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Popper, Nicholas. Walter Raleigh's History of the World and the Historical Culture of the Late Renaissance

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scientists will find the cultural approach used—and conclusions reached—to be very worthy of future debate and investigation.

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Popper, Nicholas.

Walter Raleigh's History of the World and the Historical Culture of the Late Renaissance.

Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012. Pp. xv, 350 + 19 ill. ISBN 978-0-2266-7500-8 (hardcover) \$55.

There is little doubt that Sir Walter Raleigh looms large in the history of late Elizabethan and early Stuart England. He has come to be regarded as a gallant courtier, brave soldier, swashbuckling privateer, and adventurous explorer who disobeyed James I and lost his head for having done so. Of course, Raleigh was also a man of learning, a scholar and historian who authored the 1,500-folio *History of the World*—a fact sometimes overlooked when set against his long list of impressive and rather more exciting accomplishments. However, in this superb study of Raleigh's *History* which appears on the eve of the quadricentennial of its publication, Nicholas Popper has shed new light not only on the crafting of the book, but also on what its contents and sources reveal about Raleigh's place in the intellectual community of early modern Europe. As Popper sees it, Raleigh must be viewed as an active participant in "a venerable, vibrant culture of politics, polemic and erudition" (6), whose magnum opus was to serve not only in his own rehabilitation but also in charting the course for future counselors of kings and princes.

Popper's book is divided into six well-balanced thematic chapters and a conclusion. Extensive notes, many of which are Latin quotations from Raleigh's sources, are augmented by a lengthy bibliography that will surely serve students of Raleighana well in years to come. The book is both a rich textual analysis of the *History* and a study of the work's impact and readership. The first chapter, "Context," offers an overview of Raleigh's attempts to establish his position as a courtier capable of providing good counsel. Popper does not see the *History* as being "too sawcie in censuring of Princes" as James I did, but instead views the

book as an attempt to assert Francesco Patrizi's claim that "the first companions of kings and princes are learned and wise men" (38). As Popper describes it, the *History* reflected Raleigh's "immersion in the culture of historical council" (69), which also situated him as a leading proponent of the methodological changes shaping the practice of *artes historicae*.

In the second chapter, "Sources," Popper examines the discipline of history in early modern Europe and the emphasis historians placed on the "two eyes of history"—chronology and geography. In undertaking his universal history from Creation to 168 BC, Raleigh was also seeking to understand the role providence played in the world. This required him to mine sources old and new, drawing on the ancients, Scripture and biblical commentaries, and modern historians to grasp how providence affected the decisions of princes. Popper notes that Raleigh was keenly aware of the necessity to draw on a range of different sources and of the power of the "narrowest fragments of evidence" (121). In his chapters "Reading" and "Narration," Popper examines Raleigh's use of geographical knowledge to assist in the construction of his chronology of the ancient world and his "microscopic method of reading" (129). This included the use of notebooks and meticulous note taking, methods common to geographers such as Ortelius and Mercator. The resulting chronology challenged ancient as well as modern sources, and Raleigh's efforts to locate the resting place of Noah's Ark proved his "most sophisticated construction of a world historical narrative" (189). Raleigh's chronology was informed by his travels in the New World, which gave him a unique perspective on its geography and topography, knowledge that many contemporary historians lacked. In "Presentation," Popper investigates the *History* as a product of the developing culture of learned counsel increasingly being practised in courts across Europe. He asserts that Raleigh's incarceration in the Tower did not exclude him from offering political and military analyses to either James or Prince Henry. Raleigh's study of the actions of ancient kings and the rise and fall of empires, Popper notes, "supplied exemplary evidence of the inescapability of providence" (211). At the same time, Raleigh's career as a soldier meant that he could weigh the stratagems of Alexander, Scipio, and Caesar with an experienced eye and draw analogies between ancient and modern empires, with a particular interest in the empire of his arch-enemy, Spain. In the final chapter, "Reception," Popper describes the "afterlife" of the *History*, examining commentaries on the book and reflections of its readers. During his life, Raleigh courted controversy, particularly where his religious beliefs were

concerned (Popper argues that the claims of Raleigh's atheism are overstated); as one might imagine, he had no shortage of critics in life as in death. Popper's own meticulous search through the marginalia of extant copies produced as many supporters of Raleigh as it did detractors, finding that the *History* could just as easily be read as an anti-Stuart polemic or an endorsement of royalism! The endless variety of interpretations, both of the Raleigh and his *History*, makes it is easy to see why he continues to fascinate.

Nicholas Popper's study is a fine piece of scholarship and a very welcome addition to the history of the early modern book. At the same time, it is an important contribution to our understanding of Renaissance historical studies that intellectual and political historians will equally find useful. Suffice it to say, Popper's study has done much to elevate the stature of Raleigh's pen to that of his sword.

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Racine St-Jacques, Jules.

L'honneur et la foi. Le droit de résistance chez les Réformés français (1536–1581).

Cahier d'Humanisme et Renaissance 107. Genève: Librairie Droz, 2012. Pp. 218. ISBN 978-2-600-01587-5 (paperback) \$57.60.

The rise of the Reformation in Europe opened a season of bitter fights between the followers of the traditional faith and those converted to the new doctrines formulated by Luther or Calvin. During the second half of the sixteenth century, France was set on fire by civil wars and manipulated by complex political plots and international power struggles. In this turbulent context, and more specifically within the Calvinist movement, there arose a heated discussion about the intricate political-religious and civil problem of reconciling obedience to the lawful sovereign and loyalty to God. This area remains a fertile field of investigation and historiographical reflection, which has seen significant results over the last few decades: consider, for example, Quentin Skinner's *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1978) and Paul-Alexis Mellet's *Les traités monarchomaques: confusion des temps, Résistance armée et monarchie*