

with Catherine, yet he strives to present and discuss concurring views and above all relies on what is known from the sources. Refraining from speculations and from craving for sensation, ascriptions which are all too easily attributed to women of power, Malettke offers a very balanced and nuanced biography, which convincingly considers Catherine as a woman and an individual of her time.

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

Faux Titre 443. Leiden: Brill, 2021. x + 352 pp. €127.

This book is built upon a central premise: that there was a semiotic crisis in sixteenth-century France caused by “the whipsaw of wars and peace treaties” during the religious wars, and that this “back and forth” between bloodshed and calm deceived the French people into uncertainty (15). No one’s word could be taken with certainty, not even the word of the king and queen mother. Haake’s main argument is that authors “were emboldened by an awareness of print culture and undertook several rhetorical techniques and critical strategies in order to neutralize the crisis and therefore render literary discourse more effective in a tumultuous political context” (17–18). Haake’s familiarity with so much recent work by academic historians on the history of print and the French Wars of Religion suggest the book is aimed at historians as well as literary scholars.

One problem for historians is that Haake makes very clear that he is not concerned with whether the texts he analyzes were widely read or whether they were even persuasive. His focus is thus exclusively on authors rather than readers. How can he persuade us that the authors and texts he discusses succeeded in neutralizing the crisis and rendered literary discourse more effective if he is not concerned with the reception of these texts? A second issue for historians is Haake’s choice of texts. He excludes most of the historical texts that historians study: personal correspondence, diplomatic communiqués, virtually all discourses and texts emanating from the court or other political institutions, the writings of political theorists such as Jean Bodin, and the many well-known contemporary works of history in the period. Haake simply notes that “these represent discursive activity that is different from literature” (25). He makes an exception for the monarchomach writings of the 1570s, but largely because they better display the authorial strategies of his more literary authors.

Despite all that, Haake does have some interesting things to say about the texts he analyzes. Chapter 1 sets out to define the semiotic crisis and its origins in some detail. Haake explores texts as diverse as Ronsard, Du Bellay, and Calvin, among others, to illustrate the crisis. Chapter 2 explores the rhetoric of extremes in a diverse set of

texts that dealt with fanaticism, martyrs, and claims of atheism and tyranny. Rhetoric waged “a war against nuance” (133), and it showed how unstable language had become, illustrating the crisis nicely by making Jacques Clément, the assassin of Henri III in August 1589, both fanatic and martyr depending on the pen of the polemicist. Chapter 3 takes up efforts by various authors to reverse the effects of the semiotic crisis. Here, Haake focuses primarily on paratexts rather than the texts themselves: for example, prefaces, such as those by Simon Goulart, or the title pages of many books that employed quotations from scripture. Haake argues convincingly that paratexts framed the texts for readers and served as a guide for reading. It is a pity that he did not further explore whether contemporary readers actually read the texts in the ways that the authors instructed through the paratexts.

Chapter 4 follows with efforts to restore authorial authority, using Pierre de Ronsard, Agrippa d’Aubigné, Jean de la Taille, and Louis D’Orléans as examples. Chapter 5 focuses on a short, twenty-one-page memoir published in 1576 by the Parisian lawyer Jean David, who attempted to discredit the Guise family in print by claiming that they were responsible for a plot to overthrow Henri III and replace him with one of the Guises. Though the plot was fictitious, Haake argues that it was useful propaganda against the Guises and the Catholic League. Chapter 6, as already mentioned, centers on the monarchomach writings of François Hotman and others. It would be invidious to end this review by criticizing the author for not writing the book a historian would write, especially as historians and literary scholars could both profit from reading it. If nothing else, Haaske shows us some useful things to look for in these texts that we might have otherwise missed.

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Transregional Territories: Crossing Borders in the Early Modern Low Countries and Beyond. Bram De Ridder, Violet Soen, Werner Thomas, and Sophie Verreyken, eds.
Habsburg Worlds 2. Turnhout: Brepols, 2020. 262 pp. €64.

As its title indicates, this collection of essays treats transregional borders, paying special attention to those of the Low Countries, in the early modern period. A particularly turbulent time in Northern Europe, the two centuries covered in these pages saw the borders and boundaries in this region shift constantly. Transregional history is a methodological tool that offers researchers a lens through which to analyze how borders worked in the early modern period and to demonstrate that while borders separated territorial entities from each other, they simultaneously connected them to each