

its marks are “graphic abstractions for entities, qualities, events, times, locations, and sometimes sounds” (23). It is unlike writing because its marks have greater iconicity and depict what they refer to. In this respect, Aztec pictography is more like pictorial illusionism. But it is unlike pictorial illusionism in that its marks do not describe the optically perceived qualities and shapes of the objects that they refer to. Instead, Aztec pictographic figures are “ideoplastic,” which means that the “rendered form accords with the idea of the original form rather than with its optical image” (23).

Boone’s arguments and analyses of these manuscripts are based on previously published material, including her own, and they demonstrate her intimate knowledge of the sources. The book’s main strengths are the author’s insightful visual analyses, which are aided by the many high-quality images. *Descendants of Aztec Pictography* makes for an excellent textbook and reference work for undergraduate students as well as senior scholars of preconquest and early colonial Mesoamerican art and culture. Historians of the humanities will appreciate the way the book makes them reflect on the image-text relation in the acquisition and dissemination of (art) historiographic, religious, artistic, and ethnographic knowledge in the early modern period, and on how images convey knowledge in different cultures and in colonial contexts.

Matthijs Jonker

Annemie D. G. Leemans, *Contextualizing Practical Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*. CITCEM Studies in Literature 13. Berlin: Peter Lang, 2020. Pp. 316. €56.10.

Annemie Leemans’s *Contextualizing Practical Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* took shape in context of the European Union–funded doctoral program Text and Event in Early Modern Europe, with partner universities in the United Kingdom, Germany, Portugal, and the Czech Republic. Its main focus is an English recipe book, the oldest known print book devoted to techniques of color making and painting, *A Very Proper Treatise, Wherein is Briefly Sett Forthe the Arte of Limming . . .* (1573). Most of the surviving copies of its early modern editions are held in libraries in the United Kingdom and in Washington, DC, where much of the archival work for this study was conducted. Leemans places this collection of art technological recipes within a broader discourse on practical knowledge and its complex transmission patterns in print and, to a lesser extent, manuscript. She focuses on early modern recipe literature, defining recipes as the basic units to convey

and transmit practical knowledge. Recipes were no marginal phenomenon; on the contrary, “Early modern Europe was awash with recipes” as stated by a cofounder of *The Recipe Project*, a blog with a broad readership among humanities scholars. This book thus fits into a fast-growing field concerned with the study of historical recipe texts that cuts across different disciplines, including the history of knowledge, medicine, and technology; technical art history; cultural history; material culture and conservation studies; and the history of books and archives.

The volume comprises two parts. It begins with a broad reflection on the textual study of practical knowledge and its creation, dissemination, and consumption in early modern Europe. Practical knowledge is primarily discussed with examples from art technological sources and the well-known printed books of secrets by medical practitioners (Leonardo Fioravanti, Hugh Plat) and the Italian *professori de segreti* (Isabella Cortese, Alessio Piemontese, and Girolamo Ruscelli). To elucidate complex transmission patterns of practical knowledge widely spread through printed media, the author makes use of the botanical concept of a rhizome—a subterranean, multiple-root system proliferating horizontally with no centralized root. Drawing on the work of the French philosophers Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze, Leemans uses the rhizome metaphor to describe the interconnectedness of a group of art technological booklets, the German *Kunstbüchlein* first published in the 1530s, and the European spread of recipes from these popular printers’ compilations that reappeared in best-selling books of secrets, including translations of Alessio Piemontese’s *Secreti*, now commonly attributed to Girolamo Ruscelli (1500–1566). This attribution is not undisputed. Leemans questions the hypothesis that Alessio Piemontese is a pseudonym and that Ruscelli is the “real author” of the *Secreti*. Archival evidence suggests that Ruscelli and Piemontese have been two separate historical persons. Instead of tracing one originator, she argues that the *Secreti* provides another example for rethinking authorship for practical knowledge codified in print. Leemans portrays Ruscelli as editor and publisher of Piemontese’s recipe collection, illuminating his vital role as instigator of this bestseller and as “mediator” of early modern recipe knowledge.

The second part of the book is entirely devoted to the anonymous collection *A Very Proper Treatise*, with recipes for limning. First published in London in 1573, this booklet saw six editions within the next three decades, enjoying a great popularity in early modern England. Leemans provides a detailed study of its genesis, describing its intended readership, and tracing actual owners and consumers of thirty-seven surviving copies of its early modern editions. The book includes an overview of all known physical copies in European and North American collections (app. 2). Based on physical examinations of twenty-four artifacts, several of which bear traces of early modern users, Leemans demonstrates the importance of studying recipe books as material objects. In addition, a thorough textual comparison of six editions (1573, 1581, 1583, 1588, 1596, and 1605)

is systematically presented in a “collation” of the early modern text, indicating any changes, variations, or additions to the original text of the first edition in painstaking detail (app. 3). Leemans’s careful analysis leads to interesting new insights. While others have tried to attribute the anonymous text to the hand of an early modern miniature painter, Leemans convincingly argues that *A Very Proper Treatise* is the creation of the London printer Richard Totthill (1528–93). This “printers’ compilation” draws on various handwritten and printed texts. Leemans is the first to identify a lost manuscript compiled by Robert Freelove in 1525 that survived in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century copies as a “proto-source” for *A Very Proper Treatise*. More importantly, Leemans emphasizes the decisive role of the printer in the genesis of this treatise. A close reading of the first edition shows how the printer deliberately enlarged the audience for a specialized recipe collection originally intended for “paynters & scriueners.” The beautifully designed typographical titlepage explicitly appeals to gentlemen and amateurs with an interest in heraldry, and the printer augmented the technical content with heraldic references. Leemans makes a cogent argument for the agency of printers, operating as important and independent “mediators” in the transmission and dissemination of practical knowledge.

This publication is an important contribution to the field and surely an indispensable read for anyone interested in *A Very Proper Treatise*. It succeeds in contextualizing a significant, yet understudied, art technological treatise with a thorough study of its textual creation, dissemination, and consumption. Nonetheless, the book could have profited from a more rigorous editorial process eliminating wordy and repetitive parts often found in dissertation-based publications. What I find more problematic, though, are some of the more general reflections on practical knowledge. On page 8, “knowing” is confidently situated first and foremostly in the brain, an unnuanced assertion that is much less convincing than other epistemological models put forward by historians of practical knowledge, like Pamela Smith and Matteo Valleriani, who acknowledge the interdependent practices of making and knowing and emphasise the grounding of theoretical thinking in bodily activities. Leemans does not write about any practical experiences with the historical recipes she studied, but she acknowledges that the reworking of recipe texts has gained momentum in recent scholarship. One wonders how hands-on engaging with this remarkable textual testimony to art technological knowledge might have colored her epistemic judgment. Perhaps her attitude toward knowledge making as a primarily brainy activity might have changed if she had extended her scholarly toolkit with performative methods.

The ubiquity and epistemological importance of recipe texts is now widely acknowledged among humanities scholars. Readers interested in this book dealing primarily with printed texts will also be interested in Elaine Leong’s prize-winning book *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge: Medicine, Science, and the Household in Early Modern England*

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), which traces the creation, dissemination, and consumption of handwritten recipe collections in early modern households.

Jenny Boulboulé

Dirk van Miert, *The Emancipation of Biblical Philology in the Dutch Republic, 1590–1670*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 320. US\$110.00 (cloth).

This well-researched book is one of several studies on biblical philology that have appeared with Oxford University Press over the past few years; others are Nicholas Hardy, *Criticism and Confession: The Bible in the Seventeenth Century Republic of Letters* (2017); Dirk van Miert, Henk Nellen, Piet Steenbakkens, and Jetze Touber, eds., *Scriptural Authority and Biblical Criticism in the Dutch Golden Age: God's Word Questioned* (2017); and Jetze Touber, *Spinoza and Biblical Philology in the Dutch Republic (1660–1710)* (2018).

The focus of van Miert's book is the emancipation of biblical philology in the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century, with a key role for Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609) as the founding father of this type of philology. Biblical philology is defined in several places as textual criticism, linguistic analysis, and historical contextualization of the biblical text. Van Miert argues that biblical philology was practiced by scholars from widely different factions within the church and that it was not the domain of more liberal or progressive thinkers as opposed to orthodox or traditional ones. Another recurring theme in the book is the role of publication context for a scholar's freedom to express his views on biblical philology.

In the introduction, van Miert gives an overview of the history of biblical philology from antiquity up to the days of Scaliger, the subject of the first chapter. He then raises the central question of the book: how did Scaliger's philology influence biblical scholars in the Dutch Republic up to the time of Spinoza? The chapters that follow are organized chronologically around case studies of biblical scholars from the Dutch Republic.

The first chapter describes the biblical philology of Scaliger himself, based on published and unpublished works by that author. The publication context is relevant: van Miert's analysis reveals that Scaliger was more guarded when he knew his writings would be widely read and that he asked his correspondents for confidentiality when sharing his more controversial thoughts in private. The chapter provides an interesting problematization of the private and the public sphere for authors in this period.