Summer 2009

Reviewed Work(s): Prince Henry Revived: Image and Exemplarity in Early Modern England by Timothy Victor Wilks

John E. Moore
Smith College, jmoore@smith.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.smith.edu/art_facpubs

Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Prince Henry Revived: Image and Exemplarity in Early Modern England by Timothy Victor Wilks

Review by: John E. Moore

Source: *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Summer 2009), pp. 578–579

Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Renaissance Society of America

Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/599931

Accessed: 09-07-2018 15:50 UTC

Timothy Victor Wilks, ed. *Prince Henry Revived: Image and Exemplarity in Early Modern England.*
Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008. 312 pp. index. illus. tbls. $75. ISBN: 978–1–903470–57–2.

The title's first three words echo those of a book by Henry Peacham appearing in 1615, five years after Henry Frederick (1594–1612) became Prince of Wales, and three years after his untimely death. Peacham's work extols the birth of another Henry Frederick, the son of Frederick V, Elector Palatine, and his consort Elizabeth, the late prince's sister. Between the lines, this edited volume revisits *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance*, whose author, Roy Strong, often failed to interrogate the motivations of Henry's biographers, panegyrists, and eulogists; moreover, he was inclined to posit alternately hopeful or ominous scenarios of what might have occurred had Henry not died. The fact is, he did, so speculations about a life never lived prove vain.

Gathering the fruits of new primary-source research and drawing on recent scholarship, contributors here insightfully refine received wisdom. How should one gauge, for example, the ideological discord that allegedly separated father from son? Demonstrating that experienced ministers, agents, and supporters of Elizabeth I remained active and influential for some years after 1603, D. J. B. Trim tempers the putative breach between James I's pacifism and Henry's militant Protestantism.

Aysha Pollnitz understands the *Basilikon Doron* of James VI and I as both a blueprint for Henry's tutelage and a means for broadcasting the king's intention to raise a son fully prepared to assume the reins of power. Hardly a crackerjack Latinist, the child still aimed to please his learned father in matters intellectual. The practical, political, and dynastic objectives of Henry's education shape Michael Ullyot's paper, which provides fascinating details first regarding the *Basilikon Doron* (a widely translated, international bestseller) and then books dedicated to Henry.

Cataloging 110 such books, John A. Buchtel's revealing and imaginative empirical survey illuminates hierarchies within the prince's household, complex and interconnected social and patronage networks beyond it, patterns of

composition in English publishing houses, and various authors' goals and ambitions. The dedication of *Coryats Crudities* propels Michelle O'Callaghan to explore English aristocrats' Continental sojourns; the genesis of a genre of travel writing that privileges sophisticated engagement with the particularities of works of art; the Huguenot presence in England and France; and foreign artists in Henry's circle, among whom was Costantino de' Servi, author of ingenious yet unrealized plans for Richmond Palace. On Richmond, it bears mentioning, O'Callaghan does not cite an indispensable article (Sabine Eiche, "Prince Henry's Richmond: The project by Costantino de' Servi," *Apollo* 148 [Nov. 1998]: 10–14.) Two iterations of George Chapman's translations of Homer also carried dedications to the prince; Gilles Bertheau endeavors to link the scion's depiction therein to motifs inferred from the playwright's French-themed dramas.

Studying aspects of European print culture nourishes several essays. With respect to Robert Peake's painted equestrian portrait of the prince at Parham House, Sussex, Gail Capitol Weigl strives to locate compositional and iconographical sources in French art, especially in engravings of Henry IV. In a short follow-up, Timothy Wilks identifies a painted equestrian portrait of the French king that once hung at Greenwich Palace and convincingly argues that Peake's Parham portrait first belonged to Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton. In a second authoritative investigation, Wilks reconstitutes numerous intertwined historical, military, social, topographical, and visual contexts for the frontispiece of Michael Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*, the engraving called *Prince Henry Practising with the Pike*. In 1611, Henry's tutor in perspective, Salomon de Caus, published a folio, *La perspective avec la raison des ombres et miroirs*, the focus of Alexander Marr's instructive contribution. He retraces national and international networks that underlay the financing, making, dissemination, sale, and audience reception of books and prints and delineates technical processes that London printing houses had (and had not yet) mastered. Appreciating "the importance of the artist-practitioner network at the Richmond court" (226), Marr builds a suggestive case for a productive nexus among de Caus, the Flemish engraver Cornelis Boel, and the painter Isaac Oliver.

By analyzing the multivalent signifying functions of cloth and clothing within the representational settings of court life, Gregory McNamara vividly reconstructs material and spatial cues whose inflection, following Henry's death, spoke mournful volumes to viewers and users. Finally, Elizabeth Goldring examines how details of Henry's funeral ceremonies conformed to and deviated from distant and proximate precedents. To be sure, in 1612, printed words and images helped contrive a mythical figure, "a Protestant warrior king [who was] in fact ... a young, inexperienced prince who had died in peacetime" (280). Goldring thus reinforces the strength of the entire volume, whose subject emerges freshly rooted in different, nuanced historical circumstances.

JOHN E. MOORE
Smith College