

have been considered as mitigation leading to a more amicable settlement or even an acquittal. This feature is one of the various factors considered in the final chapter exploring judicial settlements. Here the contrast between the severity advocated in legislative texts and the realities of practice is thoughtfully explored. Our attention is drawn to inconsistencies within ecclesiastical and secular courts, as well as the notable differences across region and time. A detailed discussion on penalties reveals that while extreme punishments, including execution, could occur and act as a deterrent, this judgment was not common. Fines were far more likely, or pilgrimages, and there are examples of secular authorities waiving penalties altogether. Legislators appear to have provided space for interpretation by judges. Delameillieure explores the different approaches within cities and jurisdictions, concluding that there was not always an obvious reason why one case was treated more leniently than another, but were context specific. At times, a pragmatic use of the law recognized that differences could be resolved through private settlements rather than court appearances, which all parties could use to their advantage. It all adds weight to the conclusion that these strategic uses of the law are testimony to the depth of legal knowledge among women, their relatives, and abductors.

Ultimately, what comes across in this fascinating book is the complex nature of abduction cases and the multivalent, nuanced readings required to understand different marital practices in the late medieval Low Countries. For this reason, Delameillieure resists generalization and firmly advocates analysis on a case-by-case basis. Nevertheless, by drawing attention to patterns in the evidence, she raises key questions about women's consent and property rights, which demand testing and comparisons in further studies of this kind.

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Jeroen J.H. Dekker, *Children's Emotions in Europe, 1500-1900. A Visual History* (London [etc.]: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024). 320 pp. ISBN 9781350150706.

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This volume is the summation of forty years of work by the author on children's emotions. Jeroen Dekker, professor of History and Theory

of Education at the University of Groningen, has done more work on the subject than anyone. His command of the material, in publications dating as early as 1981, is unequalled. The bibliography contains more than 800 items, including 38 by Dekker and another eight of which he was co-author. The text is a fully informed précis of the multitude of developments, concepts and visions concerning children and their upbringing in the writings of historical and contemporary authorities and the creations of artists.

Dekker writes of his book that it ambitiously (perhaps too ambitiously) “combines history of education and history of emotions with art history and intellectual history, and its main source is visual.” The latter contention is not really justified. By page 50, with dense chapters on “emotional and educational space”, only three works of art have been illustrated. The main source throughout, even where more art is illustrated and discussed, is the social history of ideas. For this purpose, children aside, the book serves as a useful compendium. Dekker lards his text with (to my mind too) numerous snippets of quotation and titles of books and treatises, serving as raw material for his survey. To provide them with binding principles, he invokes the notion of “Big Talk”: master concepts that accommodate the opinions and practices prevailing in the (over)long periods of his argument. Chapter 2 covers “The Big Talk on Education and Emotions in the Age of Renaissance and Reformation”; chapter 5 “The Big Talk on Education and Emotions in the Age of Enlightenment, Romanticism, and Science.” In the former, Christian ethics link the passions to the vices and virtues that really count. Children were born bearing the burden of original sin. They need to undergo corrective treatment in order to live by God’s laws. In the latter, the child is a *tabula rasa* susceptible to proper education, the demands of which were subject to vast disagreement between authorities. While society was thus shifting, the biology of childhood was not. Dekker’s unsurprising conclusion is that art showed “a rather strong continuity of so-called basic emotions, at least for children and their parents [...], a continuity [that] existed notwithstanding major changes over time about the way emotions were discussed, explained, and assessed in theological, philosophic and scientific discourses, and notwithstanding major changes over time about the way they should be channeled and controlled.” That disjunction, it seems to me, complicates the correspondences between depiction and discourse put forward throughout and should have been subjected to critical interrogation.

Dekker serves up a jumble of authorities and ideas, making it hard for the reader to discern the line of his exposition. On p. 31, in a random example, we are expected to bring to mind the values associated with the Second Vatican Council, Thomas Aquinas, Pope Gregory I, the Fourth Lateran Council, Jean Gerson, a Freudian psychiatrist, Erasmus, Luther, Thomas More, and Sebastian Brant, concerning Christian virtues, mortal and venial sins, societal cohesion, emotional standards, confession, and the power of images.

The works of art Dekker brings into play offer welcome specificity in what otherwise tends toward an array of abstractions and reifications. He tells us what emotions can be discerned in the depiction of the children in his examples, putting his observations in the service of the Big Talk of the period. And here, his book fails to live up to its subtitle as “a visual history”. Dekker conscientiously provides good information about the 340 works of art he discusses, but only 64 are illustrated, in poor gray-on-white reproductions. There are no details that would help the author make his points more effectively.

Unfortunately, this deficiency typifies the editorial and production values of the book. The misprints are rampant and unpardonable in a self-respecting scholarly publication.¹ In addition to outright errors, the text is full of inconsistencies. Van and de in Dutch names are too often, and arbitrarily, capitalized, St. Christopher is also Christophorus, St. Nicholas is Nicolas as well, and so forth. The use of italics, apostrophes, quotation marks, capitals, hyphenation, commas, British versus U.S. spelling, is gallingly erratic. Jeroen Dekker has insufficient grasp of English word order; verbal forms; the use of articles; vocabulary conventions (the Virgin Maria); the distinction between adjectives and adverbs; between like and as; and many, many more. There are howlers such as the artist Jan Jansz. de Stomme (elsewhere the Dutch patronymic has no period) being “deaf and thumb”. On nearly every page there are faulty sentences, like this one about the “full-blooded European humanist” Erasmus (p. 126): “A third source formed his personal experience as a child together with later by him observed examples of bad education.” That an author is unaware that his English

1 To cite just the errors in proper names I noted, and cringed at, in the first hundred pages: Ovide for Ovid (p. 17; on p. 56 he is Ovidius); Burkhardt for Jakob Burckhardt (p. 25); Herman Boerhave for Herman Boerhaave (p. 40); Loyd DeMause for Lloyd deMause (p. 49); Tmmasso Portinari for Tommaso Portinari (p. 54); Velázques for Diego Velázquez (p. 58); Saint Mary Clephas for Saint Mary Cleophas (p. 61); Hiheronimus Bosch for Hieronymus Bosch (p. 65); Boticelli for Sandro Botticelli (p. 72); Salomon for King Solomon (p. 75); Justus van Genth for Justus van Gent (p. 79); Lorenzo Magnifico for Lorenzo il Magnifico (p. 79); Adriaen van Ostade for Adriaen van Ostade (p. 88); Illiad for Iliad (p. 97).

is insufficiently idiomatic is bad enough, but that a scholarly publisher lets such a deficient text go into print is inexcusable. Including inconsistencies and flawed English, this book has well over a thousand errors.

Bloomsbury Academic owes it to the author and the scholarly community to re-issue this book with proper editing and color illustrations. And Jeroen Dekker owes it to himself and the reader to clarify his message and smoothen his writing.²

Gary Schwartz

Gillian Mathys, *Fractured Pasts in Lake Kivu's Borderlands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025). 386 pp. ISBN 9781009463058.

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The book *Fractured Pasts in Lake Kivu's Borderlands* presents a rich and nuanced history of the communities living along the Congo-Rwanda border, focusing on the Lake Kivu region from the nineteenth century to the present day. Unlike the dominant narratives that portray this region primarily through the lens of violent conflicts and entrenched ethnic divisions, reducing its history to hatred and state failure, Mathys takes a different approach. She stitches together the Lake Kivu region's long and complicated past, reminding us that convivial relationships and cooperation existed apart from the wars. These ties played a crucial role in the survival of communities. She emphasizes long histories of interaction, migration, trade, and interdependence between those communities. Relying on oral histories and archival evidence, she argues that the region's history was marked by dynamic migration and diverse identities, yet was mainly disrupted by colonial interference.

The book is divided into four parts, each exploring a distinct phase in the region's historical evolution. In the first part, "Frontiers", the author examines precolonial communities around Lake Kivu, challenging prevailing claims of fixed ethnic identities and territorial boundaries. She draws an interesting contrast between 'frontier' and 'border' by illustrating that mobility, coexistence, interactions, and shared

² In a book on the depiction of children's emotions, there should be no place for a sentence as hollow as this: "Rembrandt laid down emotions of real people in hundreds of drawings with special attention for children."