the peasants who preferred their habitual oral and ritual culture. Those most attracted to Protestantism were a cross section of the practitioners of the more skilled, complex, literate and newer trades and occupations. The city women who joined the Protestant ranks did not necessarily lead or follow their husbands but tended to be from the same groups in society as the male converts. Women who because of their personal circumstances were more independent (or perhaps more lonely?) such as widows, the self-employed or those with curious nicknames were attracted to Protestantism, but the most learned women were not. On the whole, Protestant religious commitment seemed to complement in a new sphere the scope and independence already existing in the lives of the female converts.

All of this did not happen without problems. Printers' journeymen in Lyon could return to Catholicism to seek economic gain. But for many, religious difference brought violence because religion was an intimate part of the fundamental values and self-definition of a community.

Europe was changing and the *menu peuple*, particularly those in the cities, were both adapting to and furthering the change. Sometimes the argument is hard to follow, as in "Women on Top." Sometimes the conclusions are commonplace. Perhaps theory gets too much in the way of research in some of the middle essays. Stanford University Press must be censured for its continuing practice of putting the footnotes at the end of the book, but the fact remains that this is not only a book that cannot be ignored; it is a book that is a pleasure to read.

J. MICHAEL HAYDEN, *University of Saskatchewan*

William H. McNeill. *Venice, the Hinge of Europe, 1081-1797*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974. Pp. xvii, 334. \$10.75.

McNeill's book is likely to take unsuspecting readers by surprise. It is not the concise overview of Venetian history which one might expect, but a probing inquiry into relations between Latin West and the Greek, Turkish, and Russian East, pegged to the rise and decline of Venice as a Great Power. McNeill conceived of the book as a pendant to his *Europe's Steppe Frontier, 1500-1800*, published a decade earlier. It turns out a far richer, more comprehensive, and more stimulating study. Partly this is because the Eastern Mediterranean, even after becoming a "naval backwater" (p. 138), remains intrinsically more interesting than the Danubian and Pontic plains. But one also senses that McNeill is now more cheerfully prepared to present tentative syntheses and to entertain bold hunches, thanks, no doubt, to the growing weight of the *Annales* tradition, which he acknowledges.

As regards Venice proper, McNeill's chief concern is to define the economic, social, and military strengths which explain her rise to international power and, beginning in the sixteenth century, her decline. The explanations he advances range from the convincing to the frankly speculative. Thus he suggests, for example, that Western merchants and mercantile cities may have had an edge over their Greek and Muslim competitors owing to the ease with which they set up "ad hoc corporations," a habit he explains as acquired in agricultural collaboration, where the moldboard plow required pooling draft animals (pp. 15-

16). Technology plays a key part also in McNeill's scheme of periodization. Venice rose to power when warfare was dominated by the heavily armored knight. She maintained her international standing even after crossbow, longbow, and the systematic use of massed pikemen made armor obsolete, but became a "marginal polity" when forced to hold her own in a world of "gunpowder empires." Similarly, McNeill suspects that the emergence of Italian sea power in the eleventh century was linked to the adoption of dramatically cheaper methods of ship construction (pp. 10-11), and, of course, endorses the more widely accepted appreciation of the "nautical revolution" of ca. 1300. Compared to technology and fundamental economic trends, constitutional issues receive short shrift, as does the interplay of interest groups in domestic and imperial politics.

But McNeill's chief interest is not with Venice proper. He is at his most interesting when discussing Venetian involvement with the turbulent and pluralistic world of the Eastern Mediterranean, especially after the conquests of Mehmed II, when conqueror and conquered alike were forced to adjust to a new reality. The challenge to develop new identities helped to cast Venice in the role of chief purveyor of Western culture to the various communities of the East. To the Turk Venetians supplied technical expertise and an example of Latin high culture which, though studied with interest, was never widely imitated. To the Orthodox, both under Turkish domination and beyond, Padua-trained intellectuals served to define and defend the faith against hesychast piety on one hand and Latin pretensions on the other. The Serenissima's colonial subjects imitated Venetian styles more directly, in anything from domestic architecture to literature and painting. So did, sporadically, admirers of Italian culture between Dalmatia and Muscovy.

Given the breadth of his material, and a book of less than 250 pages text, one cannot but admire the economy of McNeill's style. His *forte* is the brief incisive summary, analytical rather than descriptive, which puts first things first and establishes perspectives. Applied to the large and intricate subject of the currents and countercurrents which shaped the cultures of Southeastern Europe and of early Russia, this method opens exciting vistas, especially to the nonspecialist, whose perception is not distracted by an excessive awareness of exceptions.

Nevertheless, one occasionally finds oneself wishing for less in the way of elegant outline and more admission that the present state of knowledge may preclude postulating general trends. This is particularly true when, on unfamiliar ground, McNeill's perspective seems too narrow, no doubt owing to the inadequacy of previous studies. His discussion of broad cultural influences sometimes proceeds on the strength of ill-documented and isolated individuals, such as the Italianizing painters of Crete or some of the Padua-trained intellectual who carried "Western" styles of reasoning to Constantinople and Kiev. Aldus was, of course, right that it is better to have something than nothing, but we simply may not always possess suitable paradigms to exemplify substantial and long-range influences. Conversely, one wonders at the value of such all-embracing schemata as the "confluence of a trans-Alpine technique with Italian and/or Byzantine traditions" (p. 158) in McNeill's nutshell assessment of Venetian painting, music, and printing in the early sixteenth century.

But these are small flaws in a work of synthesis which by definition cannot indulge in presenting and juxtaposing an abundance of detail. The book's virtue rests in the orderly absorption of a vast and divergent literature. In the face of formidable obstacles created by the uneven quality of earlier studies—where such studies exist at all—McNeill succeeds

admirably in mapping out a field of study which will undoubtedly occupy many other scholars in years to come.

E. LEE, *University of Calgary*

Lawrence Stone, editor. *The University in Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974. Pp. ix, 642 (in two vols.). \$22.

So much writing in the history of education has been deplorable enough to make many educational historians despair. The self-congratulatory chronicle that purports to be the history of an educational institution, the Whiggish educational histories, and those writings which treat of education without showing its relation to society are all indications that educational history as an academic discipline is still only adolescent.

In increasing quantity mature scholarly work that avoids these puerile diversions in educational history is being produced and coming into print. The collection of essays which make up the volumes under review, and which are the polished outcome of a research seminar held at the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies at Princeton University from 1969 to 1971, endeavours by judicious inquiry into primary sources to fill in a few of the many lacunae in our knowledge of the relationship between university and society. In the first volume, *Oxford and Cambridge from the 14th to the Early 19th Century*, the essays of most interest to readers of *Renaissance and Reformation* will be Guy Fitch Lytle's "Patronage Patterns and Oxford Colleges c.1300-c.1500," James McConica's "Scholars and Commoners in Renaissance Oxford," and Victor Morgan's "Cambridge University and 'The Country' 1560-1640." In the second volume, *Europe, Scotland, and the United States from the 16th to the 20th Century*, there is Richard L. Kagan's "Universities in Castile 1500-1810," though an earlier draft of this appeared in *Past and Present* in 1970.

Crucial in understanding the relationship between university and society is the reply to the question, "what happens to students after they graduate?" In one sense this can be answered readily enough, if the data survives and one has the time and the patience. Even at this level of who-got-which-jobs, G. F. Lytle's study of the change in patronage patterns is immensely interesting. The table and graph of Ecclesiastical Livings Presented to University Graduates (pp. 124-125) carry enormous implications for the relationship between Oxford and English society in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Yet it is the analysis of the response at Oxford to the crisis of patronage that is most valuable, for it does much to increase our understanding of the position and function of the college and that peculiarly English relationship of college and university.

The complexities of the change from a largely clerical student body to a largely lay student body at Oxford in the sixteenth century are examined in James McConica's essay, by an analysis of the social composition of the four sixteenth-century foundations and a comparison with the social composition of a sample of colleges and halls of mediaeval foundation in the same era. Although much of the work has to be limited to post-c.1575 because of the quality of the data yielded by the Matriculation Registers, the result is illuminating for the whole century. Apart from fascinating asides such as "[confirmation of] our general impression that Sir Thomas White's foundation [of St. John's College] reached the urban