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England and the Italian Renaissance

The Growth of Interest in its History and Art

John Hale

Introduction by
Edward Chaney

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Introduction

When, half a century ago, John Hale wrote *England and the Italian Renaissance* (very elegantly and entirely in longhand), the printed page was rivalled only by radio as the world's most popular medium.[1] This status now belongs to television, whose diet of sport, 'soaps', 'reality', 'makeover' and game shows is only occasionally leavened by programmes about the Medici, Venice or Leonardo. Although of variable quality, these assume we share a common understanding of a predominantly artistic phenomenon called 'the Italian Renaissance'. This doubly-specific concept, based on a French noun meaning rebirth, was indeed used by the likes of Kenneth Clark and John Hale in their superior TV documentaries, but these pioneering pundits had put their Renaissances into more carefully articulated contexts.[2] Despite today's academic 'problematizing' of such concepts, books of all kind still routinely use the term, whether appealing to a wider or a more fashionable/scholarly readership, acknowledging that students 'have better instincts for the big and little screen than for the printed page'.[3]

As someone who was clearly fascinated by that troubled Victorian, John Addington Symonds – with whom he concluded his book – Hale did not need reminding that the Renaissance, let alone the more

In preparing this introduction I would like to thank Ann Barnes, David Chambers, Luciano Cheles, Sheila Hale, Keith Jacka, Pamela Neville-Sington, John Pemble, Jennifer Speake, J. B. Trapp and Tim Wilks.

[1] Hale was broadcasting on BBC's Third Programme from as early as 1956; see 'The Cruel Art', published in *The Listener*, LV, no. 1412 (19 April 1956).

[2] Hale wrote and presented three 'Chronicles' in the 1970s, on the Renaissance papacy, the Medici and Venice. He also did a programme on the cleaning of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

[3] See Blair Worden's review of Thomas V. Cohen, *Love and Death in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 2004); *Sunday Telegraph*, 19 December 2004, p. 15 (the phrase is Professor Cohen's).

specific 'Italian Renaissance' was a 'construction' (even if this particular concept had not yet been constructed).[4] His consciousness of the extent to which such terms are indeed hindsighted and/or inherited inventions was indeed one of his principal reasons for combining subjects in the way he did. By studying the evolution of English awareness of what was happening among the culturally competitive city-states of Italy during the Wars of the Roses, the Tudor and Stuart periods and beyond, Hale was able to shed light both on the Italian Renaissance *per se* and its sixteenth- to nineteenth-century reception in England, all within a single narrative. Meanwhile, the more he discovered about the ways in which his predecessors had struggled with the emerging concept of the Renaissance the more he came to accept the essential validity of the term, one that he concluded, quasi-Romantically, was 'irresistible' (see p.xxxiv below).

Partly in order to justify the theoretical industry in which most students are now obliged to labour, but perhaps partly also out of ignorance, many contemporary academics create the impression that their predecessors were oblivious of the dangers of such constructions.[5] As if addressing this assumption, in his preface to the revised edition of *England and the Italian Renaissance* (1963) Hale reminded his readers that 'the late 'forties and early 'fifties were very self-conscious about historical periodization in general and about the meaning and significance of the Renaissance in particular' (p. xxxiii below). In fact as early as 1885 in his entry on the Renaissance in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Symonds himself, who did more than any other to popularize the term in English, warned that 'we have to guard against the tyranny of what is after all a metaphor'.[6] Having

[4] For his subsequent, somewhat informal thoughts on the matter, as well as the references that follow, see his 'The Renaissance Label' in J. B. Trapp ed., *Background to the English Renaissance* (London, 1974). He there recommends to undergraduates Federico Chabod's 'The Renaissance Concept' from *Machiavelli and the Renaissance* (London, 1942) and Johann Huizinga's 'The Problem of the Renaissance' from *Men and Ideas* (London, 1959), pp. 243–87. See also below, H. Fraser, cit. in n. 60.

[5] See William Bouwsma, 'The Renaissance and the Drama of Western History', *American Historical Review*, 84 (February 1979), pp. 1–15, and 'The AHR Forum', *American Historical Review*, 103 (1998), pp. 57–124. For relevant recent reviews, see the *Renaissance Quarterly* (of the Renaissance Society of America); the British *Renaissance Studies* (of the Society for Renaissance Studies) and *The Italian Renaissance in the Twentieth Century*, eds. A. J. Grieco, M. Rocke and F. G. Superbi (Florence, n.d.). Most recently the Open University, in collaboration with Yale University Press, has produced a five-volume work entitled *The Renaissance in Europe: a Cultural Enquiry* (New Haven and London, 2000).

[6] The popularizing role of authors such as Leader Scott (*vere* Lucy Baxter) might be mentioned here. The daughter of William Barnes (and thus Thomas Hardy's guide when he visited Florence in 1887), she published many relevant, illustrated books including *The Renaissance of Art in Italy* (London, 1883).

considered the reservations of both Jacob Burckhardt and the more Hegelian Symonds, Hale concluded that:

> The Renaissance was a term that from the middle of the nineteenth century had meant something fairly definite to a large number of intelligent people, and so long as we were clear what they had meant, it was needlessly sensitive to wash our hands of it.[7]

Largely thanks to such common-sense reasoning, the concept of the Italian Renaissance continues to fulfil the function of introducing readers, listeners and viewers alike to the notion that, beginning in the fourteenth century, throughout the peninsula that hosted the first consolidation of Graeco-Roman civilization, a similarly classical culture was revived which then encouraged the traces of this civilization which had survived elsewhere in Europe to re-emerge, albeit as modified by national proclivities.[8] In England so little remained of the Roman occupation that our post-medieval experience of antiquity was necessarily almost entirely reimported via the Italian Renaissance, which is why the theme of Hale's book is so important to the entire Anglosphere, albeit still relatively understudied. The use of the terms 'Middle Ages' or 'Medieval' to describe the period that lay between the decline and revival of Graeco-Roman culture in Europe seems (somewhat illogically) less controversial than the more culturally elitist notion of Renaissance itself. Even the word 'Gothic' seems to survive in less problematized condition, despite its origin as a Renaissance term of disparagement (as an alternative to 'tedesco' or German).[9]

[7] p. xxxii below. This echo of the words of Pontius Pilate reminds one of the Christ-like status of the concept of 'Renaissance' which may be one of the reasons some prefer the term 'Early Modern'. Regarding the latter, in his final *magnum opus*, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Europe* (London, 1993), as his concluding sentence Hale wrote: 'However posterity describes this century and a half, whether selectively as "the Renaissance" or blandly and neutrally as the "early modern" phase of European history, to contemporaries it was, cumulatively and naturally enough, "our age" ' (p. 592).

[8] Although he documented the Italian ingredients in the English Renaissance in his first book, perhaps because of its broader remit, by the time he was writing his final, far longer work, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Europe*, Hale emphasized the independence and robustness of local cultural traditions, even to the arguably exaggerated extent of saying that 'imports from Italy no more transformed a country's indigenous culture than did the spices imported from Venice add more than an exotic flavour to its tables' (op. cit., p. 323); cf. Peter Burke's use of 'domestication' to describe related phenomena, in *The European Renaissance: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford, 1998).

[9] Paul Frankl, *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries* (Princeton, 1960). The word Baroque also began as a term of disparagement; see Otto Kurz, *Barocco: Storia di una Parola* (Florence, 1960). For the term Medieval used in conjunction

One of the reasons that the Renaissance is popularly associated with the visual arts, above science, medicine, ancient languages or astronomy, is that, as the word '*rinascità*', it first appeared in the writings of neither an intellectual nor humanist, but of an art-promoting painter and architect who compiled a book of the lives of his fellow post-medieval artists, Giorgio Vasari. The quasi-millenarian notion of rebirth that emerged from Vasari's very readable and influential *Vite*, first published in 1550, naturally focused upon the *rinascità* of art in his native Tuscany. It represented the revival of a spirit that had been all but destroyed during the Dark Ages, the beginnings of which decline were already evident under the first Christian Emperor Constantine, and were confirmed when 'barbarian' or 'gothic' tribes invaded and brutalized an over-ripe classical civilization.[10] This reborn civilization was understood to have had its roots in ancient Greece but, confusingly, 'la vecchia maniera greca' in its Byzantine manifestation also played a significant role in the enfeeblement of classicism even whilst maintaining that minimal degree of continuity required for its revival, at least where scholarship was concerned. Vasari anticipated and surely influenced Gibbon in his disparagement of the Byzantines (and indeed of 'the fervent [iconoclastic] enthusiasm of the new Christian religion' generally); but of greater relevance in historiographical terms may have been the scholarly familiarity of the artist's more learned advisers, in particular Vincenzo Borghini's, with the likes of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Valla, Alberti, Ghiberti, Ficino, Erasmus and Paolo Giovio, and with the classical sources which had encouraged these writers to evolve notions of cultural history in which the phenomena of rise, decline and fall was at least implicit.[11] A century before Vasari, in his *Elegantiae Linguae Latinae*,

with Early Modern as if to avoid the term Renaissance (as well as Florence), see Paula Findlen, Michelle M. Fountaine and Duane J. Osheim eds., *Beyond Florence: The Contours of Medieval and Early Modern Italy* (Stanford, 2003).

[10] Vasari saw signs of decadence in the sculpture (and the reuse of earlier sculpture) in the Arch of Constantine, but republicans argued for an earlier date that confirmed their negative view of imperial rule; see J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment. Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, 1975), p. 54.

[11] Pliny the Elder was already conceptualizing artistic decline in the first century AD. There was a related political debate about the decline of republican Rome and the justification or not for imperial government, sustained in particular in Renaissance Venice and Florence; see E. Chaney, 'The Italianate Evolution of English Collecting', *The Evolution of English Collecting: Receptions of Italian Art in the Tudor and Stuart Periods* (New Haven and London, 2003), p. 4. All educated readers were moreover aware of Virgil's Augustan 'Golden Age'; see E.H. Gombrich, 'Renaissance and Golden Age', *Norm and Form* (London, 1966), pp. 29–34; cf. Salvatore Settis, 'Did the Ancients have an Antiquity?', in *Language and Images of Renaissance Italy*, ed. Alison Brown (Oxford, 1995).

Lorenzo Valla articulated his consciousness of living in a new age in which all the liberal arts 'so long and so greatly denigrated and almost perished with letters themselves [are] now being reawakened and revived'.[12] A little later Marsilio Ficino expressed similarly positive feelings but after the French invasion of 1494 the mood began to change, a change for the worse that was confirmed by the traumatic Sack of Rome in 1527.[13] Combining forces with that tendency on the part of many a middle-aged commentator to believe that everything is in decline, the state of the arts in Italy and even the phenomenon of Mannerism (which he was responsible for both practising and naming) encouraged Vasari to tell the story of the art of the past three centuries in anthropomorphic terms. Art had been reborn and developed via primitive childhood, an experimental youth leading to a maturity in which modern Italians rivalled the ancients not least in their capacity to follow and even surpass nature. The mature Michelangelo perfected art but with a further turn of the wheel of fortune, art would decline in his wake. It was, however, only later, once one could look back and see that rebirth had indeed culminated in another severe decline so far as Italy was concerned – while new movements emerged elsewhere – that the notion of the Renaissance as a distinct period could itself be born.[14]

Even before the end of the sixteenth century the Cardinal Bishop of Bologna, Gabriele Paleotti, was criticizing contemporary art as being pretentiously unclear if not actually decadent.[15] Whether art historians might agree today that there was a decline in the visual arts in the second half of the sixteenth century most would now argue that they were flourishing again by its conclusion, with Caravaggio and the Carracci in particular establishing respectively realist and classicizing foundations for perhaps the greatest century of all where Italianate painting, sculpture and architecture were concerned.

According to Huizinga (whose *Men and Ideas* Hale recommends elsewhere):

[12] For an excellent anthology of the most telling quotations, see Hale's 'Epilogue: "Our Age" ', in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Europe*, pp. 585–92. In fact Hale here misquotes Huizinga's *Men and Ideas*, p. 245 as 'denigrated' rather than 'degenerated'.

[13] In Machiavelli's *Arte of Warre*, we read (in the 1560 translation by Thomas Hoby's friend and travelling companion, Peter Whitehorne) that 'this Province seemes to be altogether given to raise up again the things dead, as is seen by the perfection that poetry, painting, and writing, is now brought unto' (1905 ed., I, pp. 231-2).

[14] See E. H. Gombrich in *Background to the Italian Renaissance*, ed. J. B. Trapp.

[15] Largely because it was no longer performing its true purpose in illustrating the Bible; see Paleotti's *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane* (Rome, 1582) in *Trattati d'arte del cinquecento fra manierismo e controriforma*, ed. P. Barocchi (Bari, 1960–2), II, pp. 117–503.

> During the seventeenth century the concept of a renascence of civilization seems to have slumbered. It no longer thrust itself forward as an expression of a feeling of enthusiasm at recaptured glory... The dawning of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century took up the term Renaissance where the generation of the sixteenth century had dropped it.[16]

Pierre Bayle in fact coined the phrase 'la renaissance des lettres' as early as 1696 in his *Dictionnaire historique et philosophique* but rather than the concept having slumbered during the seventeenth century it seems that the new post-Mannerist vigour which then became the Baroque, together with the Europe-wide influence of Palladio, postponed the possibility of perceiving a relatively distinctive Renaissance that only subsequently became apparent.[17] It is a measure of Hale's good judgement and wide reading in contemporary sources that in covering this period he refers to Guido Reni more often than Titian, thus confirming Reni's English reputation as outdoing even his most popular 'Renaissance' predecessors. Charles I, for example, had more pictures by Reni in his collection than by any other artist, while the sons of his sculptor and architect, Nicholas Stone, visited Reni as well as Bernini (who in the mid-twentieth century still made Herbert Read feel sick) during their 1637–9 tour of Italy.[18] As late as 1844, Hale informs us, the National Gallery 'bought two Guido's at sixteen hundred and twelve hundred guineas respectively' whilst refusing to pay more than £250 for Michelangelo's *Madonna and Child with Angels*, which was eventually acquired 26 years later for £2000.[19]

Even in those scientific fields which contribute to the more complete notion of Renaissance, in the seventeenth century Italy continued to produce influential institutions such as Florence's experimental Accademia del Cimento and personalities such as Galileo and Malpighi whom travellers from the Protestant north remained as anxious to meet as the contemporary artists who encouraged interest in their predecessors.[20] While Poussin and Claude Lorrain

[16] Huizinga, *Men and Ideas*, p. 248.

[17] S. J. Freedberg, *Circa 1600: A Revolution of Style in Italian Painting* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983).

[18] Nicholas Stone Junior and his brother Henry 'spoke with Sr Guido Reni and s[aw] his worke' in Bologna; E. Chaney, *The Evolution of English Collecting*, p. 74. For the Renis in Charles I's collection, see Oliver Millar ed., 'Abraham van der Doort's Catalogue of the Collection of Charles I', *Walpole Society*, XXXVII (1960) and idem, 'The Inventories and Valuations of the King's Goods', *Walpole Society*, XLIII (1970–2).

[19] Below, p. 119.

[20] For details of the alleged visits of Milton and Hobbes to Galileo, and John Ray's attempts to see Malpighi, see E. Chaney, *The Grand Tour and the Great Rebellion* (Geneva,

chose to spend their entire lives in Italy, Rembrandt, who followed the international art market in Amsterdam, and Velasquez, who was no less familiar with his royal master's collections in and around Madrid but who also twice visited Italy, could not have painted the way they did without a knowledge of Italian painting that included Caravaggio – just as William Harvey is unlikely to have 'discovered' the circulation of the blood without having studied the work of his immediate predecessors at the anatomizing University of Padua.[21] Meanwhile, the first post-Reformation British ambassador in Italy, Sir Henry Wotton, was sending back to his patrons Galileo's books and telescopes from Venice as readily as he despatched modern mosaics or pictures by Fialetti or indeed traded drawings by Palladio with Inigo Jones.[22] Tintoretto's son, Domenico, painted the young Englishmen who visited their ambassador just as Maratti, Rosalba Carriera and Batoni would portray their Grand Touring descendants.[23]

Complementary to the contemporary academic tendency to problematize is the advertisement of theoretical credentials and, by implication, of political affiliation. In response to criticisms that the traditional (in fact not long-established) university 'disciplines' were anachronistically restrictive, the plea for multi- or interdisciplinary studies or cultural history has in practice been compromised by 'cultural studies'. Sir John Hale was nothing if not interdisciplinary, being successively Fellow and Tutor in Modern History at Oxford, founding Professor of History at Warwick and Professor of Italian at University College London.[24] His expertise extended to art history – already evident in *England and the Italian Renaissance* and eventually

1985), pp. 251, 301, and *The Evolution of the Grand Tour* (London, 2000), pp. 19–20, 144 *et passim*. For even later admiration for Italian science, see Brian Moloney on Volta in *Florence and England: Essays on Cultural Relations in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century* (Florence, 1969). Soon afterwards Canova emerged as the most admired sculptor in Europe; see Nicholas Penny's preface to the 1996 printing of this book.

[21] It is even possible that Harvey visited Galileo; see Chaney, *The Grand Tour and the Great Rebellion*, p. 291. For the beginnings of English (Bellorian) criticism of Caravaggio (which lasted until the twentieth century), see William Aglionby's *Painting Illustrated in Three Dialogues* of 1685 and Hale's account on p. 47.

[22] E. Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour*, p. 171 and 193, n. 6.

[23] For example, the portrait of Sir John Finet by Domenico Tintoretto with the Grand Canal in the background, currently in the Trafalgar Gallery in London; see forthcoming monograph by E. Chaney and T. Wilks, *A Jacobean Reconaissance: Viscount Cranborne's Travels in France and Italy: 1609–10* (London, 2006).

[24] For the best accounts of his life, see Michael Mallett's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004) and D. S. Chambers' obituary in *The Times* (13 August 1999).

recognized by his chairmanship of the Trustees of the National Gallery – as well as to the political theory of the Renaissance. No doubt encouraged by his work in *England and the Italian Renaissance* on the English Machiavellian, William Thomas, seven years later he published *Machiavelli and Renaissance Italy.*[25] Had he been a twenty-first-century academic, the time he spent travelling and absorbing those little-known or forgotten primary texts so ably summarized in *England and the Italian Renaissance* would have been drastically reduced not merely by administration and bureaucracy but by pressure to absorb and cite quantities of contemporary theory. In his 1963 preface, Hale described his project with a disarming unpretentiousness that suggests that the siren voices of Barthes, Foucault (who constructed a post-Renaissance episteme which sought to render the Renaissance obsolete), Bourdieu (who coined the similarly restrictive 'habitus' to describe a web of common concerns) and Derrida would never have seduced him from his enthusiastically empirical path. As Hale's whole book is essentially an analysis of the writings of his largely non-academic predecessors, having summarized his 'methodology' (which word he would surely have joined Gombrich in deflating to 'method'), the nearest Hale gets to today's obligatory survey of secondary and theoretical literature is the characteristically modest suggestion that his book might be looked on 'as an extended and respectful footnote to the general work by W. K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought* (1948)'.[26]

But any doubts that might occur to today's students or scholars when first encountering a fifty-year-old cultural history which fails to flaunt Foucault are soon dispelled. The theory is here but so lightly worn it is conveyed as imaginative common sense and succinct analysis of chronologically arranged primary texts. Thus Hale writes with confidence of the conscious and unconscious responses and mentalities of a multitude of travellers, diplomats, scholars, artists and historians whose evolving thoughts are brought back to life on the page and placed within their appropriate contexts. We are reminded that 'Italy'

[25] Teach Yourself History Library, 1961; revised edn. Penguin 1972. He also edited and translated Machiavelli's *Literary Works: Mandragola, Clizia, A Dialogue on Language, Belfagor, with selections from the Private Correspondence* (Florence and Oxford, 1961).

[26] The most recent such survey, which justly describes Ferguson's book as 'still unsurpassed' (albeit long since out of print) is Christopher S. Celenza's *The Lost Renaissance. Humanists, Historians, and Latin's Legacy* (Baltimore and London, 2004). Also relevant, and particularly to Hale's concluding chapters, is J. B. Bullen, *The Myth of the Renaissance in Nineteenth-century Writing* (Oxford, 1994). Applied in all but name by Hale was 'reception theory' both throughout this book and in, for example, the published version of the very entertaining lecture he gave at the first Art Historians Association conference: 'Art and Audience: The Medici Venus *c.* 1750–*c.* 1850', *Italian Studies*, XXXI (1976), pp. 37–58.

was experienced in terms of its individual city-states or regions more than most other early modern nations: 'the traveller went from town to town rather than from country to country.' It was partly because of the inevitable variety of responses to this multiplicity of cultural phenomena that the connecting concept of Renaissance which we now have the luxury of questioning took so long to establish itself: 'it was the political complexity of Italy that prevented writers from seeing her culture as a whole till the middle of the [seventeenth] century.' (p. 1) Ironically, Hale's concluding paragraph describes what happened in the late nineteenth century in terms that might almost apply to the consequences of post-modernism in the late twentieth: 'The term [Renaissance] that had grown up to supplement the Revival of Learning and that Burckhardt had tried to restrain to Italy, was washed free of restriction by a flood of subjective writing.'[27]

After publishing the revised paperback edition of *England and the Italian Renaissance* in 1963 (upon which the present edition is based), Hale expanded his range of inquiry into contemporary phenomena in other parts of Europe and beyond, in, for example, *Renaissance Exploration* of 1968.[28] Surveying the geographical spread of Italian Renaissance phenomena (in a noble attempt at 'majority history') he meanwhile compressed his chronological boundaries, to write *Renaissance Europe 1480–1520* (1971). This still very useful textbook was published in a series of histories of Europe in which the arts merited, at most, single chapters in order to accommodate those on political, economic, social and religious history.[29]

But during this period, perhaps initially inspired by Machiavelli, Hale, as well as working on Renaissance painting and on the history of Venice, was developing what became his major area of expertise, the history of Renaissance warfare and fortification, an interestingly dialectic choice in view of his strong personal antipathy to militarism.[30]

[27] See below, p. 149.

[28] Published by the BBC on the basis of seven talks first broadcast on Radio 3. Hale had won a year's research fellowship in America before taking up his fellowship at Oxford. He made sure that his new history department at Warwick included much American history and returned to California as a visiting professor at Berkeley for a year before succeeding Roberto Weiss as Professor of Italian at University College London, in 1970.

[29] Second edition with preface and additional bibliography by Michael Mallett (London, 2000; reprint 2005). Originally published by Fontana, most volumes in this series have now been re-edited for Blackwell. Fellow authors include George Holmes, Geoffrey Elton, J. H. Elliott and John Stoye, whose excellent *English Travellers Abroad 1604–1667*, first published by Cape in 1952 and republished by Yale University Press in revised form in 1989, usefully complements the early chapters of *England and the Italian Renaissance*.

[30] Hale's obituary in the *Daily Telegraph* (16 August 1999) describes him as a pacifist but fails to point out that he chose to postpone his Oxford scholarship in order to assume the dangerous role of radio operator in the merchant navy during World War II.

His essays on these subjects were gathered together in *Renaissance War Studies* in 1983 and two years later he produced a masterly survey published in the Fontana History series as *War and Society in Renaissance Europe, 1450–1620*.[31] Finally, combining a lifetime's interest in art with his accumulated knowledge of matters military, the second half of the 1980s culminated in that superbly produced monograph *Artists and Warfare in the Renaissance* (1990). Having published his somewhat eccentric edition of *The Italian Journal of Samuel Rogers* as early as 1956, Hale's last contribution to the history of European travel was his useful edition of *The Travel Journal of Antonio de Beatis 1517–1518*, published by the Hakluyt Society in 1979.[32] The fact that de Beatis's master, Cardinal Luigi d'Aragona, went out of his way to visit Leonardo at his villa near Amboise, describing this favourite of François I as 'the most outstanding artist of our day' early in a century in which no Englishman seems to have mentioned the great man, reminds one of the cultural gap, the reduction of which was the primary theme of *England and the Italian Renaissance*.[33]

In his final *magnum opus*, *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance*, Hale demonstrated his exceptional sensitivity to the relative levels of sophistication that characterized the cities and states of Europe. Thus he retained the European dimension of his 1971 textbook but abandoned its emphasis on economics and socio-political history to return to the broader culture and larger timeframe of the first half of *England and the Italian Renaissance* by covering the period *c.* 1450–1620. Granted its European rather than exclusively Italian remit, *The Civilization of Europe* can claim to be the only accessible late-twentieth-century rival to the works of Hale's heroes, Burckhardt and Symonds. Despite having suffered a stroke which had deprived him of coherent speech the previous year, he was very much present, indeed in memorably cheerful and communicative form, at the grand launch of this publication at the Royal Academy in October 1993. The fact that the speeches were made by others whilst he looked smilingly on, somehow epitomized the enlightened but modest approach which characterized his life's work.[34]

[31] Meanwhile he had edited the unpretentious but fact-filled *Concise Encyclopaedia of the Italian Renaissance* (London, 1981) which included his essays on 'Warfare' and 'Wars of Italy' as well as on 'Renaissance'; see also below, n. 53.

[32] Translated by Hale with J. M. A. Lindon but edited by Hale alone, yet somehow omitted from the bibliography of his works in *War, Culture and Society*, cit. in n. 33.

[33] See now David Chambers, 'Isabella d'Este and the travel diary of Antonio de Beatis', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, LXIV (2001), pp. 296-308.

[34] Hale's former pupil at Oxford, Dr David Chambers, kindly undertook the task of seeing *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance* through the press. In the previous month

Dominating the opening pages of *England and the Italian Renaissance*, the first of the multitude of primary texts to be investigated by Hale is William Thomas's remarkable *Historie of Italie*, first published in London in 1549. Insofar as the Machiavellian Thomas and his publications are known and studied today it is in large part due to Hale's book, though you might not have guessed this from the breezy, readable way in which he is introduced.[35]

Having said as much, it is a measure of how the so-called disciplines continue to divide and rule that Thomas's *Historie* is still so little studied, most notably in English literature. Twice reprinted in the 1560s, it was the only book in English containing accounts of all the major Italian cities available to Shakespeare, yet is scarcely mentioned in the otherwise exhaustive literature on the plays.[36]

In this and other respects, Hale's most (almost only) relevant precedent was the work of an independent scholar published half a century earlier: Lewis Einstein's *The Italian Renaissance in England*.[37] No doubt Einstein's title inspired Hale's own, but the differences between the two projects are greater than implied by the modified word order, above all in the fact that Einstein's account deals exclusively with the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries while Hale pursues his subject up to the eve of his own. Einstein began his book with a chapter on 'The Scholar', focusing in particular on the project by Henry IV's son, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, to import Italian humanism, the new classically derived learning, into England. Hale does not discuss Duke Humphrey, who never travelled to Italy

Hale had been presented with the Festschrift in honour of his seventieth birthday, edited by David Chambers, Cecil Clough and Michael Mallett: *War, Culture and Society in Renaissance Venice* (London and Rio Grande, 1993). This includes a complete chronological list of his principal publications from 1950 to 1993. For a superb account of Hale's last years, see his widow Sheila Hale's *The Man who Lost his Language* (London, 2002).

[35] He could have included him in his *Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance* among those contemporaries who eulogized the advancedness of Renaissance Italy for Thomas writes of it flourishing 'in civilitee moste of all others at this daie' (E. Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour*, p. 76, citing the original edition); cf. George B. Parks's abridged edition (New York, 1963).

[36] Where the Arden Shakespeares are concerned, it seems that only Frank Kermode in his 1954 introduction to *The Tempest* refers to the possible influence of Thomas's *Historie* on Shakespeare. Given Hale's familiarity with Shakespeare, confirmed as this was by acting in and directing the plays at Oxford (where he was secretary of the Oxford University Dramatic Society), it is surprising that he refrained from any discussion of Shakespeare's Italy.

[37] (New York, 1902). This work, by a gentleman scholar (albeit published in the 'Columbia University Studies in Comparative Literature') still provides a very useful account of its subject.

but worked through agents, and he merely lists the English humanists Grocyn, Colet, Tunstall, Linacre and Lily. Instead he develops Einstein's pioneering treatment of William Thomas and Sir Thomas Hoby (who met Thomas returning from Italy) by analysing what they said about Italy from a historiographical perspective. Hale uses Thomas's *Historie* and Hoby's contemporary proto-Grand Tour diary to investigate the beginnings of the belated English recognition and interpretation of the revival of classical civilization in Italy.

Thomas did not need to wait for Hoby to translate Castiglione's *Cortegiano* in order to read it, any more than he needed translations of Machiavelli, so that long before the 1563 publication of *The Book of the Courtier* he 'grumbled when Urbino did not come up to the picture Castiglione had painted of it'.[38] Many Elizabethans, however, including perhaps Shakespeare himself, did depend on Hoby's translation, which thus did more to encourage the modernization of English manners than any other text, epitomizing the beneficial effects of a single Grand Tour on an entire civilization.[39] Hale did not know that Hoby had used Leandro Alberti's *Descrittione di tutta l'Italia* (first published in Bologna in 1550) as the basis for his travel diary. This discovery not only enables us to distinguish that which is plagiarized from what is first-hand observation in Hoby's account, but it enables his readers to observe the translator perfecting one of the languages that would earn him a distinguished career as a diplomat and a knighthood.[40]

Another quasi-forgotten travelogue which Hale revived was Robert Dallington's fascinating *Survey of Tuscany* of 1605. Dallington followed Guicciardini's political theory where Thomas had followed his predecessor Machiavelli's, in this instance comparing unfavourably the over-taxed population he saw suffering under a tyrannical Medicean government in 1596 with the more enlightened regime of the fifteenth-century Medici.[41] Hale concluded his first chapter with yet

[38] See below p. 7. Thomas was in any case executed in 1554 for plotting against Mary.

[39] Even if, as Hale reminds us in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Europe* (p. 152), 'it was the Latin translation that sold most copies' (across the continent). In 1981 Hale had published an article on 'Castiglione's Military Career' in *Italian Studies*, XXXVI, pp. 41–57, reissued with abridged notes in *Castiglione: The Ideal and the Real in Renaissance Culture*, ed. R. W. Hanning and D. Rosand (London and New Haven, 1983); cf. Peter Burke, *Fortunes of the Courtier: European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (Cambridge, 1995).

[40] Chaney, *Evolution of the Grand Tour*, *passim*.

[41] For Dallington, see K. J. Höltgen, 'Sir Robert Dallington (1561–1637)', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, XLVII (1984), pp. 147–77, E. Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour*, pp. 143–67 and *Oxford DNB*. Dallington's book so offended Grand Duke Ferdinand I that he asked James I to destroy the edition. It concluded with the pun: 'Qui sub Medici vivit,

another remarkable but neglected book, James Howell's *The German Diet or the Ballance of Europe* of 1653. In this, Howell hypothesizes a group of German princes debating the relative greatness of the European nations, which for the purposes of this 'Philosophical Dialogue' include the nation of Italy. 'Lord Lawrence von Wensin' takes up the banner in a remarkable way, echoing Thomas's and Dallington's enthusiasm for the early Medici and indeed the fifteenth-century popes in order to articulate the concept of an influential Italian Renaissance in all but name. In particular Howell has his German prince say that by the time of Leo X, 'it is incredible how all kinds of Sciences did reflourish in *Italy*, and consequently in all Countries else; for Italy may be call'd the *Source* or great *Cestern* whence all kinds of Vertues flow to the European World.'[42]

In his second chapter, Hale deals with the century in which the early modern Englishman's preoccupation with republican Venice was supplemented by fascination with grand-ducal Florence. Ancient and modern Rome meanwhile received more or less continuous consideration inasmuch as tourists defied or ignored exclusion of the pope's territories from the licences to travel issued by the Privy Council until the second half of the seventeenth century. Thus was Howell's notion of the 'reflourishing of Italy' increasingly experienced at first hand by English recipients of Italy's 'vertues'. Once again, little-known texts such as William Aglionby's *History of the Popes' Nephews* (1669), Ferrand Spence's translation of Varillas's part-invented *Secret History of the House of Medici* (1688) and Alexander Gordon's *Lives of Pope Alexander VI and his son Caesar Borgia* (1729) are analysed to great effect.[43] These provide an historically convincing context for more celebrated authors such as Alexander Pope (eulogizer of Leo X in his *Essay on Criticism*), who are all too often discussed in isolation. Somewhere between the two categories is an author such as John, Earl of Cork and Orrery, whose *Letters from Italy* of 1773 provides one of those lurid accounts of the Medici which still obtained a degree of currency in the mid-1970s when Hale made his own contribution to the historiography: *Florence and the Medici: The Pattern of*

misere vivit'; see A. M. Crinò, *Fatti e Figure del Seicento Anglo-Toscano* (Florence, 1957), pp. 262–77.

[42] Howell's use of the metaphor of a great cistern reminds one of Richard Lassels's contemporary but conversely negative image of Geneva: 'like a good sinke at the bottom of three streets . . . built at the bottom of Savoye, France and Germany and therefore fit to receive into itself the corruption, of the Apostatas of the Roman Church'; see *The Voyage of Italy* (Paris, 1670), I, p. 46.

[43] In fact Aglionby's book was a translation of Gregorio Leti's *Il Nipotismo di Roma* of 1667.

Control (1977). In *England and the Italian Renaissance*, Hale had also drawn attention to the more reasonable tradition exemplified by Pope's Protestant critic, the dynamic travelling-tutor John Breval, who favoured Lorenzo over his son Leo in the second set of his well-researched and illustrated *Remarks on Several Parts of Europe*.[44] While his views may not coincide with those of the most recent historical writing on the Medici, Hale was more completely aware of his British predecessors than any rival historian.

By 1759, having Muratori's remarkable 25-volume *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* at their disposal, the authors of the five-volume Italian section of the 44-volume *Universal History* were able to argue that the Florentines improved on the ancient Romans in many respects, praising Cosimo I's artistic patronage as superior not only to that of his Medici predecessors but to the patronage of Augustus himself.[45] The facts and texts were presented in context without the imposition of theory, even though most of the *Universal History*'s readership, both at home and in a constitution-creating America, would have followed David Hume in believing that the arts and sciences could only flourish under a free government.[46]

Hale's next chapter, the first of three interspersed essays on the subject, focuses on the emergence of English taste for Italian paintings. Here, after an appropriately placed summary of *The Lives of the Artists*, he surveys the halting growth of English interest in Vasari, starting with Henry Peacham, whose ignorance of the artists themselves led him not only to publish quaint versions of their names but to get their relative importance out of proportion. Buffalmacco is given considerably more space than Leonardo, which may account for Hollar's etching of this relatively obscure artist. Both Peacham and Hollar were protégés of the pioneering collector Earl of Arundel. Writing during the long lull that lay between Mary Hervey's 1921 biography of Arundel and David Howarth's 1985 monograph, Hale did an excellent job in articulating his crucial role in the development of travel, taste and collecting. Always reminding us of the evolving 'reception' (in all but name) of Italian cultural phenomena, he also provides a brief account of the creation in 1848 of the Arundel

[44] This second illustrated pair of folio volumes was published in 1738, the last year of the author's life, rather than 1728 as Hale has it in previous editions of this book.

[45] In the light of William Beckford's vengeful remarks about Gibbon's linguistic abilities, one wonders at the extent to which the historian of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* used the *Universal History* to assist him with his citations of Muratori; see E. Chaney, 'Gibbon, Beckford and the Interpretation of *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents*', *The Beckford Society Annual Lectures* (2004), pp. 25–50.

[46] pp. 29–30.

Society, which published relatively affordable chromolithographs of Renaissance (and 'primitive') paintings.

Given the almost total lack of precedent for a survey of this kind, Hale read so independently – even eccentrically – for his book, and for the most part among little-known primary sources, that he seems almost unaware of his own originality. In his introduction to Breval in chapter 2, Hale quoted the travel writer on the positive influence in Italy of the exiled Greek scholars after the fall of Constantinople and on Breval's Vasarian recognition of the mid-fifteenth-century '*Dawn* of *Taste*' (after 'The Mist of Monkish Ignorance') which then 'blaz'd out in the full Lustre of the *Augustan* Times, under the Auspices of *Laurence* of *Medici*'.[47] In chapter 3, Breval is praised (more highly than the better-known Richardsons) for being the first Englishman to take pleasure in 'primitive' art. Hale rightly remarks that his predilection for Mantegna was impressive, though he is aware that Mantegna's *Triumph of Caesar* series had been acquired from the Gonzagas by Charles I as long ago as the 1620s.[48] Breval's admiration of Perugino is perhaps not as original as suggested here, for the philosopher George Berkeley, whose remarkable Grand Tour letters and diaries had not yet been properly studied, had waxed enthusiastic about 'the sweetness, grace and beauty' of his work in Rome in 1717.[49] But Hale's book equips one better than any other to trace the emergence of pre-Raphaelitism more than a century before this phenomenon manifested itself in the creative arts (which he also reminds us began with what Sir A. H. Layard called 'German archaism' in the work of the Nazarenes well before the equivalent English 'Brotherhood' was founded). Hale's use of the late-eighteenth-century diary of the landscape artist Thomas Jones, which had recently been published by the Walpole Society,[50] was typically astute though he could hardly have known how much more significant this was about to become, for the hitherto unknown oil sketches for which Jones is

[47] See below, p. 28. It seems likely that Breval's *Remarks* would have been admired by Gibbon. Hale is characteristically acute but almost too nonchalant in his introduction of Humphrey Hody, whose remarkable *De Graecis illustribus linguae Graecae literarumque humaniorum instauratoribus* . . . of 1742, drew attention to the advanced scholarship of the fourteenth century and thus downplayed the impact of the Greek exiles on Italian humanism after the fall of Constantinople.

[48] The Mantegnas were retained by Cromwell at Hampton Court, in large part for the sake of their subject matter.

[49] E. Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour*, p. 324. The modern edition of Berkeley's *Works* was edited by A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop in nine volumes between 1948 and 1957. An Italian edition of the relevant parts of Berkeley's letters and journals (now in the BL) was published in Naples in 1979 as *Viaggio in Italia,* eds. T. E. Jessop and M. Fimiani.

[50] 'The Memoirs of Thomas Jones', *Walpole Society*, XXXII (1951).

now so justly celebrated – mostly subjectless townscapes painted from the windows of his lodgings in Rome and Naples – first appeared at a Christie's auction in July 1954, just as *England and the Italian Renaissance* was published.[51] As if anticipating their discovery, Hale had quoted Jones on just what he was reacting against when he turned his attention to what he could see from his window. In his 1776 diary entry this pupil of Richard Wilson complained that he was stuck in a melancholy chamber in Rome with walls 'hung round with dirty, dismal pictures of Weeping Magdalens, bloody *Ecce homos*, dead-Christs and fainting Madonnas'.[52]

Given Hale's love of art and architecture, however, his keeping of art history subordinate to the primary documents of art historiography resulted in an occasionally surprising omission. He quotes to excellent effect, for example, the collector Earl of Arundel's letter on his admiration for Dürer but greater love of 'Leonardo, Raphael, Correggio and such like' in relation to the Earl and Countess's pioneering Grand Tour, but Inigo Jones, with whom Arundel and his wife travelled to Italy and who was so crucial a figure in the translation of Renaissance art and architecture across the Alps into England, is nowhere mentioned; nor indeed is John Shute, Jones's architectural predecessor, who in 1563 published *The First and Chief Groundes of Architecture* on the basis of his 1550 visit to Italy. The focus upon historiography rather than the secondary literature on art influences his conclusions on taste and collecting generally. Despite what has already been said about the early Stuart predilection for Guido Reni, Hale writes that the emphasis on Venetian art, despite its disparagement by Vasari for poor draughtsmanship, 'shows how the actual collectors heeded the political emphasis on Venice while art historians still reflected their source's emphasis on Florence' (p. 43 below). In fact, even before Charles I became king, he saw and admired the Titians in Madrid and at the Escorial, and if his fondness for Venetian *colore* was influenced by anything other than aesthetic appreciation it was likely to have been influenced by the status accorded it by the far from republican court of the most powerful nation in Europe.[53]

[51] Most of the oil sketches fetched around 20 guineas apiece. For the most recent summary of the now extensive literature, see Ann Sumner and Greg Smith, *Thomas Jones (1742–1803): An Artist Rediscovered* (New Haven and London, 2003); cf. entry in the *Oxford DNB*.

[52] See below, p. 56.

[53] See now Jonathan Brown and J. H. Elliott, *The Sale of the Century: Artistic Relations between Spain and Great Britain, 1604–1655* (New Haven and London, 2002). For Hale on Venice, see *Renaissance Venice*, edited by him for Faber and Faber in 1973, 'Venice and the Empire' for the Royal Academy exhibition catalogue *The Genius of Venice, 1500–1600*, eds. J. Martineau and C. Hope (London, 1982), pp. 11–15 and his contribution to M.E.