Cruz observes that these kinds of collars “were unpopular in Spain [and] identified with the Dutch heretics and the Flemish” (note 75), which obviously encompasses a negative moral connotation within the context of the Spanish Catholic Reformation that we could not even find if we used the main resource for scholars of Spain’s Golden Age, *Diccionario de Autoridades* (published between 1726 and 1739). The following annotation also discloses the cultural value associated with “Chinese dogs” for a sentence that compares this bald canine kind with the description of the poor and threadbare garments of the above mentioned poet: “Hairless dogs were bred by the Chinese for use as ratters on ships. In the seventeenth century, they were a common sight at ports” (53, note 76). Thus, as readers we do not only get to understand the author’s election of a specific referent within a particular context, but we are also exposed to the vast universe of cultural curiosities informing the Baroque aesthetics, which are seldom fully comprehended by an unaware reader.

In summary, we owe to E. Zafra and A. Cruz the precious recovery and careful edition as well as the exquisite translation of this must-read, seventeenth-century picaresque narrative, that can finally now be added to the scholarly debates on Spain’s Early-Modern period, in general; and in particular, to the studies on the picaresque novel, gender studies, and cultural studies for which it will be, no doubt, a highly valuable contribution.


Until recently, the writings of Frenchman Pierre-Esprit Radisson (1636/40-1710) would have been regarded somewhat reductively as the memoirs of an explorer / fur trader or *coureur des bois* in seventeenth-century North America. The interdisciplinary developments of recent decades, however, have broadened the scholarly interest writings of figures such as Radisson. Not only did his travels include commercial exploration of what is now upstate New York, Ontario,
and the Midwest, he was a captive of the Iroquois, a founder of the Hudson's Bay Company, and an aspiring courtier in Paris and London who wrote extensively if unevenly of his adventures. As a result, Radisson’s writings have found audiences interested in the colonial history of Canada, captivity narratives, Native American ethnohistory, and post-colonial studies.

As a teenager, Radisson travelled to New France and was soon captured by Mohawks. After living with them long enough to learn the language and earn their trust, Radisson managed to escape. With his newfound knowledge of the geography, language, and cultures of New France, he found work as a guide, trapper, and interpreter. Partnered with his brother-in-law, Médard Chouart des Groseilliers, he helped develop the fur trade around Lake Superior. They used Radisson’s familiarity with Native American languages and customs to make contact with and enlist as trading partners a great range of peoples, including the Sioux, Cree, Huron, Saulteaux (Anishinaabe), and members of the Iroquois nations. Radisson’s success also brought him into contact with French Jesuit missionaries and embroiled him in conflicts between French, Dutch, and English fur traders. For several years he left the French and was employed by the English, helping to found the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1670. When his relationship with the HBC became strained, he joined its competitor, the Compagnie du Nord. This placed him in the middle of several clashes between the French and the English over colonial claims around Hudson’s Bay. In 1683 Radisson returned to France to resolve legal claims on his profits with the Compagnie, fell into a complex religious/political plot, and again returned to service with the HBC. Radisson remained with the Company until about 1687, retiring to England after running afoul of internal company politics. He lived in England for the rest of his life, somewhat embittered by his treatment at the hands of the Company and its irregular payment of his pension.

Radisson’s extant writings consist of his Voyages, which he composed in English in 1668 while idled in England, waiting to make his first expedition with the HBC. He seems to have written it in part to manage his restlessness and in part at the behest of Charles II. The original of the manuscript is lost, but a contemporary transcription was made and is among Samuel Pepys’ papers at the Bodleian Library.
Four separate narratives make up the *Voyages*. The first is an account of his teenage captivity by the Iroquois in 1652. The narrative is far less providential than other contemporary captivity accounts; nevertheless, it provides a wealth of detail about the culture and language of the Iroquois at a time of dramatic change. The other three narratives describe Radisson's various travels throughout North America. They are rich with description of the Native Americans, Jesuits, other fur traders, and the flora and fauna of the region. They are also distinctly self-promotional, highlighting Radisson's linguistic abilities, resourcefulness, and sense of personal honor. The focus on him, coupled with numerous internal inconsistencies has raised the specter of reliability. Radisson, for example, claims to have traveled greater distances and to more destinations than is physically possible. While these elements may irritate readers in search of verisimilitude, they are very much characteristic of the voyage genre of the time and would have enhanced Radisson's reputation as a trader and guide.

Radisson also composed, in French, two *Relations* of his experiences of the Anglo-French conflict over Hudson's Bay in 1682. Both manuscripts were owned by the HBC. A superior manuscript of these texts was found in 1996 and serves as Warkentin's copy text. A collection of several letters, a log, and personal writings, some of which came to light only in 2007, constitute the rest of his works. These materials have also been collected, edited, and translated by Warkentin and will appear in a companion volume in 2014.

Two prior editions of Radisson's *Voyages* appeared in 1885 and 1961. Warkentin rightly finds faults with each based largely on antiquated editorial practices and a lack of primary materials. Her aim is to provide a fully annotated scholarly resource, as well as a text that is accessible to readers at the undergraduate level. Some silent emendations have been made, replacing the seventeenth-century “c” with the modern “ç” as well as the “i” for “j” and “u” for “v.” The paragraphing, punctuation, and capitalization have also been modernized. Marginal notes are included inside angles and brackets are used to denote the rare editorial intrusion. The result is a very readable text. The early modern orthography and sentence structure reminds readers of the age of the text, but the emendations make it comprehensible to a non-
specialist reader. The typical page has between two and ten footnotes that identify names, locations, cross-references, and terminology.

Germaine Warkentin is the ideal choice for Radisson’s modern editor. Emeritus professor of English at the University of Toronto and author of numerous books and articles on the history of the book, early modern culture, and early Canadian writing, she deploys this combination of skills and interests to create an accessible and reliable volume. In addition to her editing and annotating of the text, Warkentin also provides a lengthy (111 page) introduction that serves as a biography of Radisson as well as a contextualization of his writings. If there is one critique to make about this volume, it is that the introduction tends to read Radisson’s *Voyages* as literary texts, identifying themes and treating Radisson as a character more than a historical figure. This, however, is a quibble as the volume is an excellent scholarly resource.

Five very well executed maps trace Radisson’s travels and helpfully include bilingual and modern place names. The appendices provide a lengthy bibliography, list of emendations, glossary of archaic language, and an essay, “Radisson in an Aboriginal World.” Written by University of Toronto history professor Heidi Bohaker, the piece provides a deeper contextualization of the events Radisson witnessed in his encounters with the Native Americans and could stand on its own as an article or chapter in a monograph.

For too long Radisson’s writings have been available only in unreliable editions without the benefit of contextualizing material. Warkentin has provided an excellent, accessible resource that will appeal to undergraduates as well as advanced scholars across a range of disciplines.


Following its publications by Tom Webster/Kenneth Shipps and Anthony Milton in 2004 and 2005 respectively, the Church of England Record Society returns to publish another critical volume on the