

*H-France Review* Vol. 3 (April 2003), No. 39

**J. H. M. Salmon**, *Ideas and Contexts in France and England from the Renaissance to the Romantics*. Variorum Collected Studies Series. Aldershot and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2000. xii + 304 pp. Index. \$105.95 U.S. (cl). ISBN 0-86078-835-0.

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Essay collections increasingly present themselves as coherent books though they do so with varying success. This compilation of previously published articles does succeed as a book and at the same time shows several sides of a fine historian's career. The book brings together nineteen essays by J. H. M. (John Hearsey McMillan) Salmon which were published from 1962 to 1999. The essays focus specifically on French and English writers on political thought, historiography, religion, and literature, interweaving these topics from the Renaissance through the Romantics. They reflect Salmon's own expertise in European (rather than either continental or British) history, although they also are only a small part of his total scholarly production.

The essays are arranged in an introduction and four sections: "The Renaissance," "The Grand Siècle," "The Enlightenment," and "The Romantics." Nine of the articles come from *History Today*, the others from seven scholarly journals and two multi-author essay collections, thus providing great breadth and depth. The presence of the articles from *History Today* may surprise some but should serve to remind us that scholars need to serve the broader public as well as our own scholarly community. Since, following the *History Today* format, those articles did not include citations, Salmon has provided source lists at the end of each. In many cases these include some newer works and, in the case of Essay X, "Voltaire and the Massacre of St Bartholomew," an additional postscript has been added to include references to the changes in the historiographical perspective of the massacre and of Catherine de Medici since the essay first appeared in 1972.

The articles are interrelated, with the shorter articles from *History Today* frequently introducing the longer, more complex articles adorned with full scholarly apparatus. Since the original pagination is kept for each article, the index cites by essay number and page and, therefore, provides clear evidence of their overlapping nature. This review will not attempt to critique the individual essays but will instead focus on them in the context of the book, which is itself a reflection of Salmon's interest in tracing the connections between French and English intellectual and cultural currents.

The introductory essay, "Religion and Economic Motivation: Some French Insights on an Old Controversy" (*Journal of Religious History* 2, 1962), discusses the Weber thesis. More importantly, it discusses the thesis historiographically from its genesis through problems and criticism to the 1960s, with a complementary focus on the sixteenth-century French theorists Malestroit and Bodin and the price revolution. The historiographical nature of the essay makes it valuable regardless of one's opinion on the validity of the Weber thesis itself. In that way this essay is representative of much of the material

in this book. The historiographical value remains even though an occasional article may otherwise be dated.

The first section, "The Renaissance", includes three essays: Essay II, "François Hotman and Jean Bodin: The Dilemma of Sixteenth-Century French Constitutionalism" (*History Today* 1973); Essay III, "The Legacy of Jean Bodin: Absolutism, Populism or Constitutionalism?" (*The History of Political Thought* 17, 1996); and Essay IV, "Clovis and Constantine: The Uses of History in Sixteenth-Century Gallicanism" (*The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 41, 1990). Despite having been written over a thirty-year period, these essays do work together to provide the reader with a good perspective on sixteenth-century political views and their interpretation in the following century. The discussions in Essays II and III on constitutionalism and absolutism in Hotman and Bodin set these figures in their own time and facilitate the reader's understanding of how they were interpreted in seventeenth-century Germany, England, the Netherlands, Italy, and Spain. It becomes clear that much of the ambiguity one sees in the interpretations of these writers is the result of ambiguity in the original authors themselves, especially in the case of Bodin. Essay IV discusses how various sixteenth-century figures used and misused history in their discussions of Gallicanism. Salmon reveals much about the historians of the time by showing that on such an emotional issue, even those in the historical school of law sometimes ignored their own dictates on the critical evaluation of sources.

These essays in the first section set some themes and techniques that continue through the other sections and characterize Salmon's works as a whole. Most obvious is that of the use and misuse of history, which will appear again below. Essay II, which counterpoises Hotman and Bodin, also provides the first example of a technique which Salmon uses repeatedly, that of juxtaposing two figures, usually contemporaries who interacted at least intellectually (and often personally), and then discussing them comparatively, in a kind of dual biography. This method is very effective in Salmon's hands and not only serves to illustrate the individual lives but also brings out major themes and issues of the time.

The second section, "The Grand Siècle," is comprised of five essays: Essay V, "Stoicism and Roman Example: Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England" (*Journal of the History of Ideas* 50, 1989); Essay VI, "Precept, Example, and Truth: Degory Wheare and the *ars historica*" (*The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain*, eds. Donald R. Kelley and D.H. Sacks, 1997); Essay VII, "The Three Faces of Henri, duc de Rohan" (*History Today* 1974); Essay VIII, "Descartes and Pascal" (*History Today* 1971); Essay IX, "Retz and La Rochefoucauld" (*History Today* 1970). The first three of these articles carry the theme of the use and misuse of history into the seventeenth century and the last two continue Salmon's method of the dual biography developed in the Renaissance section.

Essays V and VI discuss the use of classical writers and works and their influence on historical writing and political theory in seventeenth-century England. Essay V focuses on Justus Lipsius, who was described as the greatest Senecan scholar of the time. Numerous other late Elizabethan and Jacobean writers also used Tacitus, Seneca, and Neostoicism in their works, and drew comparisons to their own times. Other writers discussed in this article include Thomas Lodge, Robert Johnson, Sir William Cornwallis, Sir Robert Dallington, and Degory Wheare. Essay VI expands on the work of Degory Wheare, who published his lectures as Oxford's first Camden Professor under the title *The Method and Order of Reading Histories*. Salmon identifies this work as the only widely known English example of the Renaissance *ars historica*. He outlines the development and position of historical thought on the continent and in England and considers Degory Wheare's achievement within that context. Essay VII presents the particularly public life of Henri, duc de Rohan, a Huguenot and supporter of Henry IV and his policies (including his timely conversion to Catholicism), but who had less sympathy for the successive policy makers. Salmon explains how authors have seen Rohan in three different ways: self-interested and opportunistic (Voltaire), selfless leader of the Huguenot cause (Michelet), and champion of "reason of state" (Meinecke). Salmon examines Rohan's career and shows that none of the

descriptions fits Rohan's whole life completely. Each description does fit a particular phase of his life, but the phases are not completely distinct, and each author used the part that most suited his purpose.

The last two essays in the Grand Siècle section give the reader a sense of the time period by viewing it through the lives of individuals who played important roles. They also employ the dual biography method Salmon used in the Renaissance section. Essay VIII presents connections between two intellectuals, René Descartes and Blaise Pascal. It is an excellent example of Salmon's juxtaposing individuals in ways that enhance our understanding of both their ideas and their historical and intellectual contexts. Although these two figures are usually shown in opposition, and they did seriously disagree with one another, Salmon emphasizes some of their similarities. For example, both sought absolute values and thought their world would remain unreformed. He has thereby added a deeper dimension to both their lives. Essay IX uses the dual biography technique to add a comparative perspective again to two men who are usually seen as opposites, François VI, duc de La Rochefoucauld (author of the *Maximes*) and Paul de Gondi, Cardinal de Retz (author of the posthumous *Mémoires*). Where with Descartes and Pascal the approach was serial (they did meet only once), with Retz and La Rochefoucauld Salmon compares and contrasts their lives phase by phase, as they came in and out of favor during the complicated political maneuvering of the mid-seventeenth century and the Fronde. La Rochefoucauld's work shows him to be a man dominated by passion and subject to self-deception. Retz's work shows him to be directed by self-interest, but still subject to altruism, thus more complex and less consistent in his personality than La Rochefoucauld. From this comparison Salmon concludes that both men's views in their works reflect their internal experiences and contexts as well as their external ones.

The third section, "The Enlightenment," consists of six essays. The first three are from *History Today*: Essay X "Voltaire and the Massacre of St Bartholomew" (1972), Essay XI "Turgot and Condorcet: Progress, Reform and Revolution" (1977), Essay XII "The Abbé Raynal, 1713-1796: An Intellectual Odyssey" (1976). The other three are Essay XIII "Liberty by Degrees: Raynal and Diderot on the British Constitution" (*The History of Political Thought* 20, 1999), Essay XIV "Renaissance Jurists and 'Enlightened' Magistrates: Perspectives on Feudalism in Eighteenth-Century France" (*French History* 8, 1994), Essay XV "Constitutions Old and New: Henrion de Pansey before and after the French Revolution" (*The Historical Journal* 38, 1995). These are connected not only by chronology but also by their demonstration of the intellectual and political ferment of the times and by their use of themes and methods from the earlier sections.

Essay X discusses Voltaire's interest in the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572. He wrote a related epic poem about Henry of Navarre called the *Henriade* in 1722 and an ode about the massacre itself in 1772. Salmon shows through these works that Voltaire was not nearly as interested in the facts as in the principle. Both the ode and the epic teach the same lessons and tell us more about the eighteenth century than the sixteenth, says Salmon, who identifies three main elements Voltaire stressed in the works: Catherine de Medici's bad faith, the volatility of the aristocracy, and popular fanaticism. Although Voltaire's understanding of the causes of the massacre was inaccurate, Salmon finds value in his use of the massacre to teach lessons about fanaticism. This essay represents a balanced view of early 1970s historians' representations of Catherine; however, she is a subject that has undergone revision, and this somewhat dates the article. The additional bibliography helps rectify this by including a note on the more recent research on Catherine and on the massacre.

Turgot and Condorcet are best known for their contributions to the eighteenth-century's idea of progress of mankind. In Essay XI Salmon focuses on two of their works, written over forty years apart: Turgot's *Philosophical Outline of the Successive Advances of the Human Mind* and Condorcet's *Progress of the Human Mind*. Salmon concludes, "Turgot had launched his prophecy at the dawn of an age of reform: Condorcet had maintained it through an age of revolution" (XI, p. 8). Salmon's development of this contrast enhances our understanding of the men and their time.

Essays XII and XIII look at Abbé Raynal's collaboration with Denis Diderot. Essay XII considers Raynal's *Philosophical History of the Two Indies*. This popular and radical work appeared in over thirty authorized editions between 1770 and 1789, with a final posthumous version published in 1820. Salmon discusses the content of the work and Raynal's use of collaborators, notably Diderot. Essay XIII develops the collaboration between Raynal and Diderot on this work further, although it was published twenty-three years after Essay XII. The focus in Essay XIII, however, is on how they expressed their views of the nature and history of the British constitution. Salmon analyses these opinions and compares them with those of Montesquieu, Voltaire, Hume, Bolingbroke, De Lolme, and others. In this process, he also follows the evolution of Raynal's ideas and sees the change as resulting from influences from both the American Revolution and from his interaction with Diderot.

Essays XIV and XV continue the constitutional discussion from Essay XIII and also return to the constitutional issues in the earlier essays on the Renaissance, viewed now from the perspective of the eighteenth century. Essay XIV considers the paradox of the *parlementaires* in the eighteenth century. They are usually seen as reactionary defenders of privilege against the reforming efforts of the crown (including those of Turgot, discussed in Essay XI), but in their language of opposition they developed a defense based on natural rights and national will, justifications usually associated with revolutionaries. Salmon asks whether they had simply disguised their self-interest or actually believed their own propaganda. To answer this, he looks at eighteenth-century treatises on feudal obligations and at local customary laws. This leads to a discussion of sixteenth-century commentaries on local customs and on the use of Roman and canon law principles to organize and systematize the diverse customs. The sixteenth-century focus is on numerous figures, including Charles Dumoulin, Antoine Loisel, Guy Coquille, Charles Loyseau, Etienne Pasquier, Louis Le Caron, and René Choppin. For the eighteenth century Salmon pays particular attention to Pierre-Paul-Nicolas Henrion de Pansey's *Traité des fiefs de Dumoulin* in which Henrion sees the breakdown of feudalism beginning with Louis IX's use of Roman law.

The discussion of Henrion de Pansey continues in Essay XV in which Salmon explains that the paradox of privileged *parlementaires* resisting the crown in the name of natural and individual rights seems less peculiar when seen in the light of absolutists who opposed the *parlementaires* by connecting an unfettered monarch with popular liberty. Proponents of both of these views used the history of feudalism and customary law to support their arguments, arguments that they borrowed from the sixteenth century, but adapted to Enlightenment concepts. Henrion is a particularly good exemplar of this tradition, since the sixteenth-century jurists served as his models, and he used his knowledge of their works and time as a basis for his commentary on the constitutions of his own day. His later works emphasized the justices of the past as defenders of their written and unwritten constitutions. Salmon concludes that Henrion's work shows an appreciation both of revolution and tradition in judicial matters and of the jurists of the sixteenth century and the constitution he believed they had created. By the end of his life, however, Salmon shows Henrion also criticized them for the tendency to absolutism, and he praised the separation of powers.

The final section is "The Romantics" and includes four articles: Essay XVI "The French Romantics and the Renaissance" (*Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, ed. Michael Wolfe, 1997), Essay XVII "The French Romantics on Comparative Revolution" (*The History of European Ideas*, 11, 1989), Essay XVIII "The Historical Novel and the French Romantics" (*History Today* 1978), and Essay XIX "Oliver Cromwell and the French Romantics." (*History Today* 1980). This section ranges over the time span of the entire book as Salmon discusses the Romantic view of other historical periods.

The Romantics looked to the Middle Ages and medieval values for inspiration and as a reaction against the philosophic historians of the Enlightenment (Voltaire, Robertson, and Gibbon) who found the medieval centuries lacking in civilization. In Essay XVI Salmon explains that although many of these Romantics similarly rejected the Renaissance, which had also disparaged medieval concepts and values,

there were two other groups of Romantics who developed an aversion for medievalism and the clerical Catholicism that was a part of it and found a positive focus in the Renaissance. Salmon discusses particularly the controversy surrounding the role of Francis I in the French Renaissance and the patronage of the arts and literature. He concludes that from the reappraisal of the French Romantic view as expressed by a number of writers, a common theme of the conjunction of high culture and political amoralism emerges.

After the defeat of Napoleon and the restoration of the Bourbons, the French sought an explanation for their Revolution in their own past and in other nations' revolutionary experiences. In Essay XVII, Salmon focuses on the diverse nineteenth-century French attitudes towards comparative revolution, especially the most obvious comparison of the French Revolution with the seventeenth-century English revolution. In this context Salmon discusses the approaches of Benjamin Constant, Mme. de Staël, Augustin Thierry, Henri de Saint-Simon, and François Guizot. Salmon shows that the two revolutions were really studies in contrasts, however, and they resulted from very different national histories. The French liberal writers who attempted such comparative histories of these two events misused history by selecting their facts to fit their interpretations.

If history can be misused to create myths of the national past, then perhaps it is not surprising that historical novels can be used to convey historical truth. In Essay XVIII, Salmon suggests that the popularity of historical novels during the Romantic period was due in part to the parallel development of historical drama, the popularity of Sir Walter Scott in France, and encouragement from contemporary historians. Salmon looks particularly at Victor Hugo, Vigny, and Mérimée and the contradictions of mixing fiction and truth, imagination and reality. He uses these writers to demonstrate that the novel can be a more effective method for conveying historical truth than plain history. He concludes that "imagination is no necessary enemy to historical truth."(XVIII, R7)

In Essay XIX Salmon looks at the rehabilitation of Oliver Cromwell's reputation. This is usually seen as beginning with the work of Thomas Carlyle in 1841, but, as Salmon demonstrates, Carlyle's efforts were preceded in fact by those of French authors. Cromwell had been generally seen as a regicide, dictator, and self-serving fanatic, but several French Romantic authors began to change that in the first half of the nineteenth century. The subject of the comparison of the English and French Revolutions enters again, repeating the theme from Essay XVII. Villemain, Guizot, and Hugo are intertwined with others. Salmon concludes that insightful French perceptions of Cromwell were actually based on their own interest in the French, not the English, revolutionary past, and thus once again he addresses the theme of the use and misuse of history in this concluding article.

These essays provide a fascinating survey of part of one historian's career, and the book is a historiographical study in itself. Salmon's work over several decades shows his integration of intellectual, political, literary, and religious themes particularly in the thought of French and English writers. This would be a remarkable accomplishment in itself if he did this for one century, but Salmon does it for several and demonstrates a remarkable breadth and depth in this age of specialization. For that reason this book would be extremely useful in historiography classes, but, with the price at over one hundred dollars, it is not likely that it will be used by many students outside the library. It does, however, make readily available a number of related articles that are not all easy to find and which are probably not all in most scholars' collections. With the republication of these articles, Salmon continues to fulfill the duty of the historian not only to understand history himself but to communicate that understanding to others. His latest article, not directly related to those in this book, can be found in the Fall 2002 issue of *French Historical Studies*.

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