

## ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN MAP LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

## BULLETIN

## Book Reviews

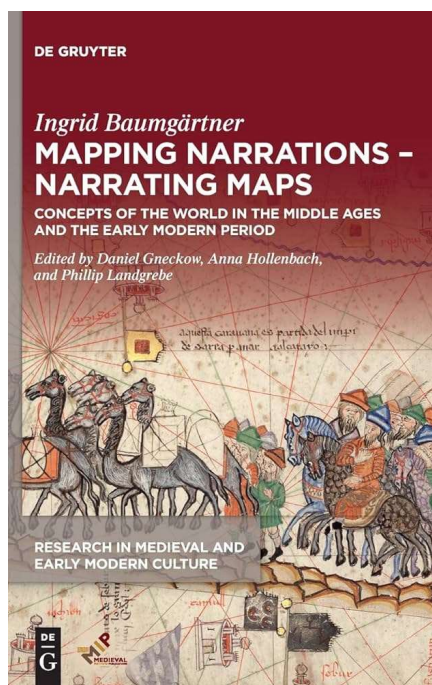
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## Books reviewed in this issue:

- *Mapping Narrations – Narrating Maps: Concepts of the World in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period*, By: Ingrid Baumgärtner Reviewed by Zack MacDonald, Western University Libraries

**Mapping Narrations – Narrating Maps: Concepts of the World in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period, By: Ingrid Baumgärtner**

## Review



Baumgärtner, Ingrid. *Mapping Narrations – Narrating Maps: Concepts of the World in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period*. Edited by Daniel Gneckow, Anna Hollenbach and Phillip Landgrebe. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022. 386p. \$102.99 US. ISBN: 9781501523816

*Mapping Narrations, Narrating Maps* brings together ten previously published works by renowned historian, Ingrid Baumgärtner, for the first time in English translation. The essays are broken into three thematic sections, ranging in original publication dates from 2008 to 2021 and represent Baumgärtner's most significant contributions to the study of medieval cartography.

The volume contains an impressive 127 colour reproductions of historical maps, and manuscript pages. The reproductions are large and clear, with many receiving a full page, making their details and texts. Each image is accompanied by detailed

bibliographic information for those readers looking for the location of original copies.

The structure is familiar in its chronological approach beginning with the emergence of the medieval T and O maps, to the technological advances and surveying in the context of nation-making and exploration in the early modern period. The first section provides a thoughtful overview of the development of the European cartographic tradition and the purpose of maps in medieval society. The second section examines the dynamic role of maps in narrative accounts of Europe and the holy land. Here Baumgärtner expertly breaks down the use of visual motifs and styles that led to the perceived "inaccuracy" of medieval maps. The third section examines the power of maps in the political sphere from Europe to the New World in the early modern period. Each section shines with extensive archival research, and Baumgärtner weaves close reading of specific examples with the wider medieval social and cultural traditions, and conceptions of the world in which they were developed.

Ingrid Baumgärtner is a professor of medieval history at the University of Kassel, in Germany. She has published extensively on medieval cartography since her first work on medieval cartography in 1995, in addition to her work on social spaces, gender, and regional history. She has held several visiting scholar positions, including the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, Stanford University, and at Harvard University's Centre for Italian Renaissance Studies in Florence, among others. This distinguished career is reflected in the quality of the works in the present volume.

The intended audience for this volume is scholarly. Those looking for a general introduction to medieval cartography may find the writing heavy. Some chapters also overlap in content and scope to some degree, which leads to some minor repetition. For undergraduate or graduate students, however, the extensive footnotes and archival sources are an ideal introduction to the theory and method of the history of cartography in the European Middle Ages. Baumgärtner's willingness to reference and point to works with contrary opinions on matters of interpretation with specific examples and citations will also be attractive to scholars and students.

Mapping Narrations is a strong choice for students or scholars of the medieval world. The rich detail and stunning reproductions highlight Baumgärtner's rigorous scholarship. The quality of the work combined with the addition of an open access e-book edition makes this an obvious choice for any library collection.



**Left:** Schematic T-O map; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2 Inc. c.a. 129. Creative 4.0

**Right:** Psalter map, with semicircular Caucasus and closed Caspian Gates, after 1262; London, British Library, Add. Ms. 28681, fol. 9r. Creative Commons 1.0.