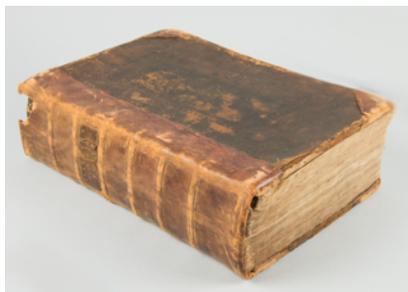




The History of the World

Sir Walter Raleigh



The History of the World
Sir Walter Raleigh
London (1614)

The History of the World is one of the better known literary achievements of Sir Walter Raleigh. The bibliographic life of the *History* is as interesting as was the life of its author, filled with successes, pitfalls and controversy. Sir Walter Raleigh was a contemporary of Shakespeare and a favorite among the court of Elizabeth I. Not without enemies, Raleigh was also deeply mistrusted by Elizabeth's successor James I, who imprisoned him for treason upon ascending the throne. It was during this 13 year confinement in the Tower of London (1603-1616) that Raleigh wrote his *History of the World*. The work was originally conceived as a five volume set covering ancient

history to the present, though Raleigh only completed this first volume. On publication, it was perceived as a thinly veiled critique of kings and did not improve Raleigh's standing in court. Once published, James had it immediately suppressed and subsequently issued with no title page, and therefore no authorial acknowledgement.

The University of Washington owns two copies of Raleigh's *History*, a 1614 printed by William Stansby and a 1621 printed by William Jaggard. While the Stansby is academically important as a first edition, the 1621 third edition also holds academic importance for its unique bibliographic history.

For many years, academics assumed that William Jaggard had simultaneously released his own 1617 edition alongside that of Stansby's second edition the same year. Given that Jaggard's edition is a direct copy of the Stansby, it is now believed that Jaggard only released



a 1621 third edition, and that the 1617 Jaggard edition was simply a typesetter's mistake where they failed to change the date on the colophon from 1617 to 1621. This bibliographic anomaly is often referred to as a "ghost" citation, and explains the inconsistencies observed by conservation staff during treatment.

Conservation

The two volumes were both in need of extensive conservation work. The 1614, in addition to being a first edition, has extensive marginalia and annotations throughout that are judged to be roughly contemporary to the printing of the volume. These hand-written notes make the volume unique and interesting to scholars. Due to its heavy use as a primary resource, the physical condition had suffered a great deal. The textblock was split into many pieces, and the first pages of the book were detached and vulnerable to damage with even the most delicate handling. The endbands and original endpapers were lost, and a poorly executed leather repair contributed to further degradation of the textblock. During conservation treatment, the binding was carefully taken apart, cleaned, repaired, and then re sewn by hand. A new cover of calf leather was prepared and the volume rebound. Embellishments were then also added to cover that were sympathetic to the original binding style. A particularly tricky step in treatment was the separation of the stunning engraved title page from an earlier unsympathetic repair. After removal, the title page was cleaned, carefully repaired, and returned to the binding in its proper place.



Sources:

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