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Cornic, Sylvain and Pierre Servet, eds. L'art de la conciliation

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**Cornic, Sylvain and Pierre Servet, eds.**

***L'art de la conciliation.***

Cahiers du Gadges 11. Geneva: Droz, 2013. Pp. 252. ISBN 978-2-36442-038-0 (paperback) €28.

This issue of the Cahiers du Gadges (Groupe d'Analyse de la Dynamique des Genres Et des Styles) is the result of two years of contributions made in the context of workshops dedicated to the idea of conciliation under the aegis of the Centre d'Études des Dynamiques et des Frontières Littéraires (CEDFL) and the Université Jean Moulin-Lyon 3. This volume, the eleventh in the series, contains thirteen essays, all in French. The studies deal with a variety of approaches to and perspectives on the analysis of conciliation, covering a broad timeline ranging from the early fifteenth to the twentieth century, with a strong focus on the Ancien Régime.

In their introduction, Sylvain Cornic and Pierre Servet attempt to divide the thirteen contributions into three categories (lexicography and rhetoric, *praxis*, and genre) but rightfully insist on the difficulties associated with a collection of essays on the fleeting notion of conciliation—a notion that has dramatically evolved from Antiquity, when it was defined as a rigorously codified type of discourse, to the twentieth century, when it mostly refers to a nebulous position of compromise between contradictory postures. The essays are not arranged in sections, but appear in chronological order according to the period being studied. For the sake of efficiency, this review will focus on the contributions covering topics associated with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most likely to generate interest in the readers of *Renaissance and Reformation*.

Antoine Biscéré opens with an article illustrating, in a great display of erudition, the generic appropriation of the Aesop fable by neo-Latin authors from the beginning of the fifteenth century in Italy to La Fontaine's fables. Biscéré demonstrates the various efforts of fabulists to adapt and imitate Antic models in order to surpass them, resulting in hybrid texts conciliating verse and prose. Mathieu de La Gorce then explores satirical dialogues written by both Catholics and Protestants between 1535 and the end of the sixteenth century. In his extensive study, de La Gorce shows that the conciliatory attitudes displayed in the different dialogues are in fact denounced with the objective of convincing hesitant readers to commit to their cause. The third contribution, by Déborah

Knop, offers a fascinating rhetorical analysis of the lesser known of Montaigne's *Essays* entitled "De ne contrefaire le malade" ("Not to Counterfeit Being Sick"). Knop skilfully illustrates, through a rigorous reading grid borrowed from Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, Montaigne's use of digression in order to dispense a moral lesson to his reader. Francis Goyet proceeds to analyze two passages taken from George Buchanan's *Histoire d'Écosse (Rerum Scoticarum Historia)* in the light of *conciliatio*, a type of political discourse, through the lens of early modern rhetorician Melchior Junius (1545–1604). In his very efficient demonstration, Goyet makes the case that *conciliatio* has the weight of political *praxis* and aims at obtaining the *benevolentia*, understood as a social and political alliance, of the opposing faction. Natacha Salliot closes the section on the sixteenth century with a contribution dealing with a fictional dialogue dated from 1590, entitled *Le Pacifique* by an author using the pseudonym Théophile Friderick. Salliot argues that the notion of conciliation in this dialogue is used as an argumentative strategy employed to blur the confessional differences between Catholics and Protestants in order to expunge the latter form of faith to the profit of a vision promoting national identity and unity.

Stéphane Macé opens the section on texts produced during the seventeenth century. His analysis focuses on the lexical aspect of the genre of the consolation, where conciliation relies on an initial effect of *amplificatio*, triggering further the pain of the mourning individual before conciliating the latter, bringing him back to reason, with the opposite effect of *attenuatio*. Macé rightfully stresses the mechanical and emotionless aspects of the consolation's rhetoric, ultimately leading the genre to its own demise. Patrick Dandrey offers an analysis of a conciliatory attitude during the classical age as it was displayed in sculpture and mostly in La Fontaine's works. Dandrey eloquently and convincingly demonstrates the aesthetic and ethical implications of conciliation in regards to the adaptation of the lessons dispensed by the ancients to contemporary tastes. Through a rereading of the prefaces of La Fontaine's texts, Dandrey illustrates the conciliatory process employed, successfully or not, by the famous French fabulist in order to neutralize the tensions between past and present in order to conform to the ideal of proportion valorized by seventeenth-century classicism. Aurélie Gaillard also focuses on the evolution of the genre of the fable from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. She denotes a drastic change in the readership of fables, a growing distaste and suspicion of the allegorical, leading to a new hermeneutic understanding of

the genre as a “transparent allegory,” thus reconciling fable and truth. Cécile Lignereux follows with a fascinating contribution analyzing the rhetorical and stylistic strategies used by Madame de Sévigné in her epistolary exchanges with her daughter. She presents conciliation as *douceur*, or conciliatory “sweetness,” functioning as a purely linguistic and pragmatic device permitting Madame de Sévigné to dispense motherly advice without causing the habitual or expected reaction of defiance in her susceptible recipient.

This collection of essays paints a very broad picture of the multifaceted notion of conciliation and from the very first pages the reader will clearly perceive a lack of cohesion and unity in spite of the valiant efforts of Cornic and Servet, in their short introduction, to trace a type of conceptual or thematic continuity through the essays of the collection. Nevertheless, the many contributions found in *L'art de la conciliation* do indeed contribute to our understanding of the complexity and diversity of the idea of conciliation and its thematic, rhetorical, and generic exploitation, and should encourage further investigations.

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**Desrosiers, Diane et Christian Veilleux, édés.**

*L'écriture des femmes à la Renaissance française II.*

Numéro spécial de *Littératures* 28 (2014). 239 p. ISSN 978-0-7717-0724-7 (broché) 18\$ (Canada) 21\$ (Étranger).

Beaucoup de chemin a été parcouru depuis la parution, en 1998, du numéro 18 de la revue *Littératures*, consacré à « L'écriture des femmes de la Renaissance », et si l'on en juge par le contenu de ce nouveau numéro dirigé par Diane Desrosiers et Christian Veilleux dédié au même thème, le sujet est bien loin d'être épuisé.

C'est le moins qu'on puisse dire, car s'il s'inscrit dans la continuité des travaux entrepris par le Groupe d'analyse et de recherche sur l'écriture des femmes au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle (GARSE XVI), il y a de cela plus d'une vingtaine d'années, *L'écriture des femmes de la Renaissance II* ne manque pas d'ambition. S'appuyant sur les nombreux travaux réalisés sur les écrits féminins de cette période depuis les années 1990, l'ouvrage, qui regroupe les contributions