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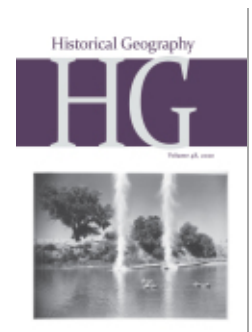
*Cartographic Humanism: The Making of Early Modern Europe* by  
Katharina N. Piechocki (review)

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distant national governments rail against licit and illicit migration, but hundreds of thousands of border dwellers from San Diego/Tijuana to El Paso/Ciudad Juárez to Brownsville/Matamoros cross each day for work and recreation. *The Limits of Liberty* provides an excellent outline of the historical roots of today's US-Mexico border conflict. Anyone interested in replacing rhetoric with research would benefit from reading it.

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*Cartographic Humanism: The Making of Early Modern Europe.*

Katharina N. Piechocki. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. Pp. 311, maps, illustrations, notes, index. \$45.00, hardcover, ISBN 978-0-226-64118-8.

Continents are commonly defined as large continuous landmasses. Conventional wisdom holds that the Earth's surface is composed of seven continents—Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America—divided by oceans and smaller bodies of water. This basic geography is learned at such a young age, often before the beginning of any formal education, that it is generally taken for granted, but even a cursory review leads to some questions. There is no standard threshold for what qualifies as a “large” landmass, for example, except that Australia is regarded as big enough to be a continent while Greenland is not. The criteria of continuous is also problematic. North and South America are continuous through the isthmus of Panama, but that land bridge is narrow enough to be commonly disregarded to allow the Americas to count as two separate continents. The same is clearly not the case for the connection between Europe and Asia, where a broad swath of territory joins the two no matter where the boundary is set. In terms of physical geography, Europe seems more like a collection of peninsulas appended to the western edge of Asia, or perhaps Eurasia, rather than a distinct continent. Yet Europe's status as a continent seems firmly entrenched in conventional wisdom, not to mention textbooks used across disciplines from elementary school through postsecondary education.

Katharina N. Piechocki's *Cartographic Humanism: The Making of Early Modern Europe* explores the contexts, motivations, and processes

that served to set Europe apart as a distinct continent. Christian cartographers during the Middle Ages tended to visualize the world through a “T-and-O” schema that placed Jerusalem at the center and Asia toward the top and the Mediterranean stretching toward the bottom to divide Africa and Europe. Within that framework, Europe was understood as a distinct landmass separated from Asia by some significant body of water. That error was laid bare as advances in cartography and geodesy and successive voyages of exploration gradually allowed more accurate understandings of the broad swath of territory joining Asia and Europe. European voyages to the Americas further rendered the T-and-O framework obsolete. Piechocki focuses on this transitional period to tell “the story of Europe’s transformation from a derivative of Asia to a sovereign of the terraqueous globe” (4). To do so, Piechocki examines “the different cartographic, poetic, and linguistic attempts to imagine Europe as an autonomous continent detached from the land masses surrounding it” (4). While previous studies have tended to emphasize the role of religion, specifically Christian responses to the rise of Islam culminating in the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Piechocki argues “that the imagining of Europe as an increasingly sovereign continent was driven by the rise of a novel humanistic discipline: cartography” (4). Benefiting from growing economic, political, and military advantages garnered through colonial conquests, Europeans gained a commanding platform to propagate cartographic conventions reflecting their ideologies and priorities. “Maps have the capacity to strategically influence and shape their onlookers’ perceptions of the world,” Piechocki explains, “guiding them across the surface of the represented world from the mapmaker’s commanding yet invisible position” (21).

The main body of the book consists of five chapters, each presenting a case study illustrating the cartographic definition of Europe during the early modern period. Chapter 1 focuses on Conrad Celtis’s *Quatuor Libri Amorum* published in 1502. As the poet laureate of the Holy Roman Empire, Celtis composed a collection of erotic poems tracing the narrator’s lifelong search for erogenous pleasures. This imagined life story corresponds to metaphorical travels to the four cardinal directions of the empire represented by adolescence in Kraków, youth in Regensburg, old age in Mainz, and death in Lübeck. Chapter 2 examines

*Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis* published by Maciej Miechowita in 1517. In contrast to the poetic style of Celtis, Miechowita, rector of the University of Kraków, compiled a scholarly overview of the physical and cultural geographies of eastern Europe, paired with a mythological genealogy tracing Polish nobility to ancient Sarmatia. Geoffroy Tory's *Champ fleury*, published in 1529, is the subject of chapter 3. A professor and printer in Paris, Tory is best known for his work creating a standard French grammar and typeface framed by a sort of Cartesian grid. Chapter 4 turns to Girolamo Fracastoro, an Italian physician, who published *Syphilis sive Morbus Gallicus* in 1530. In that work Fracastoro frames the question concerning the origins of syphilis within the broader context of connections between Europe and the Americas and the continental impact of syphilis. The fifth and final chapter shifts attention to connections between Europe and the Indian Ocean and India using Luís de Camões's *Os Lusíadas*. Published in 1572, renowned Portuguese poet Camões composed an epic narration of Vasco da Gama's voyage to India around the Cape of Good Hope. Each chapter also includes other contemporary and historical works that provide context. A brief conclusion aptly summarizes the main argument, but connections to contemporary issues such as immigration policy and Brexit seem out of place.

*Cartographic Humanism* reviews a period when Europe "was transformed from an ill-defined part of the world, its borders permeable, to a sharply delineated, hegemonic, and metaphysically charged continent" (231). The book constitutes a welcome contribution to "recent work in the humanities that binds cartography and literature to one another as a single, interdisciplinary, endeavor, capable of questioning and redirecting categories previously considered in isolation" (233). The book is well written and includes helpful illustrations. It will be of interest to scholars interested in the history of geography and cartography within the context of the transition from the medieval to early modern periods, although the topic and approach are not as novel as suggested.

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