

A Renaissance Reclaimed: Jacob Burckhardt's Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy Reconsidered. Stefan Bauer and Simon Ditchfield, eds.

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To what extent are the ideas and methodology of Burckhardt's monumental work still relevant for historians today, when they are operating with a concept of modernity that appears so very different from the one Burckhardt described? This question, underscored by Peter Burke in the afterword, is at the center of this collection of articles. The volume resulted from a conference held in 2018 and is divided into a prologue on "The Making of a Text," and six parts corresponding to those of "The Civilization"—namely, "The State as a Work of Art," "The Development of the Individual," "The Revival of Antiquity," "The Discovery of the World and of Man," "Society and Festivals," and finally, "Morality and Religion." Throughout, the contributors examine Burckhardt's methodology and reevaluate his research results in the light of recent historiography.

New insights on Burckhardt's method can be found in Mikkel Mangold's article on the creation of the text, which focuses on the preparatory notes that Burckhardt excerpted from primary sources, as well as in Barbara von Reibnitz's contribution, where we learn how he inserted emblematic sketches in his accounts by recombining these excerpts into new compositions. According to Martin Ruehl, painting these broad aesthetic generalizations in a process of *Anschauung* is exactly what made Burckhardt such an innovator—and not a founder—of the field of cultural history. Wietse de Boer finds that with this method of assiduous investigation, Burckhardt operated much more in Hegel's tradition than he himself was willing to admit. Stefan Bauer discusses the "principle of correction" that would have made Burckhardt exaggerate his position in reaction to the historiography of his own day.

Whereas the authors often appreciate the stylistic ekphrasis in Burckhardt's methodology, they are more critical about his conclusions. Burckhardt's impressionistic generalizations, which tend to emphasize the exceptionalism of the Italian spirit, receive particular reproach. For instance, Joan-Pau Rubiés asserts that discovery and travel accounts were far less of an exclusively Italian affair than Burckhardt acknowledged, and more closely related to humanism and the world of learning than he accounted for. While Giuseppe Marcocci points out that within the current paradigm of the global Renaissance, the age of discovery is no longer interpreted as a unilateral Eurocentric development, but rather as a multipolar process. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly also addresses Burckhardt's narrow Italian focus while explaining the reasons his work has not been a point of reference in festival studies, though he could still be seen as a forerunner.

With regards to one of the most contested Burckhardtian themes, the advent of individualism, Virginia Cox confirms that the concept does not hold up, but posits that there might have existed something she calls singularism, which nonetheless was

constructed as a common effort. Robert Black tests another Burckhardtian theme, that of the state, and concludes that government was not as rational as Burckhardt thought. William Stenhouse points out that Burckhardt appreciated humanism for its attention to material remains rather than for its textual scholarship. Nicholas Terpstra concludes that the religious landscape as painted by Burckhardt actually looks much more like that of our time than that of the Renaissance period, and that his work should be read as evidence of a nineteenth-century mindset above all else.

As a reflection of Burckhardt's broad vision, the volume touches upon many fields of study and is therefore likely to appeal to a wide range of scholars. Furthermore, the book has an obvious historiographic aim. The authors all appear to have reservations about Burckhardt's methodology and conclusions, but often suggest that his work could nonetheless function as an inspiration for new interpretations. Burckhardt is often simultaneously appreciated and problematized, somewhat in the style of his own writing about the Renaissance. As the book mentions, Burckhardt himself held doubts about the usefulness of the concept of a Renaissance. We as readers, therefore, are left with a question: what Renaissance is being reclaimed here? Are we really witnessing a new conceptual understanding of the Renaissance? Or, rather, are Burckhardt and *The Civilization of the Renaissance* being reclaimed?

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Amerasia. Elizabeth Horodowich and Alexander Nagel.
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In many early modern cartographic and other associated documents, Asian places are found in America, or America is placed in direct proximity to Asia. For Horodowich and Nagel, categorizing these occurrences as mistakes eradicates a fundamental epistemological framework of early modernity: the metageographical construct called Amerasia. Some manifestations of it are placing Calicut—under the name of Calicutan—in *Tierra Nueva* America instead of in India, identifying Tenochtitlan with a Chinese city, locating China directly north of Tenochtitlan, and even identifying Moctezuma with the Last Great Khan. While acknowledging the epistemological vastness of the phenomenon, Horodowich and Nagel present the notion of an Amerasia that was a “major organizing paradigm of the world for centuries accompanying and possibly enabling the rise of Europe as an idea” (24) even though the concept did not survive. The metageographical Amerasian concept was supplanted by the “modern metageography of the seven continents” (364) during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.