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au livre des *Nombres*, XXI, 4–9. Il s'agit du célèbre épisode du serpent d'airain érigé par Moïse, qui intercède auprès de Dieu, pour guérir son peuple des morsures de serpents envoyés comme punition de leur désobéissance. Des évocations poétiques de cet épisode apparaissent parfois, il est vrai, dans les poésies latines et vernaculaires de l'époque d'Henri III. Or, l'emploi qu'en fait Jacques de Billy mériterait une explication approfondie, puisque ce passage, qui évoque «du traistre Serpent la morsure cruelle» guérie par le sacrifice de Jésus, semble renvoyer dans ce contexte autant à l'évènement du livre des *Nombres* qu'à la morsure serpentine du péché originel. De telles hésitations du lecteur admiratif témoignent seulement de l'intérêt réel de ce volume passionnant que Thierry Victoria livre à la curiosité des chercheurs.

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Clegg, Cyndia Susan.
Press Censorship in Caroline England.
New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Pp. vii, 289. ISBN 978-0-521-87668-1 (hardcover) $99.

As in her previous studies of the subject in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, Cyndia Clegg's analysis of censorship in Caroline England emphasizes the lack of cohesion and consistency in state efforts to control printing. Her exhaustive researches into the mechanisms of censorship chart a middle path between older studies that assumed the existence either of rigorous, repressive and effective controls of printing or else of more feeble controls that proved adequate only thanks to prevailing cultures of political and (until the later 1620s) religious consensus among the ruling elites.

Clegg's study finds no centralized machinery for enforcing censorship, but instead a series of overlapping institutions and authorities that sought to license or control the output of presses. The crown had one set of priorities, and attempted to use existing powers and the law of sedition and libel to restrict the publication of works that directly or indirectly threatened royal authority, without ever claiming any sweeping prerogative rights to control all printing. The Stationers' Company had different concerns and focused attention on

protecting proprietary rights rather than on policing content. Ecclesiastical authorities had their own system of licensing, seen most obviously in the operations of the High Commission. Meanwhile Star Chamber, the court traditionally identified as having jurisdiction over the printed word, issued decrees and ordinances aimed at printers and heard some high profile cases involving contentious works, but dealt with surprisingly few instances of what modern observers would describe as censorship. In a world where consensus was rare rather than common, and fears of disorder of all kinds ran high, each of these bodies sought to control the printed word, but they competed with each other as often as they cooperated. Furthermore, all of them suffered from a lack of adequate resources and consequently met with uneven success, seen in the reams of controversial or inflammatory pages that slipped through their various nets.

Having identified what might be characterized as disjointed and reactive attempts at censorship at the hands of a variety of individuals, institutions and agencies, Clegg makes a bold argument for change beginning in the mid1620s. She contends that up until this point, ordinary English subjects and readers rarely concerned themselves with the subject of the control of printing presses. They were aware of attempts at the suppression of 'dangerous' ideas and of the punishments meted out to convicted offenders, but remained largely indifferent to them: such clamp downs by authorities were only to be expected. All this changed, however, when the Caroline regime intervened in the so-called Arminian controversy by attempting to suppress 'godly' works by authors with Calvinist beliefs or sympathies, on the grounds that they were unorthodox and seditious. These clumsy but well publicized attempts to restrict religious debate failed to achieve their aims. The targeted authors and their supporters turned immediately to publishing abroad and to reprinting and repackaging older works that had previously been licensed, with the result that 'godly' publications continued to dominate the market for printed texts. However, the pitting of protestant against protestant (despite regular accusations of 'popish' innovations) turned the control of printing into a political as well as a religious issue. Despite the limited effectiveness of Caroline controls in practice, a growing number of English men and women became upset or unsettled by what they perceived as increasingly rigorous press control. This animosity increased as Charles and Laud and members of the Arminian faction employed what Clegg terms a 'transformational literalism' (99) to tighten the control of print through

the expansion or ever more rigorous application of existing mechanisms for control, most notably in Star Chamber and through the High Commission.

Not everyone will be persuaded by Clegg's identification of this transformation in the culture as well as the mechanisms of censorship. Her depiction of the pre-existing indifference to matters of press control arguably pays insufficient attention to self-censorship under what could often be brutal regimes. In her introduction, for example, she points out that 'Pamphlets did not express indignation at John Stubbs losing his hand' (42) for daring to question Queen Elizabeth's marriage considerations, without considering the rather obvious disincentive to speak out on Stubbs' behalf. Similarly, her claims to unprecedented change beginning in 1626 are grounded in disputed modern interpretations of the Arminian controversy. Through no fault of her own impressive scholarship, this study is caught up in, and gets swirled around by, the ongoing historical debates about political, religious and social conflict or consensus that continue to colour interpretations of the Caroline regime. However, Clegg's admirable attention to detail and careful analysis of failed, as well as successful, attempts to control controversial works make this an extremely useful addition to our knowledge about censorship that will appeal to literary and legal scholars as well as historians.

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de La Roche-Guilhen, Anne.
***Histoires des favorites, contenant ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable sous plusieurs règnes*, éd. Els Höhner.**
Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2005. 412 p. ISBN 978-2-86272-397-6 (broché) 8 €

Dernière œuvre de l'écrivain huguenot Anne de La Roche-Guilhen et celle qui a été la plus appréciée à l'époque de sa publication, l'*Histoire des favorites* (1697) témoigne de la popularité des nouvelles historiques dans la deuxième moitié du dix-septième siècle en France. Les dix nouvelles mettent en scène des favorites — c'est-à-dire des femmes aimées, mais pas forcément des maîtresses — des rois, papes et empereurs de différentes époques, du premier siècle de