabeth Joscelyn, *The Mother's Legacy to her Unborn Childe*, 1622



seriously my own ignorance
and though I did not, this
following treatise would
betray it, but I send it only
to the eye of a most loving
husband and a childe ex
ceedingly beloved to whom
I hope it will not be ^{altogether} un
profitable Thus humbly de
siringe god to give thee all
comfort in this life and hap
pines in the life to come I
leave thee and thine to his
most gracious protection:

Thine inviolable
Eliza Joscelyn

Documents attesting to parents' concerns for their children include quite a few advice books, some written by rulers for their heirs and some by more ordinary people. One of the most touching is Elizabeth Joscelyn's *The Mother's Legacy to her Unborn Child*,

written by a member of the English gentry. Joscelyn feared that she would die in childbirth—her biographer (who published the manuscript) reports she bought a shroud as soon as she knew she was pregnant—so she wrote this guide during her pregnancy. Her fears were not unfounded, as she died nine days after her daughter was born of puerperal fever. The book survives in manuscript in her own hand, shown below; it was published two years after she died, and reprinted frequently over the next several centuries. This is from the opening.

It may peradventure [perhaps be] when thou comest to some discretion, appeare strange to thee to receiue these lines from a Mother that died when thou wert borne, but when thou seest men purchase land, and store vp treasure for their vnborne babes, wonder not at mee that I am carefull for thy saluation, being such an eternall portion: and not knowing whether I shall liue to instruct thee when thou art borne, let mee not bee blamed though I write to thee before. Who would not condemne mee if I should bee carelesse of thy body while it is within me? Sure a fane greater care belongs to thy soule, to both these cares I will endeuour my selfe so long as I liue.

Againe, I may perhaps bee wondred at for writing in this kinde, considering there are so many excellent bookes, whose least note is worth all my meditations. I confesse it, and thus excuse my selfe. I write not to the world, but to mine own childe, who it may be, will more profit by a few weake instructions comming from a dead mother (who cannot euery day praise or reproue it as it deserues) than by fane better from much more learned. These things considered, neither the true knowledge of mine owne weaknesse, nor the feare this may come to the worlds eie, and bring scorne vpon my graue, can stay my hand from expressing how much I couet thy saluation.

Therefore, deare childe, reade here my laue, and if God take mee from thee, bee obedient to these instructionsj as thou oughtest to bee vnto mee, I haue learnt them out of Gods Word, I beseech him that they may be profitable to thee.

The first charge I give thee, I learned of Solomn, Eccles.

1. Remember Thy Creator in the Days of Thy Youth. It is an excellent beginning, and a fit lesson for a childe. Looke with what the Vessell is first seasoned, it retaines the taste: and

if thou beginnest to remember to serue GOD when thou art young, before the world, the flesh, and the deuill take hold on thee, God will laue thee, and send his holy Spirit to take possession of thee, who shall resist those enemies, and not suffer them to hurt thee...

At thy first waking in the morning, be carefull of thy selfe, that thou harbor in thy braine no vaine or vnprofitable, but of all no vngodly fancy to hinder thy morning sacrifice [prayers], but straight frame thy selfe to meditate on the mercies of God, the maliciousnesse of the deuill, and thine owne weaknesse. Thine owne weaknesse is apparant to thee: for euen but now thine eyes were closed, thou couldst not see to defend thy selfe, thy strength was gone, so that thou wert not able to resist the weakest creature, a gnat or a flea might glut themselues with thy blood. The Deuils malice is as easily perceiued, for euen now hee lies lurking ready to catch euery good motion from thy heart...

And though I beleeeue there are diuers sorts of pride more pestilent to the soule than this of apparell, yet this is enough dangerous, and I am sure betraies a mans folly more than any other. Is it not a monstrous thing to see a man, whom God hath created of an excellent forme, each part answering the due proportion of another, should by a fantasticall habit

make himselfe so vgly, that one cannot finde amongst all Gods crea-tures any thing like him? One man, though not resembling another in shape or face, yet for his rationall soule is like another: but these fashionists [followers of fashion] haue (I feare) changed their reasonable soules for proud soules without reason: could they else deforme and transforme themselues by these new fangled fashions, and apish behauiour crindging? shrugging, starting, and playing the fantastiques euery way. So that they may truly say when they are fashionable, that they are not like other men: and I beleeeue wise men will not be sorry for it. For who would be like them?

I desire thee for Gods sake shunne this vanitie, whether thou bee sonne or daughter. If a daughter, I confesse thy taske is harder because thou art weaker, and thy temptations to this vice greater, for thou shalt see those whom perhaps thou wilt thinke less able, exalted fane aboue thee in this kinde, and it may bee thou wilt desire to bee like them, if not to out-goe [surpass] them. But beleeeue and remember that I tell thee, the end of all these vanities is bitter as gall. Oh the remembrance of mis-spent time, when thou shalt grow in yeeres, and haue attained no other knowledge, than to dresse thy selfe. When thou shalt see halfe, perhaps all, thy time spent, and that of all thou hast sowed, thou hast nothing to reape but repentance, late repentance, how wilt thou grieue?

How wilt thou accuse one folly for bringing in another? and in thy memory cast ouer the cause of each misfortune which hast befallen thee, till passing from one to another, at last thou findest thy corrupt will to bee the first cause, and then thou wilt with grieve enough perceiue, that if thou hadst serued God when thou seruedst thy fond desires, thou hadst now had peace of heart. The God of mercy giue thee grace to remember him in the dayes of thy youth

Mistake me not, nor giue your selfe leaue to take too much liberty with saying, My mother was too strict. No, I am not, for I giue you leaue to follow modest fashions, but not to be a beginner of fashions: nor would I haue you follow it till it bee generallt so that in not doing as others doe, you might appeare more singular than wise: but in one word, this is all I desire, that you will not set your heart on such fooleries, and you shall see that this modest carriage will win you reputation and laue with the wise and vertuous sort.

And once againe, remember how many houres maist thou giue to God, which if thou spendest in these vanities, thou shalt neuer bee able to make account of.

11. Vesalius's *On the Fabric of the Human Body* (1543) and Elizabeth Blackwell's *A Curious Herbal* (1747-9)



One of the illustrations from Elizabeth Blackwell's *A Curious Herbal*

Illustrated anatomical guidebooks and illustrated herbals were both important sources of medical knowledge. Anatomical guidebooks were generally prepared by trained physicians or surgeons, while herbals were prepared by apothecaries and people with less formal training. The most important early modern anatomical guidebook was *On the Fabric of the Human Body*, written by Andreas Vesalius, a professor at the University of Padua, and published in 1543. Elizabeth Blackwell was a Scottish woman, who drew, engraved, and colored illustrations for an herbal of medicinal plants that was wildly praised by physicians and apothecaries. She produced the herbal to raise money to get

her husband out of debtors' prison, a task in which she was successful. Both of these can be found at the British Library's website featuring highlights from their collections, Turning the Pages:

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.htm>

12. Oaths of staff members in city hospitals, Germany sixteenth century

Hospitals in early modern European cities were run both by the church and by secular city governments. Those institutions within city walls generally took in the injured, chronically ill, infirm elderly, and poor expectant mothers, while patients with contagious diseases were sent to small pest-houses or infirmaries outside the city walls. The staff at such hospitals and infirmaries often had to swear oaths of loyalty and agree to follow all directives laid out for the day-to-day operations of the institution. From these oaths, we can tell what care for the ill was supposed to be like, though we cannot be sure if such directives were followed. (Nuremberg, Staatsarchiv, Amts- und Standbuecher, Nr. 101, fol. 160, 57, 294, 400. Translated by Merry Wiesner-Hanks)

Oaths of the Couple in Charge of the Infirmary for Incurables [those with the plague]

The Hofmeister and Hofmeisterin in the Lazarett or hospital for incurables should give their oath, and swear to God that they will conscientiously work for the good of the Lazarethhaus carefully, and keep it securely closed up, especially at night. The things that have been inventoried and given over to them, such as bedding, covering, sheets, other linens and utensils, should be left in the rooms and chests exactly as they are and not moved whenever the house is locked up.

When the Lazarett is closed, they should use nothing for their own needs, or without the knowledge of the council, or the overseer of all the

hospitals. They should not remove or use even the least bit, and should report to the Lazarett at least once a year, so that any beds, sheets, or other utensils that have been damaged or destroyed by snow, rain, or in any other way may be repaired or replaced, and all remains in good shape. If through the will of God a plague returns and the Lazarett is opened again, they are to stay in their office and follow any ordinances and rules that are given to them by the council, the overseer or anyone else. All this should be done faithfully and without deceit.

Oaths of Female Staff in the City Hospital

Custorin's Oath and Ordinance

A Custorin hired and taken on in the new city hospital is to give her oath of loyalty, and swear to God the Almighty that she will further the needs of the hospital, and guard against damages and injuries to the best of her abilities. She should pay special attention to the orders of the appointed director of the hospital so that they are carried out to the advantage of the hospital and the good of the poor patients without excuses. She should report any problems or shortages, or if she finds anything illegal, to the director of the hospital immediately, without delay, and should enforce his decisions about these. Without his knowledge and advice she should not undertake anything, for that is not her calling or office.

She should pay strict attention to all utensils and movable goods, like bedding, cushions, pillows, sheets, towels, and so on, that belong to the poor, and which are entrusted to her, so that all are well preserved and maintained. None of these are to be sold, given away, loaned or otherwise disposed of, or used for her own purposes.

She is to be sure that the maids appointed to help her reliably aid the poor patients, giving them support by night and day--changing their bedding, as

often as necessary, lifting them or laying them down, carrying them to meals at the normal time, getting drinks and preparing the necessary foods, and whatever else has been ordered by the doctor. She is to report any maid that is disobedient to the director of the hospital.

Anything that she cooks or has cooked in her kitchen for the poor and sick people, like meat or other dishes, is not to be given to the pensioners [elderly people who paid the hospital for their care] or other healthy people who are not in need, neither for a payment, a gift or for free, but only to the poor weak people in the hospital for whom it is intended. Everything that she buys for such a use, such as salt, lard, eggs, milk, chickens, and so on, from the money provided by the director of the hospital is to be used for the good of the poor sick people, as called for, and nowhere else. She is to handle the money given her each week by the director of the hospital for fish and other things carefully and honestly, and not loan, take, or keep any of it, but buy the necessary things immediately as if it were her own business. Each week she is to give the director of the hospital an orderly accounting of all that she has purchased, and stand next to the tradesmen when they prepare and weigh out all goods so that all is weighed and handled truthfully. If she sees, tastes, or finds any problems or shortages, whether of salt, lard, meat, cabbage, vegetables, spices or anything else, she is inform the director of the hospital, so that the cook, or whoever is guilty, is forced to improve. She is to invite no friends or guests to her table nor prepare any special dishes for them nor have them prepared, hut is to be satisfied with her salary and benefits.

She is to pay attention to those who should be in the hospital and who shouldn't. If she finds some who have become healthy again, she should let them go, but otherwise give the poor people support, speak to them in a friendly manner and as often as necessary bring them refreshing drinks. If

one of the sick people dies, she is to take custody of all that he brought into the hospital, like money, clothing, or other movable goods, so that nothing is taken from it to the detriment of the hospital, which has rights over all these goods. She should inform the director of the hospital of the death immediately, as she has sworn to do, and wait for his decision about this legacy, and then follow it. She should also provide the maids working under her with any necessities. All this should be carried out faithfully and without deceit.

Meisterin's Oath and Ordinance

Those who are taken on and hired as Meisterin in the new city hospital should give their oath and swear to God that they will be true and responsible to the hospital, serve its needs at all times, and watch for and guard against damages and injuries as much as possible, and care for the poor ill with the best attentiveness, giving out and distributing everything that the ordinance of the hospital calls for easily and graciously. She should pay special attention to the orders of the established director of the hospital, so that they are carried out to the benefit of the hospital and the good of the poor patients without delay. If she has any problems or shortages, or suspects or finds anything amiss, she should report it immediately to the director of the hospital, wait for his decision and then carry it out. Without his knowledge and orders she is not to venture or do anything, for that is not her position or office.

She should pay special attention to the kitchen and the things that belong to it, and order every day what should be cooked and served. At all times she should notice that the cooks and maids assigned to her pay attention to the cinnamon and other spices, taking neither too much nor too little. They should prepare the correct amount of meat according to the number of healthy people who can eat it and serve it at the correct time. All meat

should be washed and cleaned, the pans and other kitchen utensils kept clean so that the food is properly and purely cooked. At the proper times she should test the food, to see whether it is correctly salted and has the right amount of fat. When it is time to eat, she should serve the food to the poor patients, sit beside the Custorin and both help each other dish up, giving each patient what he is supposed to get.

While she is serving, she should pay special attention to how many very ill people are in the hospital, that cannot eat meat or that sort of meal, so that on the next day she counts that number fewer and orders less food to be cooked. Nothing more should be cooked than needed for the number of people who want to eat it; all excess should be avoided. While the meals are being cooked she should not spin or sew for her own profit, or allow her maids to do it, so that the cooking is carefully looked after.

She should also go to the market during the regular, normal times, and buy whatever is necessary, or what the director of the hospital has ordered her to, as if it were her own business. The money that she has received for this from the director of the hospital is to be used for nothing else than the business of the hospital. She is to take, keep, or borrow none of it for herself, nor loan some of it to another, but give the director of the hospital an itemized accounting of her income and expenditures each week, or as often as he demands it. She is to be present and be sure when the butcher brings the meat, that it is good and suitable, without blemishes or a strong smell, and is correctly weighed and cut on a board.

From this hour on she is responsible also to go every Monday with the Custorin among the poor patients and see who needs to stay longer in the hospital and who not, and release the healthy again. Because she is responsible for the administration of the household furniture and movable goods for the servants, like beds, cushions, pillows, sheets, handtowels,

tablecloths, keys, plates and the like, she is to care for them conscientiously, and anything else that is entrusted to her for the hospital, so that nothing is destroyed or lost.

She is not to prepare or give any food, be it fish, meat, spices or anything else, cooked or uncooked, for any of her relatives or strangers, whether for a payment, a gift or for free, but use it solely for the necessities of the hospital. She is not to invite any relatives or guests to her table, nor cook or have prepared any special dishes for them, but is to be satisfied with her established salary. All this should be carried out faithfully and without deceit.

Schauerin's Oath and Ordinance

The Schauerin in the new city hospital is to give her oath to the director of the hospital and swear to God that she will let no person be admitted to the hospital if her asks without the knowledge of the director of the hospital or Meisterin. But if someone asks to be let in, she should examine this person carefully and admit no one to the hospital who has a dangerous, contagious illness which could not be cured in the hospital, but only those who are suffering from moderate bodily weakness. Ail of these people should be citizens, children of citizens, or servants of the same, or journeymen who have worked a long time with a master here and are thus eligible to be taken into the hospital.

She should be careful when giving out wine and beer to the poor and aged, and also when distributing bread, that she give them only what they should have and what the hospital ordinances prescribe. Without the knowledge of the director of the hospital she is not to give or hand out anything, or use anything for her own needs. If she sees or experiences any shortages among the old people, the sick or others that could lead to problems for the hospital she is to report immediately to the director of the hospital or

Meisterin. She is to take no bread that has been given to the sick and resell it to the pensioners nor to anyone else, but completely abstain from such trading, nor allow anyone else to do it, nor be silent if she finds anyone else doing it. She should do everything she is supposed to do when ordered to by the director of the hospital or Meisterin, without argument with all diligence, faithfully and without deceit.



Architect's plan for Guy's hospital, built in London in the 1730s by Thomas Guy as a home for "incurables" who had been discharged from other city hospitals.

13. A couple, a medical practice, and an accusation, Denmark 1553

Medical treatment was handled by a hierarchy of individuals in most of Europe, ranging from university-trained doctors (who were all male), to barber-surgeons, apothecaries, and midwives, trained through apprenticeship, to a variety of medical practitioners who gained their training less formally. In early modern Denmark, ordinances and other legal records made a distinction between doctors of medicine, barber-surgeons and the men and women who were connected with the public baths. However in the following testimony from 1553 we find a couple who apparently shared a medical practice. He is called “doctor” and she a “doctress” implying that they were medical practitioners, though she could not have gained her training at a university. (Malmø stadsbog 1549-1559. Rådstuerettens, bytingets og toldbodrettens protokol. Ed. Einar Bager (Copenhagen: Selskabet for Udgivelse af Kilder til dansk Historie, 1972) p. 132. Translated by Grethe Jacobsen and Pernille Arenfeldt)

After Christmas 1553

Testimony, which the doctress received in court in the presence of the proper jury.

We, the Mayors and the City Council in Malmø and Valentin Køler, Reeve ibidem, hereby make public and acknowledge with this our open letter, that year etc. 1553 on Friday the 19th of February were summoned in front of us at our city hall, Johan Krumpis, called doctor, of Malmø and his wife, Magdalena, and brought with them these aftersaid our burghers and burgheresses, whom they had summoned to our court and asked and urged each and all of them to step forward and admit for God’s and justice’s sake, how they have dealt with them with medical skill and other things. Which people came forward and with raised fingers and stretched arms swore a holy oath as follows.

First Jesper Maler and Niels Erlandsson said that the doctor had helped them, so that they thanked him and wished him well. Morten Herløv, Mikkil Pramkarl, Hans Knudsen testified that he and she had helped their wives honest and well, so that they thanked them and wished them all well.

Marine Pibils recounted how the doctress had helped her in childbed so that she thanked God and her for her health.

Marine Bartolemæus', wife of Jacob Rebslager, Bente Hans Knudsen, Gertke in the Cellar testified and swore that the doctress had helped them in one way and the other with herbs, water and other things, so that they thanked her a lot, because she had helped them.

Adrian Nettelmaier's wife and Anne Lydekone testified that she had helped their daughters in childbed and in other ways so that they thanked her greatly.

Jep Kedelsmed testified, that she had helped him, next to God, during his illness with something to drink and other honest (cures) so that he thanked her highly and said he would be in the ground, had she not been around.

Hans Mortensen Skinder that they had helped him and that he had nothing to accuse them of.

Hans Nielsen Skomager testified that the doctor gave him a drink, which neither harmed him nor did him any good and therefore he had neither thanks nor accusations to offer him.

Morten Østen testified that he knew that the doctor had helped a peasant and a girl, who were not present, so well that they thanked him and wished him very well.

Adrian Nettleare and Anders Jyde testified that they had been sent to Hans Roskom's house to inquire what they said about the doctor and the doctress. Then they had said that they knew of nothing to accuse them of.

Jørgen Isenkræmmer and Peder Sittil recounted how they had been sent to Mikkel Overskærers' house about the testimony they could give, concerning the doctor and doctress. Then they had answered that they had been in the house and left again so that they knew of nothing to accuse them of.

As further evidence that thus was sworn, testified and recounted in front of us, we have sealed this our open letter with the seal of our city.

14. Woman's petition to be allowed to practice medicine, Germany sixteenth century

At times medical practitioners who had received formal training protested to civic authorities when individuals were practicing medicine without being a member of their guild or organization. In this undated sixteenth-century petition to the city council of Munich, a female medical practitioner answers the charges against her. (Munich Stadtarchiv, Gewerbeamt, no. 1020, Medizinalia Pfuscher. Translated by Merry Wiesner-Hanks)

Modest answer and obedient report from Katherina Plumanerin
Carberinerin

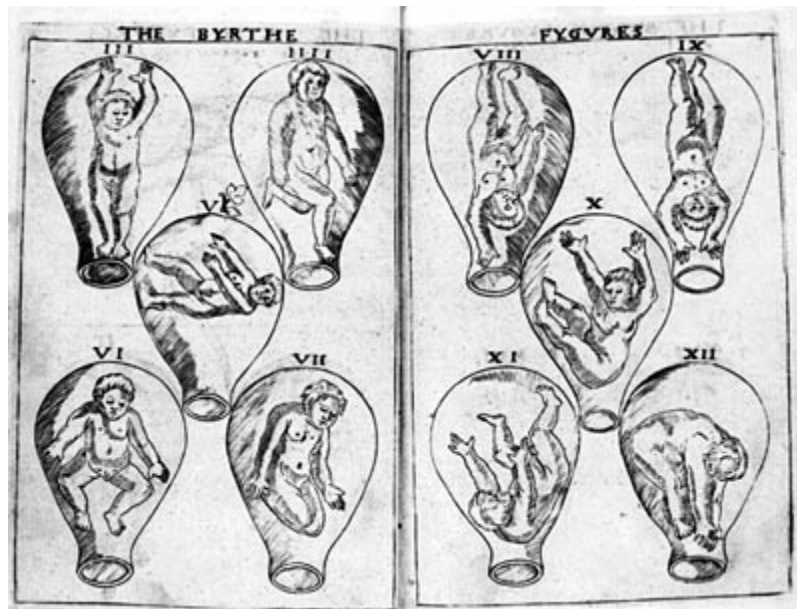
Honorable, just, careful, highly educated, and wise mayors and council of
this electoral capital city of Munich, gracious and serving sirs:

Because of my humble modesty, I cannot let your honorable and gracious
sirs go without an answer: A few days ago your city secretary (with
somewhat harsh words) brought me an extract from a council meeting held
on December 17 of last year, which included the following: that Plumanerin
Carberinerin is to be earnestly forbidden to treat or look at patients. This
decision, arrived at because of malice and not through any fault of my own,
appears to me not only strange, but also totally deplorable. On one hand I
use my feminine skills, given by the grace of God, only when someone
entreats me earnestly and never advertise myself, but only when someone
has been left for lost, and they ask me many times. I do whatever I can
possibly do out of Christian love and charity, using only simple and
allowable means that should not be forbidden or proscribed in the least.
Not one person who has come under my care has a complaint or grievance
against me. If the doctors, apothecaries, or barber-surgeons have claimed
this, it is solely out of spite and jealousy.

At all times, as is natural, women have more trust in other women to discover their secrets, problems, and illnesses than they have in men (as long as no un-Christian means are used)-but perhaps this jealousy came from that. Undoubtedly as well, honorable husbands who love and cherish their wives will seek any help and assistance they can, even that from women, if the wives have been given up (by the doctors) or otherwise come into great danger.

Because I know that I can help in my own small way, I will do all I can, just as, according to the Gospel, we should help pull an ox out of a well it has fallen into on Sunday.

So that your honorable and gracious sirs can see that I am trying to follow your directions from now on as I have generally done in the past, I will not promote or advertise my healing. But if someone comes to me in an emergency and pleads with me, I cannot deny them my time or my troubles or the skill that God has given me out of friendship or out of Christian sympathy. Thus I humbly hope that you will not listen to any spite and envy any further but will allow me this out of your grace and wisdom. This is my answer given to you out of my duty of obedience.



Illustrations of the baby in the uterus and various birth presentations from the English translation of Eucharius Roesslin's *Rosegarden for Pregnant Women*, a 16th-century manual for midwives.

15. Ordinance Regulating Midwives, Germany 1522

Women in early modern Europe, like those in most of the world's cultures in most periods, generally gave birth assisted by female relatives and friends. Women who had particular talents or inclination were often called to assist more often, and gradually such women began taking payment for their work, evolving into professional midwives. Midwives were trained by watching and helping more experienced midwives, but beginning in the sixteenth century in some parts of Europe, city governments began to regulate midwifery and require midwives to swear an oath if they wished to obtain a license. This is the first midwives' ordinance from the south German city of Nuremberg, which served as a model for many other cities. (Nuremberg Staatsarchiv, Amts-und Standbücher Nr. 100, fol. 101-105. Translated by Merry Wiesner-Hanks)

Every midwife should give her oath and swear she will conscientiously care for and stand by every expectant mother in her time of need to whom she is called, whether she is rich or poor, to the best of her abilities and

understanding. She should proceed to whomever she is called first, immediately and without opposition, and make absolutely no excuses or delays, as has often been the case, but faithfully stand by her. Also no woman is to be hurried or forced to deliver before the proper time; she should wait and hold out until the appropriate time.

If the thing [the delivery] looks like it will be dangerous, she should call one or two of the women who oversee midwifery and proceed with the emergency according to their advice. In no case is she to wait or delay to call them until the need is so great they cannot handle it, or she will warrant serious punishment.

If it happens that the birth takes so long and the first midwife has a pressing need to rest or sleep for a while, she should call another sworn midwife and not an apprentice, who will then be just as responsible to appear immediately without opposition. She should then steadfastly and helpfully care for the woman in labor just as if she had been called at first. If it happens that this second midwife is caring for another expectant mother at the time she is called, she should stay with this one and send another midwife to the other birth.

If any midwives show themselves to be disobedient or disagreeable, the city council will not only remove them from office, but will also punish them severely, so that all will know to shape up and watch their behavior.

The council has certainly experienced that the midwives deal very deceitfully and for their own profit with the Arme Kindbetterin Almosen [a city fund for poor expectant mothers] running back and forth to respectable women, who don't need the alms, promising them bedding and lard and other things if they will agree to call them as midwives. These lucrative operations are leading to a decline and breakdown of the Almosen. Because the council sees this with no little displeasure, from now

on the midwives will be sworn by their oaths not to run after these women, or promise them the Almosen, but to refrain from this completely. If the council discovers any further incidents, she [the midwife] will be let out of her office, and will be punished in each case according to the severity of the deed, however the council decides.

From now on no midwife will be allowed to take on an apprentice who has begun with a different midwife and left her without justifiable cause, but every apprentice shall stay with the woman with whom she started. Justifiable and legitimate cause for leaving may be proven to the council or to those appointed by it. In such cases, the apprentice will not be forbidden to complete her training years with another sworn midwife. In this case, the woman that caused the apprentice to leave through her unfairness and unreasonableness will not be allowed to take on another apprentice until the end of the training years of the first.

They should not take on any flighty, young apprentices, as it so often happens that they marry during the course of their training and that all sorts of injuries result from their inexperience. They should rather take on apprentices well advanced in years and preferably living alone, from whom one expects more diligence than from younger ones.

They should also not allow themselves to drink wine in excess, as all kinds of injury and harm have been inflicted on the pregnant women because of this. The council has decided to punish severely any who break this restriction.

The honorable council has discovered that the midwives often send their maids (who have not completed their instruction or who have just completed it and have no experience yet) alone to women who are giving birth for the first time, through which these women are often neglected and deplorably injured. Therefore the honorable council orders that from

now on no maid, whether she has half-completed her training or not, is to attend alone any woman bearing her first or second child, whether she goes with the knowledge of her instructor or not. After the passing of the normal years of training, the apprentice shall carry out her first birth in the presence of her instructor. In the case that the instructor is dead or not there, another sworn, experienced midwife should be present. Anyone who is convicted of this will be punished to the extent that the council's displeasure with the deed can be felt.

The high honorable council has also had enough of midwives taking their proper salary for poor women not only from the established overseer of the charity [the Arme Kindbetterin Almosen] but also from the women themselves, and therefore receiving double payment. This gives the honorable council great displeasure. Because of this the midwives are to swear that when they receive their proper salary (that, due to persuasive reasons, has been set at 20 kreuzer for each birth) from the overseer for caring for a poor woman, they are not to demand or want anything more, but let themselves be completely satisfied with their established salary. All of this is liable to punishment, which the high honorable council will set each time according to the crime and opportunities of the case.

Recently evil cases have taken place, that those women who live in sin and adultery have illegitimate children, and during birth or before purposefully attempt to kill them by taking harmful, abortion-causing drugs, or through other notorious means. Some of these cases never come to the attention of the authorities, and proper punishment for them cannot be carried out. This the high honorable council, because of the God-given authority it carries, can no longer tolerate. Therefore they have made the recommendation that the midwives' oath be added to. They are to swear yearly, that when one of them is called to deliver a baby for such a woman,

one who is carrying an illegitimate child, she [the midwife] is obliged to ask with intent what the name of the child's mother is, and who the child's father is. As soon as she has brought the child into the world, she is to report to the Lord Mayor whether the child is alive or dead, who its mother and father are, and where the mother is lying in bed. Also no dead illegitimate children are to be carried to the grave before she gives her report to the Lord Mayor. At least three or four unsuspected female persons are to go with the child to the grave. If one or more of the midwives act against this, and will not comply with what has been sent forth above, the high honorable council will deal with them as perjurers with corporal punishment. Then they will finally know to conform to this.

[Changes in and additions to the regulations were made fairly regularly, and in 1579 were codified and reissued along with the original 1522 ordinance:]

On the request of the sworn midwives to the high honorable council to improve their ordinance in several various points, this further pronouncement is to be published, to bring the following improvements to their ordinances.

First: The midwives have sworn in their oaths not to send or use an apprentice during her normal training years to a woman having her first baby, but have requested to have this limited to only the first quarter-year. The high honorable council believes this to be much too short a time, and will set the limit at one year. Therefore from now on no midwife should send a maid to a woman having her first child unless she has completed one year of her training program.

Second: It has often come about that some midwives who were with women during their labor run away from them and to others, without caring that this is utterly and completely against their sworn duties.

Through this running away many births are hurried, and it should be severely punished. Therefore, when from now on one or more midwives leave a woman in need, without calling another sworn midwife to come in their place, they will be required to pay the high honorable council a five gulden fine, without exception.

Third: Some women have allowed their little children to be carried to holy baptism by strange people when the midwife was too busy, although such small children are easily harmed and injured. Therefore, the high honorable council orders that from now on all new-born children are to be carried to holy baptism by their sworn midwife or her apprentice. Any midwife will be fined two gulden if she breaks this ordinance.

Fourth: No midwife is to send her children or servants to a baptism, nor ask for anything to take home to them, with a fine of two gulden.

Fifth: No midwife is to take on a maid-apprentice without the knowledge of the overseers of midwifery. No maid-apprentice is to be accepted who is married or has her own household, but only those who are single or widowed, so that these persons are not called away from their instructors to their private business or housework, and will always be available. They should not live in the midwife's house, but in the neighborhood, and should keep themselves occupied at all times.

Sixth: Some maid-apprentices have been wantonly leaving their mistresses and continuing their training with others, which is not only not to be tolerated but specifically forbidden in the midwives' ordinance. In order to deal with this the high honorable council has decided that from now on no maid-apprentice who has left her mistress before the completion of her proper training period without justifiable cause may be taken on or instructed by another midwife. These maids have forfeited the office [of sworn midwife] with this action. However, if a midwife treats her maid so

unreasonably that she cannot stay with her, it will not be forbidden for her to complete her training with another mistress. The overseers of midwives should make note of this. If they cannot decide the case, it will be the responsibility of the high honorable council, and their decision will have to be awaited. The high honorable council also wants the midwives, when they accept maid-apprentices, to take on the children of citizens before any foreigners.

The high honorable council has discovered that some of the midwives are taking all or half of the tips that have been given to their maid-apprentices by people, which leads to all sorts of lack of diligence and care among the maids. In order to prevent this, the high honorable council has demanded that from now on all that a maid receives for herself from a child's mother, father, relatives or others, that has been given willingly above the normal payments, should remain the maid's and she is not to be required to give any to her mistress. She should, however, give the house-maid five gulden a year from this, as she is doing her housework [i.e., whenever a maid-apprentice is serving at a birth].

The high honorable council has also discovered that some midwives have no maid-apprentices, with the result that when the old midwives die no qualified people may be appointed to their posts. In order to improve this the high honorable council seriously asks all midwives who have completed the training period with one or more maids to take on another capable one in their place a quarter or at longest a half year later. Also, if they are with pregnant women, they are not to send their maid alone to another to whom they've been called, but go there themselves, so that all kinds of dangers may be prevented.

16. Lawsuit regarding a pregnancy out of wedlock, France 1547

Women who became pregnant were sometimes able to make arrangements for the support of the child, which were recorded by notaries. In this document from Paris in 1547, a single woman and a man go on record to settle a lawsuit in progress regarding the woman's pregnancy and the subsequent birth of a child by the man. The woman's economic circumstances and means of earning a living are not specified. The man, as a legal practitioner given the title "master," was probably comfortably well off, though not rich. (Paris, Archives Nationales, Minutier central, Étude XI/27, 25 Jan 1547. Translated by Carol Loats)

Were present in person master Jherosme Honys, legal practitioner at the Palais in Paris, on the one hand, and Mathurine de Marville, living in Paris, rue Alexandre Langloiz, on the other hand, who have made and now make the agreements, compromises, and arrangements which follow.

That is to say that the said de Marville has promised and here promises to raise and support, well and duly, from this point on, a young girl named Claude, to whom she previously gave birth, child of the said Honys; in return for which the said Honys will be obliged and obliges himself to give and pay her, each month for the next two full years, one écu soleil, the first term of payment falling due the last day of February coming up.

And in addition to this, [Honys] has given four écus d'or in cash, and has promised and promises to pay her six écus soleil by the day and feast of Easter coming up, for maintenance and clothing of the said child; without Honys being in any way obliged to give anything else for the support of the said child, from this point on, if not of his own goodwill.

In consideration of the things above, the said Marville has released and here releases the said Honys of all things whatsoever, equally for what she is able or might be able to ask in original amount as for expenses in the

legal process pending before whatever judges there might be, and of all other things whatsoever for which she could made demands and take legal action in whatever cause or way that might be, from the past up to now.

Thus etc., promising, etc., obligating, etc., each in his own right, etc., renouncing, etc. Done and passed in duplicate in the year 1547, Wednesday, the 25th day of January.

17. Death sentence of a woman accused of infanticide, Germany 1740

Many women who had children out of wedlock could not get the father to agree to support the child, or in some cases even acknowledge that the child was his. Pregnancy outside of marriage was disastrous for many women, and they tried to hide the pregnancy as long as possible, or to abort this child with herbs or other methods. If they could not induce a miscarriage, they might give birth as secretly as possible, and then abandon the child or attempt to kill it. During the sixteenth century, governments in many parts of Europe became very concerned about infanticide, and required unmarried women who became pregnant to report their pregnancies; those who did not might be charged with infanticide if the baby died, even if there was no proof that it had been killed. Medical personnel often had great difficulty telling if a child had been born dead or had died shortly after birth, but the more stringent laws were enforced; more women were executed for infanticide in early modern Europe than for any other crime except witchcraft. The following case from Frankfurt is typical of this uncertainty in terms of proof. (Criminal court records from Frankfurt, quoted in Wilhelm Wächterhäuser, *Das Verbrechen des Kindesmordes im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Berlin, 1973), p. 11. Translated by Merry Wiesner-Hanks)

Anna Maria Rauin admitted, concerning her child that was conceived in immorality, that as soon as it was born she shook it back and forth by the head so that it would not cry and no one would discover it or learn about it, and that she grabbed it around the throat under the face and held it very firmly. But she denied have murderous intentions or having handled the child in a way to murder it. The examination of the body by the doctors and surgeons was inconclusive in terms of determining the cause of death or whether the lungs had drawn breath, despite their best medical understanding. The accused herself was not certain, but only thought that the child was born living into the world and was then strangled by her. Because her confession may have been motivated by fear of torture, and

because of the absence of a clear *corporis delecti* and complete certainty that the child lived, the death sentence might appear not to be proper, and it might appear as if the accused should be given an unusual punishment [i.e., not the death sentence], or should be forced into making a more complete confession through firm handling on the part of the city executioner. However, it appears from the circumstances, and is fully demonstrated without a doubt through the confession of the accused... that it was the intention of the accused to keep the child from crying by pressing in on its throat so that no one would know anything about this birth. This is indeed premeditated murder, that is, an intent to kill the child, and the accused, who as any reasonable person would, clearly understood that holding it by the throat and neck would cause this gentle little child to strangle and die... .Thus she is sentenced to death by the sword.



Executions of common criminals, as well as those of prominent persons, were public occasions and often drew large crowds. In this engraving by William Hogarth, an apprentice found guilty of theft is being taken to Tyburn, the principal place of executions in London from 1388 to 1783.

18. Regulations of a city brothel, France 1500

During the late Middle Ages, most cities in Europe established licensed or official brothels and often regulated the hours, prices, and clothing of prostitutes. Some cities issued very specific and detailed ordinances regarding life in the brothel; the following are the ordinances of a city brothel in Strasbourg, passed in 1500 by the city council.. (Strasbourg, Archives Municipales, Statutenrepertorium, Vol. 3, fol. 4-5 (1500). Translated by Merry Wiesner-Hanks)

How the brothel manager, his wife, and their servants should treat the whores

In past times and still today wanton knaves often take women and daughters from other areas and put them in or sell them to the city brothel. Then such persons are kept in the brothel against their will by the brothel manager and his wife, so that they can not leave the brothel, although some of them would willingly turn away [from this life] and do penance. This is difficult to tolerate, so the mayors and the city council and the 21 [a smaller city council] have decided that from henceforth this shall be handled in such a manner:

That is, that no brothel manager nor his wife nor his servants shall sell or pawn a woman, whether for a large sum or a small sum. If they have sold or pawned any women, these persons should now be free. If any brothel manager, his wife, or his servants do this in the future, they shall pay the city five pounds each time this happen. Those that disdain this and will not follow it shall be banished from the city of Strasbourg under threat of corporal punishment. Those who want to carry out this sinful work [i.e., prostitution] may take women in and maintain them for a relatively small weekly sum for room and board, a sum which both parties agree to in good will.

If the brothel manager, his wife, or his servants give the whores clothing, linens, food, or drink, the women are to pay for this by the week so that the debts are repaid. They are not to use this to keep the whores in their debt or pawn them, but the whores are to have the free will to decide whether to stay or to go without being forced by the brothel manager, his wife, or his servants, by the pain of the aforementioned fine.

The brothel manager, his wife, and his servants are not to claim a part of the money that the poor whores earn with their bodies, nor force them to do such work, for it should be up to them whether they earn money or are idle.

At all times, the whores are to be free to go to church, to sermons, to hear mass and to other church services, whenever and wherever they want, and not stopped by the brothel manager, his wife, or his servants, by the pain of the aforementioned fine.

All brothel managers, their wives, and their servants are to be summoned and ordered to swear an oath to obey this ordinance.

The two officers who assist the mayor, the three tower guards, and the two bailiffs are also to take an oath, that if they experience or learn that this ordinance is not being followed, they are to punish and report this. The seven officers of morality are also expected to enforce this ordinance according to their oath, with one-fourth [of the fine] going to the officers who carry out the punishment for their troubles.

19. Debates about closing a city brothel, Germany 1560s

During the sixteenth century, religious reformers preached about the evils of prostitution, and city authorities responded by closing municipal brothels in their efforts to encourage order and morality. The following comes from the minutes of the city council of Nuremberg, as members debated what to do about the city's brothel. Nuremberg: Bavarian State Archives in Nuremberg, Ratsbücher 31, fols. 316, 350; 36, fol. 15; Ratschlagbücher, 36, fol. 150-153. Translation by Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

[January 5, 1562] The high honorable [city] council asks for learned opinions about whether it should close the city brothel (Frauenhaus), or if it were closed, whether other dangers and still more evil would be the result.

[January 19, 1562] The learned counsellors, pastors and theologians discussed whether closing the house would lead the journeymen and foreign artisans to turn instead to their masters' and landlords' wives, daughters, and maids. The pastors and theologians urged the city not to break God's word just because of foreigners, and one argued that the brothel caused journeymen to have impure thoughts about women. If they were never introduced to sex, they would not bother other women. The argument that a man performed a good deed when he married a woman from the brothel, which he could no longer do if the brothel was closed, is to be rejected, as closing the brothel would also pull the women out of the devil's grip. One jurist added his opinion that because there were only ten or twelve women in the brothel, they couldn't possibly be taking care of all the journeymen, so closing the house would not make that much difference. The council then asked for an exact report from Augsburg about the numbers of illegitimate children before and after it closed its brothel [in 1532] to see if it had increased or decreased.

[March 18, 1562] On the recommendations written and read by the high honorable theologians and jurists, why the men of the council are authorized and obliged to close the common brothel, it has been decided by the whole council to follow the same recommendation and from this hour on forbid all activity in that house, to post a guard in the house and let no man enter it any more. Also to send for the brothel manager and say to him he is to send all women that he has out of the house in two days and never take them in again. From this time on he is to act so blamelessly and unsuspiciously that the council has no cause to punish him. When this has been completed, the preachers should be told to admonish the young people to guard themselves from such depravity and to keep their children and servants from it and to lead such as irreproachable life that the council has no cause to punish anyone for this vice.

[May 18, 1577] The high honorable city council asks for learned opinions, because adultery, prostitution, immorality and rape have gotten so out of hand here in the city and the countryside.



Along with sermons and books, art often contained morality tales. This section from an anonymous Venetian print from about 1600 shows the life and death of a prostitute. In the last panel she is carried off to hell, depicted with its classical attributes—Charon the boatman ferrying her over the river Styx and the three-headed dog Cerberus guarding the mouth of hell.

20. Punishment of a woman for theft and prostitution, Germany 16th century

The life of prostitutes and courtesans has often been romanticized, and some women who were the mistresses of powerful men were themselves quite influential. Most women who sold sex combined this with other types of work, and sometimes with criminal activity. They were imprisoned and received beatings or other corporal punishments for their actions, and one senses how desperate these women could become in cases like the following from Nuremberg, taken from the city executioner's diary. (Albrecht Keller, ed., *Meister Franntz Schmidts Scharfrichters inn Nürnberg all sein Richten* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Helms, 1913). Translated by Merry Wiesner-Hanks)

Barbara Wissnerin, a very base, lewd whore: who due to great unchastity, multiple theft and breaking and entering has already been in the Loch [the city jail] eight times. She was banished many times, and has perjured herself [i.e., and come back into Nuremberg] and was beaten in the Loch. She was publicly burned through the cheeks, and her first two fingers were chopped off. But all warnings have not helped. As she was recently arrested again, and made herself a large belly out of rags, as if she were pregnant, so that the officials would hold back, and not use the necessary severity. She was let out of the city after swearing an oath, and warned under penalty of death not to come in to the city again. Whereupon she came in again and was caught at theft. Now on her own confession her day of execution is set for next Thursday, the first of March. For the said punishment she will be taken from life to death in water [i.e., drowned].

21. Police report of a man arrested for sodomy, France 1723

Early modern theologians, jurists, and doctors applied the word "sodomy" to a variety of non-procreative sexual activities: bestiality, masturbation, and oral or anal intercourse involving any combination of individuals. Under this umbrella they condemned sexual relations between men and between women, but male "sodomites" were arrested and punished for sodomy much more commonly than female "tribades" were. The repression of sexual relations between men was sporadic and selective throughout Europe. In Paris the police entrapped hundreds of "infamous" men in parks during the first half of the eighteenth century. Reports like the following one have allowed historians to reconstruct aspects of the sodomitical subculture of the capital. They provide information about what men sexually interested in other men said and did and about contemporary sexual assumptions, attitudes, and anxieties. Records about same-sex relations involving women are much rarer, and are primarily literary. (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, Ms 10254, 21 October 1723. Translated by Jeffrey Merrick)

LEONARD GOBERT

apprentice mason living at the quarries near Charenton

native of Paris, 45 years old, unmarried

Said Gobert has been known for many years as an infamous sod[omite] and as a corrupter of young folks, as well as for having in the past supplied such to Monsieur the duke de Brancas. For 5 or 6 years he had been living on the Montagne Sainte-Geneviève, where he did not have a good reputation, always having with him young folks from the neighborhood, whom he lured to his place and often made sleep with him, about which the neighbors as well as the late Michaud, a used clothes dealer, in whose house the said Gobert then lived, informed the late Monsieur d'Argenson, who ordered Monsieur Simmonet to bring him in to speak with him and that he should be reprimanded as he deserved and in case of recidivism that he would

send him to the Hospital, said late Michaud having found the said Gobert going up with two young children from neighborhood families whom he wished to corrupt as they stated at the time. And since that time, this infamous man has continued in more or less the same way and in order to hide his cards better bought for life a little house at the quarries that he fixed up as he liked and where he has lived with a young man for four years, as he has stated and also said that he was a carpenter and that he put him up as a good friend. Said Gobert having always reserved a small room on the Montagne Sainte-Genève, in the house of a candlemaker named Gosset, in order to come there sometimes to amuse himself there with his friends, especially young folks. He has also been known to Monsieur Thérû for a long time.

Being this day Monday 21 October in the Luxembourg gardens around six o'clock in the evening, I encountered the said Gobert, who was looking for a good time there in the places where all the infamous men go. Having seated myself on the grass, he placed himself next to me and showed me his p[enis] through his shirt, while telling me the story of his adventures on the subject of sod[omy], among others about a certain Cadeau who was arrested by order of the king by Monsieur Simonnet for the same reason, who went to the Mississippi, with whom he lived for a while as man and wife and that he missed him all the time, being one of the good-looking boys of Paris. He also told me that he had something to do with a priest whom he had met on the half-moon and that a month ago he had moreover found a young man there with whom he had had a good time, but that he had caught something bad out of it, and that a week ago he had also found a man in the Luxembourg with whom he had gone to la Roquette and had a good time together, which man the said Gobert invited to come see him in his house at the quarries. Said Gobert told me that he put it in and that he did not like women at all and that his whole pleasure

was to have something to do with good-looking boys and you might that he had been of this inclination all his life. Then said Gobert having suggested to me that we go drink a mug because he did not want to do anything in said garden, because they arrested people every day and that we would be safe in a tavern to amuse ourselves, having left said garden by the gate on the side of the rue de l'Enfer, said Gobert was arrested by order of the king by Monsieur Simmonet, who led him to prison in the Petit Châtelet around eight o'clock in the evening.