John Jeffries Martin, ed., *The Renaissance World*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), xxii+702pp., ISBN 13:978-0-415-33259-1, $260 (hb), $50 (pb).

John Jeffries Martin has assembled 34 essays written by scholars from Canada, Italy, UK and the USA. The book contains essays on a wide variety of topics from geography to cosmology — essays which begin and end the book — as well as history, literature, food, religion along the way: it is not an exaggeration to use the word "world" in the title. "Renaissance" is of course a more contentious epithet for the book ends in 1650, long, long after many historians believe the renaissance itself had come to an end. Nevertheless, there was undoubtedly a long after-glow to the renaissance and therefore there are no further quibbles about taxonomy. This book also has a plethora of pictures in black and white, reproduced within the text, both acting as illustrations and as iconographic text. All of the authors suggest further reading for their many audiences as well as including the usual scholarly apparatus; something that acknowledges that even this great tome is not in itself complete.

Jeffries Martin uses the image of Carpaccio's "The Legend of St Ursula" as his motif for the book in the course of his introductory essay. It was, he says, a world in flux when the painting was created: he might have added in motion, for the book ends not with a revelation about the interiority of the world (the subject of most of the essays) but with something more frightening: the place of the world in the universe. Although the Islamic empire, in the form of a resurgent Turkey, was cutting into the heart of Eastern Europe, in a way offsetting the gains in Western Europe where the Christian nations, chiefly Spain, were expelling the last of the Moorish settlers and forging a unified political state under its two main royal houses, the resurgent west was also on the verge of its greatest push westwards to circumnavigate the globe en route to the east and a circumvention of Islam. It was a world which was undergoing modernisation and in the St Ursula painting this is shown in the contrast between continental Europe and England, the one urbane and settled, the other still the battlemented garden. Yet at the same time there was an obsession with antiquity, a rediscovering (again!) of the texts lost to the west after the implosion of the Roman empire and the rise of Islam, the latter which perhaps ironically ensured the preservation of the ancient world's knowledge. The west had been there before of course; the fractious and, in the end, destructive relationship with the Islamic world of the Middle East had exposed Christian Europeans to the classical texts of their pagan forefathers. War had ensured a kind of intellectual diversity for several centuries but, in the fifteenth century free from the sort of crusade which had ended the previous intellectual relationship, Europe began again to frequent the past.

Three serve as "preludes" (as indeed the respective essays are named) to the rest of the book: Rome, geography and death. Rome is seen as being the centre of civilisation: the fountainhead of the church; the centre of the intellectual world and the heart of civilised culture generally, something Pope Julius II emphatically sought to underline with his rebuilding programme. Moreover, Rome is seen as the site from which the world can be envisaged and understood and in Lyle Massey's essay on framing and mirroring the world we are shown how the development of perspective in art reflected and developed the very theories of what we could see and understand. Death is examined in the third of the prefatory essays in the manner by which the Black Death changed the relationships between social strata, injecting into the lower orders a sense of power: foreshadowing a series of insurrections that created optimism about the ability to control one's destiny in a way unseen before 1348. The book then divides into six unequal parts, covering: the world of the Middle Ages; ideas; power; identity; belief and reform and, finally, new knowledge.

Globalisation in the mediaeval world is explored in J. M. Ferraro's useful essay on the impact on European culture caused by the opening of new markets. Questions about overall changes wrought by consumption, and how it impinged on the world in general as opposed to elites conclude rather depressingly that it did not do so for the masses, but it was enormously important in changing the nature in elite environments. Nevertheless, Alexander Cowan argues somewhat differently: urban life was changing for all and therefore the implication seems to be that globalisation and the development of trade did impinge across the social spectrum, naturally to different degrees regarding status and gender. Francisco Bethancourt looks at the generation of knowledge brought on by this globalisation, instancing the increased size of Christian buildings constructed in South America and how they were influenced by the massive religious complexes of the Inca. Naturally, as John A. Marino shows, this had an impact on how Europe was envisaged: changing knowledge and culture helped Europe readjust to a sense of (shifting) identity. Cartographic (re)presentations grew as the three figures of old world unity, Europe, Asia and Africa metamorphosed to add a fourth sister after the (official) discovery of the New World. Yet in some ways there was less of a cultural expansion and imagery on the maps, that continued to be centred on traditional elements of power, authority and control, rather than reflecting the chaotic changes heralded by the new knowledge. In his essay on historiography and the new world, Anthony Grafton looks at the work of Jose de Acotsa and the New World, and how new knowledge and experience tended in real-

ity to chip away at the certainties of the lauded recovered past of the classical scholars.

In Part 3, "The Movement of Ideas", five essays combine to present the world of knowledge, how it was rediscovered, understood and used across Europe, opening with an essay by Peter Burke on how knowledge circulated through networking. Micheal Tworek's piece on "Vigil and Homer in Poland" looks at how the renaissance was welcomed into Poland and how through its own writers, Lukasz Gorniki and Jan Kochanowski, the country developed a literary tradition that companioned architectural influences drawn from Italy, enabling the discussions of civility and power to spread across the continent. In the succeeding essay, François Rigolot looked at Montaigne's experience of Italy and his creation of the "anti-guidebook". Spain, that rapidly evolving state, may not be readily thought of as a haven of humanism and Katherine Elliot van Liere looks at how the humanist community there was fragile and prone to self-destruction because of its smallness, hence its inability to survive the collapse of friendships brought on by scholarly criticism. Greater intellectual divisions between Machiavelli and More occupy David Harris Sack's essay and their deferent reactions to human ingenuity.

Malcolm Vale's essay, the first in Part 4, on "The Circulation of Power", moves from the world of literary intellectual activity to show convincingly how renaissance art moved the iconography of power into a modern setting, mirrored in Thomas James Dandelet's and Randolph Starn's examinations of images of imperialism and triumphalism. Daniel Goodman reminds us that the renaissance also embraced the Ottoman Empire as an "equal partner" but goes on to show how this has been largely ignored for the past four centuries. In terms of religious governance, the essay by Constantin Fasolet traces the decline of papal, and by extension, religious authority in anything but the personal sphere: the force of the reformation and the subsequent wars were just too powerful for the church to restrain.

Caroline Castiglione contributes a very useful essay that looks at the development of the family as an "affective" sphere rather than as simply a unit of governance and stability. The position of mothers is crucial, as they redesigned motherhood and played a more developmental role in the shaping of children's lives, at least amongst continental elites. Robert C. Davis adds a more sombre note to this section of the book suggesting that even if the firearm did not change military tactics greatly it did make Italy more dangerous.

Part 5, on "Making identities", brings together six essays that look at literature, food and painting. Kenneth Gouwens warns that humanist thought on human exceptionalism, so carefully crafted in the Renaissance is now under threat; Albert Russell Ascoli looks at the changes evident in the writings of Dante and Tasso, whereby the author shifts from reflecting the cultural values to one where writing began to reflect the state-approved narrative; and Bronwen Wilson questions the role of portraiture in creating the character of the sitter. If portraits could do that, then what can be said when the artistic creations of an individual disappear or are redistributed? In Jacqueline Marie Musacchio's essay on Antonio de Medici this happens. When Antonio's collection disappeared and his Casino was redecorated, his precarious identity (he was illegitimate) seemed to go with it, in a reflection of the fragility of the Spanish humanist tradition. In Douglas Biow's essay on food, the relationship between self and consumption (of food and books on food) helps to create a self-understanding. Shakespeare's plans for retirement as played out in *The Tempest* are the central planks of David Bevington's article on the playwright Shakespeare.

Part 6, the last main section, brings together a series of essays on belief. These range from Meredith J. Gill's work on devotional art and the portrayal of light as the sign of absolute conversion; through N. S. Davidson's look at the shifting relations between religious minorities and their neighbours, and the essay paired with it, by Susan R. Boettcher, that looks at the fragmentation of the church in the face of humanist calls for unity. Conversely, she argues that in terms of forms of worship there was actually a greater degree of unity in 1700 than in 1500, just contained in different confessional groups. Brad Gregory's essay continues the theme but the tack here is that instead of Erasmus's dream of a unified church free of papal orders and unconstrained by failed attempts at reform, there existed instead a series of competing claims about what the scriptures actually meant! The upshot, in David Gentilcore's essay on the inquisition, could be terrifying if in the end ineffective. In Brazil, Alida C. Metcalf believed the attempt to introduce Christianity was no more successful at homogenisation than it was in Europe. It neither replicated European Catholicism, nor reinforced its values: instead it became a means of resistance to the power of the colonists. The English post-reformation poets, Regina Mara Schwatz suggests, transformed the nature of God himself. The language of poetics moved well beyond the liturgical changes of the reformation. Going beyond the theological cannibalism of the act of remembrance the English poets turned God into a "giant living pulsing universe". At the end of the book Paula Findlen completes the developments witnessed in the last section, and brings us back to the beginning. At the outset, in Ingrid Rowland's essay, Rome was the centre of the renaissance world and its cultures of church and art and letters. In the end, the explosion of investigative science and writing expanded the world and the universe within which it

lay. Indeed it no longer occupied its place at centre of the universe; it began to move and orbit the sun rather than being the centre of the universe itself: the earth somehow shrank. The identities explored in these essays waxed and waned as a result of food, art, literature and humanism. They underwent the vicissitudes of religious pluralism and the changing understanding of the world. Conversely, just as the horizons of the (largely) western mind expanded, the world became less important: it was a massive shift to understand, but the Renaissance had prepared us for it.

This is a book with fantastic pleasures, with essays and images that look at seemingly disparate things, but each of which contributes to a period which cannot be simplified or reduced to a single label. Perhaps Fasolt is right to think in terms of three periods; the renaissance, the reformation and the age of the Religious War.

Martyn BENNETT

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