

seem unneeded for understanding the central issues, and a tendency to summarize other scholars' views beyond what is necessary. This abundance of detail, which showcases the vast research undertaken by Ng, sometimes risks diluting the main arguments in contextual minutiae.

This reservation should not detract from recognizing this book as an often-fascinating contribution to the unfinished task of writing a truly global cultural, literary, and intellectual history of the early modern period, and of mapping out the networks that made possible this Eurasian transcultural sphere, from Britain to Southeast Asia.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2020.148

The Routledge History of the Renaissance. William Caferro, ed.
The Routledge Histories. London: Routledge, 2017. xvi + 414 pp. \$285.

The twenty-four essays in William Caferro's collection the *Routledge History of the Renaissance* are a sprawling and fascinating survey of the variety of questions and priorities in Renaissance studies today. The volume stands out for Caferro's relatively laissez-faire conception of the field itself. Most volumes assessing a major field are assembled with an implicit editorial agenda privileging particular arguments, agendas, and topics, such that, in spite of the plurality of authors, the collection displays a particular interpretive point of view or advances a particular claim to significance. Caferro takes a different approach by not seeking to impose thematic unity on the field's plurality.

As a result, the "Renaissance" on offer here—the early modern world, broadly construed—includes essays on some familiar and venerable topics, such as individualism, the cultural consequences of the Black Death, the classical and vernacular linguistic traditions, but also includes new methodologies, like the spatial turn, and a more expansive geographic perspective, with contributions on the long fifteenth century in India, the humanist construction of Ethiopia, Ottoman governance, and Byzantine science, among others. As Caferro explains in the introduction, the volume "does not offer a single new thesis . . . it presents scholarship with all its jagged edges" (4). As a result, the collection will likely be less useful to undergraduates and generalists than to graduate students and specialists, but for the laudable reason that it faithfully reflects the field's complexity and diversity.

Caferro divides the book into four parts. The first, "Disciplines and Boundaries," contains essays by Germano Maifreda, Samira Sheikh, Eugenio Refini, Caferro, and Timothy Kircher on, respectively, economic thought, fifteenth-century India, the Latin and vernacular language question, individualism, and philosophy. The second, "Encounters and Transformations," contains essays by Timothy McCall and Sean Roberts, William Stenhouse, Katherine Crawford, Carina L. Johnson, Samantha

Kelly, Darin Hayton, and Ann E. Moyer on, respectively, material history, the creative appropriation of ancient Roman culture, the symbolic role of the eunuch in Renaissance notions of sexuality, physiognomy in Iberian notions of slavery, Biondo Flavio's description of Ethiopia, Byzantine science, and the Florentine reception of Machiavelli.

The third, "Society and Environment," contains essays by Susan Mosher Stuard, Sarah Gwyneth Ross, Samuel L. Cohn, Nükhet Varlık, Nicholas A. Eckstein, Alessandro Arcangeli, and Suzanne Sutherland on, respectively, performance culture in urban marketplaces, women in the humanist movement, cultural consequences of the plague in Italy and Turkey, mapping Florence, the culture of sport, and mercenary entrepreneurship. Part 4, "Power and Representation," contains essays by Kaya Şahin, Paul D. Mclean and John F. Padgett, Corey Tazzara, Katalin Prajda, and Megan Moran on, respectively, Ottoman governance, Florentine and Genoese commercial culture, Florentine diplomacy with Hungary, and female agency in economic networks.

The essays are loosely connected by the notion of exchange, a flexible theme that accommodates Caferro's conception of the Renaissance as a period of rapid change and multiple creative tensions and that captures the interdisciplinary nature of the scholarship on display. Some exchanges were entirely imagined, as in Stenhouse's essay on intellectuals who strove to reinvent themselves as participants in Roman antiquity ("I absorb myself into them completely," as Machiavelli put it in his famous letter to Francesco Vettori); some were physical, such as the trade in dyes, gold, and—most violently—alum explored by Roberts and McCall; others were cultural and geographic, such as Flavio Biondo's interaction with the Ethiopian Orthodox delegation at the Council of Ferrara-Florence; and still others were epidemiological, visited upon a mystified and frightened humanity, as evident in the plague essays by Varlık and Cohn.

In another type of exchange that links this volume to the field's modern origins, several scholars engage in dialogue with Jacob Burckhardt, who saw the Italian *condottieri* of the fifteenth century as quintessential embodiments of the Renaissance individual. Caferro tackles the Burckhardtian legacy from the perspective of military history and the Swiss scholar's studious omission of Trecento mercenaries, many of whom were German and who therefore posed an implicit problem for the exclusively Italian origins of modern individualism. The Burckhardtian image of the *condottiere* as the quintessential self-made man is also present in Sutherland's essay on the enigmatic careers and shifting loyalties of major entrepreneurial mercenaries of the seventeenth century.

Throughout, the essays engage and reveal their subfields at a high level, making the volume best suited for practitioners of the many subfields and disciplines represented. Collectively, the volume does an admirable job of presenting some of the more compelling areas of activity and new lines of inquiry in Renaissance studies today.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2020.149