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Paris in the Age of Absolutism: An Essay (review)

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The visual depictions of martyrdom owe much to the martyrology marking out a new genre, a fusion of the historiographic and hagiographic. As Lestringant reiterates, 'il n'est pas de martyr sans martyrologie'.

The development of theatre and advances in anatomy are suggested as factors contributing to the growth in illustrated martyrologies. In an incisive chapter on Richard Verstegan's *Théâtre des cruautés des Herétiques de notre temps* (1588), Lestringant analyses how the engravings are manipulated (different events and geographies are sometimes seamlessly merged into one scene) to achieve the maximum impact on the Catholic readership. Although recognizing Verstegan's talents in this respect, Lestringant persuasively, yet ruthlessly, undermines the martyrologist's status by demonstrating that he substantially plagiarized an earlier work by Matthieu de Launoy (1579). The bibliography contains succinct comments on standard editions and variants; a notable absence is Eamon Duffy, whose work, with its close reading of source material and obvious sympathy to individuals unwittingly caught up in political events, has many affinities with Lestringant's own methodology, albeit dealing with the other side of the Channel, and confessional divide. Lestringant argues that it is the Huguenots, above all, who developed and nuanced the contemporary interest in martyrdom, a focus that would be absorbed within post-Tridentine spirituality. This readable and impressive study is an indispensable guide for the investigation of martyrdom in early modern culture.

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Paris in the Age of Absolutism: An Essay. By OREST RANUM. University Park, Penn State University Press. 2003. viii + 403 pp. Hb \$35.00.

This new edition of Orest Ranum's essay on Paris from 1590 to 1715 is a very attractive, slightly larger format book produced in hardback with a pleasing array of key sixteenth- and seventeenth-century illustrations (especially those by Abraham Bosse). From dust jacket to font, this book is beautifully produced and a sheer pleasure to read. Fans of the first edition published in 1968 will be pleased to see a key essay updated and expanded, including a very sensitive — and timely — new chapter entitled 'The First Women Writers'. The primary attraction of this essay is that it focuses on Paris — in itself a source of pleasure. Moreover, the textual lens captures the city from myriad angles: kings, history, civil war(s), religion, architecture, literature, art, theatre, society (all levels), economics and politics. 'A Traveler's View in 1600' sets the scene by depicting the physical city in all its heaving and pungent post-medieval sprawl. Ranum catches the reader's attention by alternating fact with visual detail, such as the open common graves in the Cemetery of the Innocents 'that aroused the morbid curiosity of visitors in 1600'. It shocks the modern visitor to learn that two or three common graves stood open at the same time. This is what Ranum calls the 'medieval burden' borne by Paris in its failed attempts to move towards Modernity. His essay also follows this progressive sweep. A clear historical account of the League, the Civil War factions, and their divisive effect on Parisian society is swiftly followed by a practical review of Paris under Henri IV, 'a builder', who undertakes a programme of construction in the city — both physical and psychological.

Henri IV and Sully together reap praise for innovations in paving, sewers and lighting, perennial problems for the early modern capital. Henri IV focused on the beautification of Paris and, between the Place Dauphine and Place Royale, he began an architectural trend towards structuring and organization in Paris that would lead to comparisons with Rome by the end of Louis XIV's reign. Architectural matters, including interior decoration, are carefully tracked throughout the book, tracing trends, innovations and disasters. Among the praise lavished on Henri IV, he is credited with being the first king to become involved in public-private partnership, controlling construction of buildings funded by private capital. Thus, the Marais, the Île Saint-Louis and the Palais-Royal were devised and built. If Henri IV is the initial hero of this book, later chapters address the complexity of a fiery capital submitting to absolutism, under more specifically topical headings, including the construction aspirations of the nobility, women writers, Parisian 'corporations' (guilds, schools, *académies*), the Fronde, the concept of the heroic ideal, noble behaviour, religious zeal and, finally, the splendours of Paris under Louis XIV. Most impressive is Ranum's succinct account of the minefield of religious houses, allegiances and factions in the seventeenth century. For this topic alone, this essay is surely a crucial text for any student or aspiring seventeenth-century scholar. For pure pleasure, it is recommended reading for all lovers of Paris.

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FRANÇOIS BÉROALDE DE VERVILLE: *Le Moyen de parvenir*. Tome I. Transcription avec présentation, notes et index par HÉLÈNE MOREAU et ANDRÉ TOURNON, avec la collaboration de JEAN-LUC RISTORI. Paris, Champion, 2004. 497 pp. Hb €43.00.

FRANÇOIS BÉROALDE DE VERVILLE: *Le Moyen de parvenir*. Tome II. Fac simile éditée par HÉLÈNE MOREAU et ANDRÉ TOURNON avec la collaboration de JEAN-LUC RISTORI. Présentation d'ANDRÉ TOURNON. Paris, Champion, 2004. 322 pp. Hb €76.00.

In 1984 Hélène Moreau and André Tournon brought out what was then, and has remained ever since, by far the most scholarly and useful critical edition of *Le Moyen de parvenir* (see FS, XXXIX (1985), 195–96), the extraordinary fictional banquet at which hundreds of voices of famous people, living and (especially) dead, from Caesar to Ronsard, produce a disturbing mixture of philosophy, satire and obscenity that questions the value of language, learning and ethics. Moreau and Tournon's edition has played a large part in Verville's transformation into a writer of celebrity status: at a recent conference in France on Renaissance riddles, more papers were devoted to him than to anyone else. Now, with another publisher and an extra collaborator, they have revised their edition considerably, not only taking account of what has emerged since, such as the dates of Verville's death (1626) and of the earliest known edition (between 1614 and 1617, probably 1616), and not only revising key elements of their edition — such as the excellent introductory essays, the illuminating brief footnotes, and the punctuation system used for transcribing — but also now adding important, more extensive endnotes by Jean-Luc Ristori, which identify major intertexts,