

so. According to Laqueur, no new medical discoveries can account for the new emphasis on masturbation as a primary cause of many physical and mental ailments, while concern with female masturbation undercuts the argument that loss of semen was an important factor in this new concern over masturbation. Laqueur does suggest that the growing concern with masturbation may be linked in part to new ideas about masculinity and friendship, but he makes no attempt to connect the new notions about femininity and women as asexual beings with the concern over female masturbation.

When the falsity of the health risks posed by masturbation became clear to doctors, the old thinking of masturbation-as-vice remained. Freud was the person who translated this core 'truth' from the realm of bodily disorders to that of the psyche. However, Freud's characterization of masturbation as both a normal activity (at least for adolescents) and as a necessary sacrifice for the maintenance and continuance of civilization provided the basis for a rehabilitation of masturbation beginning in the 1960s and 1970s. Many people now promote masturbation as self-love, a liberating and pleasurable experience. Nonetheless, many of the old ideas remain.

As with his earlier book *Making Sex*, Laqueur has chosen to tackle a difficult topic and has done so well; and as with the former work, *Solitary Sex* is likely to become a standard text in history courses on the Enlightenment. The book contains a number of pictures, though it is not always clear why Laqueur chose the ones he did at the expense of others which he discusses but does not show. The notes are extensive and packed full of additional information. It is clear from both his acknowledgment and his notes that what he claims is true: "Books—or, at least my books—are intimately connected to great blocks of life, to conversation, collaboration, and thinking with friends, teachers, colleagues, and students over the decades" (p. 7).

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*Urban Life in the Middle Ages 1000-1450*. By Keith Lilley. Houndsmill, NY: Palgrave, 2002. xvi, 295 pp.; maps, plates and tables. \$75.00 (cloth).

To write a book about urban life in the Middle Ages covering nearly five hundred years is an ambitious project; to do so in under three hundred pages and in a way that appeals to a multidisciplinary readership is harder still. Keith Lilley succeeds in this task by approaching his topic from an angle thus far not widely considered, namely, from the perspective of anthropo-geography, i.e. the study of how human beings interact with their surroundings. He does this by placing the town as a physical at the core of his study. Other books on urban history, like

David Nicholas' *The Growth of the Medieval City* (London, 1997) and *The Late Medieval City* (London, 1997), or Edith Ennen's *The Medieval Town* (Amsterdam, 1979), explore urban life in the Middle Ages from the social, political, economic and religious viewpoints. Lilley examines the towns as actual physical communities. Connecting a variety of scholars' work and incorporating his own original research, Lilley adds a new dimension to our understanding of medieval urbanization. By drawing on examples from various European regions, some larger trends are brought to light. However, despite the author's repeated claim to compare urban life "across Europe" (p. xiv), his overemphasis on England turns this book instead into a comparison of English townscapes with continental ones, heavily favoring the former.

The author attempts to present fresh perspectives on medieval urbanism by weaving together research from varied fields such as archeology, architecture, geography and history. Lilley starts off with a brief historiographical overview, lamenting that many important works on medieval urbanism are not available in English translation. This introductory chapter presents the reader with a summary of twentieth-century research theories pertaining to how and why new towns emerged and grew, together with already existing ones, after the year 1000. The first chapter, serving as a second introduction, promotes the medieval town and its present day relevance. At the same time, it offers a rebuttal of those who, like the architect Le Corbusier, portray medieval urban developments as chaotic, accidental and unplanned. It notes that any understanding of the Middle Ages that we have is subjective and in part even "invented," since it is shaped by research trends and choices, popular culture and selective heritage preservation.

The remaining six chapters, all approximately the same length, consider various aspects that for Lilley constitute the foundation of life in a medieval town. He begins with town charters, which were significant in granting special legal and economic rights to towns that separated them from the surrounding territory. The author explores the ways in which charters were used to regulate and promote urban activities, including municipal government. He then continues on to demonstrate how lords used these charters to promote their towns and to extend their frontiers, while at the same time employing them to marginalize certain groups. Chapter Four outlines reasons for urbanization and illustrates how special locators systematically sought out new sites. The fifth chapter, titled "Urban Landscapes," is the best part of the book. Here, drawing strongly on his own research, Lilley sheds new light on the understanding of a town's physical appearance. He convincingly demonstrates that urban landscapes were controlled developments, responding to contemporary needs. Urban planning and actual layout reflected high levels of skill and an understanding of Christian symbolism that, as the first chapter notes, are frequently overlooked and underrated because of today's prejudices. In the final two chapters, shifting away from the process of urbanization, the author focuses on the elements of daily life and how these both shaped by and were shaped by the usage of particular spaces within towns.

The spatial parameters that Lilley sets for his book, specified as the "towns of Europe" (p. xv), combined with his interdisciplinary approach, have caused some difficulties. In his preface, he notes that a major obstacle in "Urban Studies" is the challenge of reading multiple European languages, and unfortunately Lilley's book is an example of the resulting deficits. The overwhelming majority of studies consulted are in English, with foreign language publications representing only a small fraction of the total. The problems arising from this are twofold: it creates an overemphasis on England and areas directly under, or influenced by, English rule (e.g. Gascony); and it limits cases from continental Europe to research published in, or translated into, English. Translations tend to deal with broader perspectives, while local case studies or primary sources rarely receive enough attention to be translated.

All the chapters except the first one begin with quotes from primary sources that pertain to urbanism in England. There then follows an extensive presentation of one or more English cases with a comparison to a continental example. It is only in Chapter Two that the reader is provided with a broader perspective, when Lilley compares the development of municipal governments in Norwich, Cologne, Toulouse and Florence. As part of this chapter, he explores urban privileges in four European regions, for which he reproduces a table from Adolphus Ballard's *British Borough Charters, 1042-1216* (Cambridge, 1913). In this table, Ballard attempts to compare certain privileges within the cities of England, France, Germany and Spain (p. 51), but in reality, the table turns out to be little more than a comparison between England and France. Ballard's two Spanish charters are hardly representative, and his German data has been criticized as too limited. Though Lilley himself brings this to the reader's attention, it would have been better to include the actual case numbers in order to make the data more credible.

The limited representation of continental Europe (e.g. Scandinavia and the Baltic are hardly mentioned) is a result of the author's near exclusive usage of English language books. Consequently, important research such as that of the legal historian Wilhelm Ebel, an expert on Lübeck and Magdeburg law (Chapter Three), is not even mentioned. This in turn leads to a number of misinterpretations. For instance, Lilley fails to explain clearly why lords chose either Magdeburg or Lübeck law for their new town. Walter Kuhn's thesis that the origins of the settlers played a key role in the process is dismissed by Lilley with the statement that lords, not settlers, decided the matter. While superficially this is true, the geographical distribution of these two laws reveals that each tended to follow its town's trade routes. To choose the "wrong" law could hinder economic growth as settlers moved to a legally more appealing town. Similarly problematic is the claim that Lübeck law formed the legal basis for the Hanseatic League. Many member towns such as Stendal, Berlin, Brandenburg or Anklam, to name just a few, followed Magdeburg Law. In fact, half the League's members were located west of Lübeck and followed laws like those of Soest or Dortmund.

A book that intends to reach a multidisciplinary readership, chiefly students and travelers to medieval urban spaces (p. xv), should contain a bibliography and, ideally, suggestions for further reading. Unfortunately, Lilley's book offers neither. The latter section would also be a good place to mention materials in foreign languages. Finally, it is surprising that as a geographer the author did not include a map of Europe to help readers locate towns and to place them in their larger geographical contexts.

With its anthropo-geographical focus, *Urban Life in the Middle Ages* represents a novel approach to the study of medieval urbanism, a field that has been primarily shaped by historians. Its deficiencies, though, underscore the difficulties of interdisciplinary and trans-European research for many scholars. Despite the author's attempts to seek out examples from the continent, his work compares unfavorably to three recent books (all by David Nicholas) on comparative urban history of the same period, all of which present a well-balanced picture. Lilley's book leaves the non-specialist reader with a good background in English urbanism, but lacks a strong continental European perspective, and provides little direction for how to continue farther along the path that the author has begun to map out.

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