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### Haake, Gregory P. The Politics of Print during the French Wars of Religion: Literature and History in an Age of “Nothing Said Too Soon.”

George Hoffmann

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ses vers, mais craignant aussi que la mise en musique ne leur enlève leur sérieux littéraire, Ronsard ne fit que d'acquiescer à cette entreprise, que Girot et Tacaille considèrent comme « la tentative la plus radicale à la Renaissance d'associer l'œuvre d'un poète à la musique de son temps » (96).

L'espace imparti pour ce compte-rendu empêche de rendre pleinement justice à son contenu et aux efforts déployés et à l'accomplissement réalisé par ses auteurs. « *Que me servent mes vers ?* » constitue une lecture désormais essentielle pour toutes celles et tous ceux qui étudient Ronsard et la poésie musicale du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle français.

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**Haake, Gregory P.**

*The Politics of Print during the French Wars of Religion: Literature and History in an Age of "Nothing Said Too Soon."*

Faux Titre 443. Leiden: Brill, 2021. Pp. x, 351. ISBN 978-90-04-44080-7 (hardcopy) €127. [doi.org/10.1163/9789004440814](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004440814).

The study opens with a meticulous close reading of the *Histoire memorable de la conversion de Jean Guy parricide* (1566), an improbable account of a son who lets himself get talked out of appealing conviction for killing his father. Enthusiastic reformers in Admiral Coligny's entourage, led by Coligny's daughter, undertook to "convert" the unfortunate fellow. More accurately, they conscripted him to serve as an object lesson on the power of belief. At best, Jean Guy counted as a novice Protestant, one barely worthy to serve as a model of piety. At worst, he was not even a former Catholic; rather, he seems to have been a kind of subconfessional Christian, doctrinally oblivious, devotionally irregular, and perhaps only vaguely theistic. But religious arguments have been constructed on far less, and Guy served to reinforce others' faith primarily through the pain he underwent: his offending hand was amputated, his nipples burned off with hot poker, and his body hung upside down to slowly asphyxiate. Gregory Haake's point is that religious propaganda could take many shapes, not all of which presented themselves as overtly polemical.

Haake charts the rise of instrumental uses of literary forms during the Wars of Religion, a phenomenon he sees as filling a vacuum left by the Renaissance's long-simmering "semiotic crisis" (17). Rather than embrace polysemy, writers drawn into the orbit of the religious struggles sought to narrow the range of words' meanings, imposing an unprecedented unequivocalness upon the nascent national language. In other words, writers narrowed words' range in hopes of increasing their amplitude. Haake traces this phenomenon through a series of key terms such as "zealousness," "tyranny," "atheism," and "martyrdom." These lexical transformations required an unparalleled assumption of authorial authority, anxiously affirmed and jealously contested. All in all, this made for unhandsome writing in unhandsome times.

Haake beautifully weaves together various strands of previous criticism (the only unturned stone seems Antoine Compagnon's *Nous, Michel de Montaigne*) to paint a Renaissance fallen under the shadow of nominalist assumptions about language. One wonders how accessible the philosophical dimensions of this question would have appeared to the period's writers. More tangible for many might have proven an institutional shift: the rise of the legal profession over theology and the massive participation in religious conflicts by writers trained in the law, who framed religious terms judicially and argued over their meaning and application rather than work within established definitions as had theologians. Haake is surely right to draw attention to how Calvin (who studied law) upends traditional exegesis in refusing to see the Hebrew bible as a pre-figuration of the New Testament. Yet, it seems possible that in applying biblical passages to their followers' lives, homilists were in fact reinvigorating a kind of typological reading more than they were employing a literal or historical one. In any event, allegory was eclipsed in favour of verisimilitude—a legal, forensic criterion.

Behind writers' restless scrambling lies a dawning awareness that the decentralized diffusion afforded by the printing press had decoupled the contestatory powers of language. Haake demonstrates these points through the inflated claims made in paratexts such as those by Simon Goulart in his *Mémoires de la Ligue*. Haake interestingly focuses on how quotes from scripture framed works; although few readers can have failed to note the presence of such epigraphs, he is one of the few (along with Amy Graves) to have studied them on their own. He points out fascinating Catholic misquotations of the Bible and observes, in one of the most acute sections of this study, a Catholic fondness

for quoting apocrypha. He concludes by observing how, on both sides, biblical epigraphs served primarily to underscore a providential conception of history.

One of the most valuable qualities of this study lies in the fact that, rather than skim a number of uncontextualized works for illustrative quotes, Haake limits the pieces he examines in order to explore them thoroughly. As with the Jean Guy account already mentioned, Haake offers extensive readings of lesser-known works such as Jean Boucher's *Vie et faits notables*, *Discours merveilleux de la vie de Catherine de Médicis*, Hotman's *Francogallia*, and the *Mémoire* of the Advocate David. A particular strength lies in his sensitivity to biblical echoes and liturgy: for example, in d'Aubigné's "Saint, saint, saint le seigneur" he recognizes the *trisagion* ("thrice holy") of the Catholic Eucharistic rite—a most unexpected echo for this staunchly Protestant poet.

Respectful toward primary materials, Haake also treats previous scholarship conscientiously, carefully canvassing, summarizing, and measuring decades of study across a wide range of topics and approaches. Through these many fine-grained engagements, he demonstrates how print sped up diffusion cycles, leading to a rush to disseminate the latest news and commentary under the principle of "nothing too soon" quoted in this study's title. If the results of such haste often proved deleterious, one can hardly level the same charge against Haake's own careful, painstaking analysis. Although the authors he studies often waged a "war on nuance," he elects the opposite course and fills this work with considerate and considered assessments.

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**Hardy, Alexandre.**

***Coriolan*. French text edition with introduction and notes by Fabien Cavaillé, English translation with introduction and notes by Richard Hillman.**

Scène européenne. Traductions introuvables. Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2019. Pp. 178. ISBN 978-2-86906-723-3 (paperback) €24.

This bilingual edition of Alexandre Hardy's *Coriolan* is a delight. A specialist of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French theatre, Fabien Cavaillé provides an