Pregnancy and Birth in Early Modern France
Treatises by Caring Physicians and Surgeons (1581–1625)

Edited and Translated by Valerie Worth-Stylianou

Best Teaching Edition in the field of gender and women’s studies:

2013 prize awarded by the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women.

‘The committee particularly appreciated the way this collection is framed to appeal to students of several fields. Ample and well-judged footnotes clarify textual, cultural, and historical context, and glossaries at the back cover medical authorities, medical terms, and herbal remedies, while the translation is clear and evocative of early modern French. This collection should encourage a broad audience of students, scholars, and curious readers to read these previously inaccessible works.’

Abby Zanger, Secretary of SSEMW
Professor of History, Tufts University Massachusetts

Valerie Worth-Stylianou is Senior Tutor at Trinity College Oxford, and Professor of French at Oxford University. She has published extensively on translations and on women’s healthcare in early modern France.
‘The texts selected and translated in this volume allow the reader to access an important group of primary sources on issues related to women’s health, including childbirth and caesarean section, sterility, miscarriage, breastfeeding, etc. … They provide evidence of a new concern and attention for women’s health needs, which, most interestingly, often went hand-in-hand with the rejection of misogynist stereotypes and the challenging of conventional views of female subordination and inferiority. … The book will be easily used by scholars and students, including undergraduates.’

Gianna Pomata, Professor of the History of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University

‘These writings by male practitioners of what today we term obstetrics and gynecology, embody a range of approaches to these literally life-saving professions. …; we, like the author’s contemporaries, are enlightened by this work in ways that are similarly salutary for future scholarship about women’s experience of the crucial events of pregnancy and childbirth. … This excellent volume’s sensitive, scholarly presentation makes newly accessible the many fascinating issues associated with early modern women’s health.’

Renaissance Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 3, Fall 2014
Kirk Read, Professor of French and Francophone Studies, Bates College, Lewiston, Maine

‘It offers crucial material as regards attitudes toward women, together with reflections on their nature and their lives. The translations themselves all read well … The care and precision are characteristic of the scrupulous attention to detail throughout, the information and scholarship only adding to the richness of the whole. … As ever, the work undertaken by Valerie Worth-Stylianou serves as an inspiration for further research.’

Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal, Vol. 9, No. 1, Fall 2014
Wendy Perkins, Honorary Senior Lecturer in French Studies, University of Birmingham

‘Through her choice of texts Worth-Stylianou shows how the plight of women as machines to produce children attracts sympathy and understanding even at this early date; not always, moreover, in ways we would have expected—who would have thought, for instance, that it was necessary to argue that bearing only female children was not a form of sterility? In sum, this is a contribution as welcome as it is well-documented to an important topic.’

Stephen Bamforth, Professor of Renaissance Studies, University of Nottingham