

much more map research in which lines referring to places visited, and routes taken are analyzed, problematized, and contextualized. Most insightful is the distinction between roads and routes, *Mapping Travel* dealing with the latter: “the personal and individual rather than the permanent and collective” (33). Addressing this contrast is helpful for map historians, for example while examining annotated maps.

That the book is eclectic is not surprising when its form is considered. Bringing together a thousand years of mapmaking in a little more than one hundred pages, from thirteenth-century navigation handbooks to twenty-first-century films, is quite an achievement. The author herself tells this is a spin-off of her forthcoming book on travel mapping. The form is a bit confusing, halfway between a book and an article, issued by Brill Research Perspectives in Map History, a book series that used to be a journal. On a sidenote, the book’s orange-and-white cover is rather simple (and quite ugly), even though maps make such beautiful cover illustrations.

Personally, I wished *Mapping Travel* was not only a short book or a long article, but an exhibition catalogue as well, since this theme would make a beautiful show if these pages and screens were put up next to each other. The book features almost fifty illustrations, while the text describes many more maps not shown, leaving the reader sometimes a little frustrated. This is definitely not a reproach; it just demonstrates that the text evokes curiosity. I caught myself several times expanding my thumb and index finger on the page, wishing to zoom in. If this theme can be translated into an exhibition, featuring these and/or other objects, that would tell a wonderful story, providing a history to the blue line on the maps on our phones we all follow.

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*Margery Kempe’s Spiritual Medicine: Suffering, Transformation and the Life-Course.* Laura Kalas.

Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2020. xvi + 254 pp. \$36.95.

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This monograph is a stimulating reading of the *Book of Margery Kempe* within the context of medieval discourses about medicine and the female body. Laura Kalas approaches Kempe’s *Book* from the perspective of the medical humanities, presenting original interpretations that highlight Kempe’s authority and agency. Rather than anachronistically diagnosing Kempe with a modern mental or physical illness, as many have before, Kalas argues that Kempe and her contemporaries used medieval medical theories and practices to understand her mystical suffering. Kempe’s salvific pain was rooted in her female, humorally melancholic body, which qualified her to act as a physical surrogate for Mary and Christ in different ways throughout her life cycle.

Chapter 1 provides a template for the remaining chapters, using medical concepts and terminology—there is a helpful glossary at the end of the book—to interpret resemblances between the *Book* and medical writings ranging from Hippocrates to a 1621 encyclopedia. By analyzing Kempe's behavior and contemporary reactions, Kalas argues that Kempe's humors were imbalanced in favor of black bile, predisposing her to both madness and mystical experiences. Her painful tears were a symptom of and a treatment for her condition.

Chapters 2 to 4 and chapter 6 follow Kempe's life course, although Kalas recognizes the challenges of this approach given the *Book's* achronological presentation of events. Chapter 2 focuses on the beginning of Kempe's visions, when she suffered a period of postpartum illness, eventually cured by Christ. Kalas insightfully reveals the paradox of female sexuality in the Middle Ages: medical treatises viewed both marital sex and celibacy as physically painful and dangerous for women. With God's help, Kempe enacted protective measures that mitigated her feminine suffering and made it spiritually productive.

Chapters 3, 4, and 6 focus on the post-reproductive Kempe, now in a chaste marriage with Christ and, Kalas argues, undergoing menopause. As the author acknowledges, menopause was not seen as a distinct part of the female life cycle in the Middle Ages, and so her conclusions about medieval interpretations and experiences of menopause in these chapters are suggestive but somewhat tenuous. Chapter 3 depicts Kempe's tears as a substitute for her absent menses, rebalancing her humors and allowing her to serve as a surrogate mother for both Christ and earthly children. In chapter 4, Kalas explores instances when Kempe imitated Christ's role as a healer. She treated temporarily insane and leprous women, as well as her son and husband, by compassionately taking on their pain and making it spiritually meritorious through "pain surrogacy" (129). Chapter 5 departs from the chronological narrative in order to make a more programmatic point: that Margery's melancholic body facilitated her "death surrogacy" for Christ, sympathetically experiencing his passion and preparing for her own death (161). Kempe's life cycle concludes in chapter 6 with an analysis of book 2, which Kalas intriguingly argues is a more immediate representation of the mystic's personality than book 1 because it recounts events chronologically closer to the *Book's* dictation. The increased wisdom and bodily suffering of old age enabled Kempe to claim spiritual authority more fully, while writing her *Book* allowed her to achieve postmenopausal reproduction.

The density of the prose makes this book a challenge, but it rewards careful attention, as the consonances between aspects of medical thought and Kempe's experiences are striking. It is not clear, however, how accessible the medical texts Kalas analyses would have been for an illiterate laywoman in late medieval England. Further research into English book culture could have helped answer this question concretely. Indeed, the book relies heavily on pan-European studies of medieval thought. Although Kalas is certainly correct that Kempe's spirituality was influenced by European models, much of her life was spent in England, and incorporating more of the existing research on bourgeois life, childbirth, childhood, marriage, medical care, and religious practice in

medieval England into this study would have helped ground the analysis in Kempe's historical context. Nevertheless, this book is a thought-provoking contribution to the literature on Kempe and will appeal to specialists with a focus on medieval mysticism, sex and gender, and medicine.

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*Early Modern Universities: Networks of Higher Learning.* Anja-Silvia Goeing, Glyn Parry, and Mordechai Feingold, eds.  
Scientific and Learned Cultures and Their Institutions 31. Leiden: Brill, 2021. xviii + 502 pp. €144.

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The early modern period represents a formidable era for the history of higher learning. Institutions multiplied, differing in their organization, structure, size, reputation, curriculum, and relations with political and religious authorities, yet they all played significant roles in transforming their society and were all affected by major changes that stimulated the expansion of high culture. Indeed, the educational landscape became much more complex than it had been in the Middle Ages, being confronted with the centralization of the state, the advent of the printing press, the progress of knowledge, the proliferation of religious confessions, and tensions between these events.

This collective work brings together twenty essays, which are of a high quality and written by recognized specialists in the field. It covers various geographical areas: France, Italy, Switzerland, England, the Dutch Republic, Ireland, and Scotland. The chronological framework, although extending from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, favors above all the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As a general proposal, the book considers the university not in opposition to or on the margins of the new institutions of knowledge that emerged in the modern period, which have been privileged in historiography as being solely vehicles for modernity; rather, it presents institutions of higher learning, old and new, as part of a local, national, or international educational network, and integrates them into the network of the republic of letters.

Institutions are not analyzed in isolation and for themselves, but as beings integrated into a larger whole. This book situates itself at the crossroads of a renewal of the history of scholarly culture by integrating the history of networks, currently in full expansion, as well as the new history of knowledge which sets places of knowledge, the circulation of knowledge, and the mobility of scholars at the heart of its concerns. In this book, the nodes (basic units) are made up of institutions but also people (teachers, students, authors) and objects that mediate knowledge, which are interrelated and interconnected. The educational landscape of the modern period thus takes on a more dynamic