

dimension, and these essays challenge several (mostly negative) received ideas about the universities of the modern period.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part, entitled “The Political Entanglement of Institutions,” highlights the complexity of the relationships between political and religious powers and institutions of higher learning and their impact on the curriculum. Moreover, through the individual trajectories of scholars, we can observe their role in the progress of knowledge and the integration of the intellectual currents of the period.

The second part, entitled “Locality and Mobility: Institutions, the Migrations of Scholars and Scholarships,” makes room in the institutions of higher learning for women and natives of Spanish America: two social groups often neglected by traditional historiography. We also see the complexity of the educational network in the Dutch Republic, where the new institutional forms made it possible to respond more specifically to the needs of civic culture. In addition, the issue of mobility is addressed through Swiss students financially supported by cities to study abroad in the sixteenth century, or through the topic of scholarly tourism in the eighteenth century, which essentially ignores university towns.

The third part, “Communication, Collaboration and the Circulation of Academic Knowledge,” puts forward the concept of network on another scale by examining, for example, the performativity of English university theater conceived as a ritual that created some social ties and jeopardized others. As for the case of the University of Aberdeen, the institution was positioned at the heart of an international network fed by the European mobility of Aberdonians. Finally, the subjects of the book’s last part (“Cooperative Interregional Worlds: Production, Markets, Travel and Trade”) is the networks of the academic book market (Paris, Basel, Zurich) and their circulation of books and collectible items.

By providing remarkable national syntheses and original one-off analyses, by refusing to present old institutional forms in opposition to new ones but rather seeking to examine their connections, this work contributes to renewing the field of the history of universities and scholarly culture in early modern Europe and, I hope, will motivate research to follow this new path.

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Games and Visual Culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Vanina Kopp and Elizabeth Lapina, eds.

Studies in the History of Daily Life (800–1600) 8. Turnhout: Brepols, 2020. 356 pp. €85.

During the medieval and early modern periods, games permeated the lives of the people of Europe. Games played at the time included parlor and outdoor games, those

requiring skill and wit, and others depending solely upon chance. They were the pastimes of royals and nobles, as well as entertainment enjoyed by people of humbler social backgrounds. Some were deemed suitable for cultivated intellectuals, others for children, as a source of mere amusement, but also as tools for teaching them manners and morals.

The volume *Games and Visual Culture* addresses the prominence and omnipresence of games that was so distinctive of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Vanina Kopp and Elizabeth Lapina have tried to organize the essays around two themes: the place of games in society and the materiality of games. The editors label the type of material that most of the contributions study as books played sitting down (a category taken over from Alfonso X's *Libro de acedrex*), but in their introduction they provide an excuse to include in the volume essays on physical contests, carving graffiti, and children's toys.

Being so inclusive, the volume becomes rather eclectic, especially given that its geographical and chronological scope is also very broad. For example, Walter Crist's study of graffiti games in the Byzantine Empire reaches back into the first centuries CE, while Írvin Cemil Schick focuses on the chess of the Gnostics, looking at boards produced as late as the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Just as vast is the territory that the research materials analyzed in the chapters come from: they include objects from the Iberian Peninsula, Italy, and the Northern Isles of Scotland, along with artifacts that are Byzantine, Ottoman, and Indio-Muslim in origin. Regrettably, none of the articles study marginalized sources on the culture of play in east Central Europe.

The contributors to the volume *Games and Visual Culture* have proposed engaging texts that provide evidence of profound research. The individual essays will likely serve as introductions to the broader works of the authors and be of interest to specialists in archaeology, art history, and literary studies, as well as scholars in book history and the history of religion. Michael A. Conrad's rich and insightful study of *Libro de acedrex, dados e tablas* was particularly absorbing. Conrad demonstrates that one of the crucial aims of Alfonso X and the scribe-illuminators working on the famed manuscript was to create an anthology of not only texts but also of images that would work together, thus transferring knowledge of games, especially chess. Conrad convincingly argues that images, with their iconographic sources of varied cultural provenances, had a vital (and, until now, overlooked) role to play in this process.

The interplay between words and pictures, with the focus on the latter, is also the subject of the contribution by Louise Fang, who studies the illustrations in the 1483 Caxton edition of *The Game and Playe of Chesse*. Fang examines the series of woodcuts that enrich this edition of the treatise in the context of the material culture of the contemporaneous chess game. She shows how the wealth of illustrations in the printed book helped to perpetuate and popularize the imagery of this aristocratic and courtly game among a wider middle-class public.

Given that the volume is an exploration through an abundance of sources that can be approached in many ways to extract information on games and their representations, it

would have benefited from a clear explanation of its core concept and a more coherent selection of content. Yet the volume provides a valuable contribution to the field, adding to our understanding of games as windows on the culture, social norms, and even religious life of the past. It argues for the importance of examining the visual—that is, performing analysis of the images of games and game playing—as well as related objects—in other words, the materials that were usually intensely used by their early owners and rarely have survived until the present day.

The volume is well illustrated (which is critical, as the analysis of visual sources underpins the ideas of most of the contributions). Unfortunately, the publisher's decision to use a rather small typeface does not make the physical act of reading an easy task.

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Ingenuity in the Making: Matter and Technique in Early Modern Europe.
Richard J. Oosterhoff, José Ramón Marcaida, and Alexander Marr, eds.
Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021. x + 382 pp. \$65.

From Cicero to Kant, ingenuity has been a central concept in European understandings of intellectual capability, often in reference to ideas of inborn talent and quick-wittedness. Yet prior to the late eighteenth century, ingenuity (from the Latin *ingenium*) was rarely isolated as a cognitive ability, much less presumed a quality of uniquely gifted minds. This book, which stems from a 2017 conference organized by the Genius before Romanticism Project at the University of Cambridge, joins a small but growing collection of scholarship interested in the analytic possibilities of *ingenium* and its vernacular cognates as polyvalent actors' terms. In contrast to word histories, however, the fifteen essays in *Ingenuity in the Making* explore what we might call the concept's spheres of action during the early modern period: the book approaches ingenuity from the perspective of makers and practitioners at work. What emerges is ingenuity's intimate and distinctive connection to materials and making.

In the introduction, the editors allude to the kind of nuance the book strives to achieve with its focus on artisanal practices—a topic that has long encouraged collaborations between historians of art and science. “Across early modern Europe contemporaries both lauded and reviled makers, their abilities, and even certain materials as ‘ingenious.’” Ingenuity “united experience” of all three of these areas, “but also allowed for distinctions to be made between qualities proper to each.” As an early modern keyword or “conceptual idiom,” ingenuity lies in how it presses us to “[bind] our categories of analysis more tightly to the contours of past experience” (1).