
Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme



Scarlatta, Gabriella, and Lidia Radi, eds. Representations of Heresy in Sixteenth-Century France

George Hoffmann

Volume 41, Number 1, Winter 2018

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1086061ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v41i1.29554>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Hoffmann, G. (2018). Review of [Scarlatta, Gabriella, and Lidia Radi, eds. *Representations of Heresy in Sixteenth-Century France*]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 41(1), 237–240.
<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v41i1.29554>

religious education. Part 2 ends with Susanna Burghartz's study of Dutch discovery narratives, which begins with an interesting analysis of place as a spiritual medium in the history of discovery and discovery narratives.

Overall, *Culture of Communication* offers diverse studies of the roles that media played in early modern devotional and religious thinking. It would be of interest to scholars of devotional culture, reformation, colonial history, print history, and theories of communication. The volume is intentionally broad, as it seeks to expand what is usually understood by media studies. It provides a wide-ranging thematic exploration of communication and the roles of media alongside individual-focused case studies that offer new perspectives and insights into various forms of communication. Though the essays in this volume are somewhat disparate, the ultimate product highlights the sheer interdisciplinarity of media studies, and is overall a valuable addition to scholarship on the diversity and ubiquity of communication media in Europe and its colonies.

TATEVIK NERSISYAN

Queen's University, Kingston

Scarlatta, Gabriella, and Lidia Radi, eds.

Representations of Heresy in Sixteenth-Century France.

Essays and Studies 40. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2017. Pp. 299 + 26 ill. ISBN 978-0-7727-2187-7 (paperback) \$34.95.

The editors and authors make clear throughout this collection that the century's religious struggles "manufactured" heretical identities. Yet to say that "heresy" primarily acted as a polemical construct is not to claim it held no purchase over actual religious attitudes. Charges of heresy served as powerful engines in the century's gradual construction of confessional identity. In other words, to paraphrase recent historians of confessionalization, confessional identity proves the consequence of Reformation struggles, not their cause, a point that Andrew Spicer makes with admirable clarity in his concluding remarks about the gradual sharpening of distinct religious boundaries over the course of the wars.

Lidia Radi's article argues that Guillaume Michel's 1518 *Le Penser* belongs to a *Miroirs des Princes* tradition that aimed to shape dispositions in

the addressed ruler. Her contribution consists of suggesting how this medieval tradition was re-purposed to argue for a “reform from within” on the eve of a Reformation that would prove schismatic, using the figure of the infidel Turk as an external fulcrum. The notion that a restored Christianity could convert Turks through example resonates with medieval tales and with Scripture itself, but still surprises given the enduring attraction to renewing the Crusades throughout the sixteenth century. Nicole Bensoussan’s well-informed essay delves into the topic of triumphal processions, raising the intriguing possibility that confraternal Eucharistic processions might be read in tandem with neo-classical triumphal entries. Erasmus was shocked to see Pope Julius make a triumphal entry into Rome in 1508; the essay highlights what was surprising and potentially risky in later French efforts to wed imperial and religious themes.

Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier takes up the topic of prominent French women who struggled to reform Christian practice on the eve of Luther’s schism. The thrust of this excellent essay shows how mainstream, pervasive, and quasi-official proved French hopes for reform of the church before the magisterial Reformation got underway. Her fascinating portrait of Queen Claude’s religious sensitivities and the evangelical networks that arose around them offers striking similarities with Marguerite de Navarre, suggesting that, rather than the singular character often argued for her, Marguerite counted around her many women who were like-minded, evangelical proponents. Edith Benkov’s signal contribution complements Wilson-Chevalier’s essay by filling in the picture of less-privileged, lower-born women. Her analysis of the presence, composition, and status of arrested women is exemplary; her conclusion of “inconstancy” presumed in women fits beautifully within the larger picture of how religious change was gendered as female at the time. As in Florimond de Raemond’s eyes, women are seen as more pliable and open to new ideas, and therefore the “agents of change [corruption],” whereas male converts feature as obdurate or feigning.

Scholarly pre-conceptions regarding polarized and distinct “camps” already at the outset of the Reformation are highlighted in Robert Hudson’s contribution. He opposes M. A. Screech’s reductive reading of Marot as orthodox and Gérard Defaux’s equally reductive reading of Marot as heterodox, and cites a subsequent “religious or humanistic [...] divide” to show the deep inadequacy of thinking religion within such binaries. In place of them, he

proposes “Gallicism,” by which he means a kind of native pragmatism that tried to reconcile pleasure in the present with salvation in the hereafter. Gabriella Scarlatta sensitively reads a changing palette of poetic imagery against the backdrop of the land’s civil war. Her essay offers a fine exploration of how the Petrarchan tradition was pressed into new undertakings. In particular, traditional tropes of love as a wound or a battle assumed new salience, culminating in a re-scripting of the lovers’ strife to fit the confessional struggles that ripped France apart. These materials document a decisive moment in the fortunes of Petrarchism as it approached the baroque era—something finely treated here in the discussion of verbal *chiaroscuro*.

Kendall Tarte fields a cogent examination of an early urban imaginary in Belleforest’s *Cosmographie*, presenting compelling evidence of a strong Counter-Reformation spirit at work in its pages. His silence over the Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre of recent date seems telling when Belleforest calls acts of iconoclasm “massacres.” She proposes that the “itinerary” model of these early geographies, which traces routes rather than outlines spaces, reappears in brief historical itineraries that sketch out subsequent developments in the Wars. Belleforest’s imaginative reconstruction of Angoulême seems to anticipate the Counter-Reformation artistic program more broadly. David LaGuardia’s essay presents a clear overview of the stakes and interests that inform this collection more generally, particularly on the “‘interpellative’ nature of accusations of heresy.” His insistence on the print and print-inspired saturation of Paris captures the immense importance of France’s struggles for Europe more broadly. Although the Reformation did not prevail in France, the intense pressure brought to bear on a nascent public sphere created a media precedent for national-scale pamphlet wars. Valérie Dionne compares three contemporary views (those of Montaigne, Charron, and Chassanion) of the Emperor Julian, whose ambiguous policy of religious toleration often served as a touchstone for French discussions of royal attempts to accommodate the realm’s reformed subjects (beginning as early as a 1562 *Remonstrance* of the Parlement of Paris). Although Julian counted as an apostate, not a heretic, and wished to promote pagan (polytheistic) beliefs, not variant Christian “heresies,” his example nonetheless served as precedent for policies attempting to adjudicate between the Roman and Reformation versions of Christianity.

This collection is particularly noteworthy in the number of essays that intelligently access visual media alongside literary works. A number of

chapters open up overlooked and extremely rich materials from the eve of the Reformation, demonstrating how fluid confessional attitudes proved, prior to any religious conflict. “Heresy” served to sharpen a sense of religious division through stigmatizing others. When and how early moderns began to adopt confessional labels for themselves remain questions to be broached in another work.

GEORGE HOFFMANN

University of Michigan

Schwartz, Regina Mara.

Loving Justice, Living Shakespeare.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xi, 141. ISBN 978-0-19-879521-6 (hardcover) US\$29.95.

Much love of writing about Shakespeare has gone into the making of this book. *Loving Justice, Living Shakespeare* reads more like an extended essay on human justice and love, with Shakespeare as a sounding board. This book is about complications and pleasures that justice creates in the professions of love in the Shakespearean world in which seeing the world “justly” (vii) is itself under the dramatist’s scrutiny. This, in a nutshell, is how Rowan Williams, Master of Magdalen College at the University of Cambridge, introduces Regina Mara Schwartz’s book about the ideas of justice in Shakespeare, the notions (and sense) of right and wrong, hurt and pain, joy and contentment, cruelty and forgiveness, and where one’s duty to the other (the lover, the neighbour, the friend) belongs among these ideas.

The crux of the book is the exploration of how love and justice are distributed in plays in which harm and moral and social reckoning are brought upon as a resolution but also a way of thinking, on Shakespeare’s part; and of the different functions that love plays in relation to justice, power, and giving in *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Hamlet*. For this reviewer at least, the book was an academic page-turner. Schwartz’s elegant and probing writing reveals her deep command of the subject; she is able to synthesize the complex and extensive problems from the theological, philosophical, and cultural history of justice and love in crystal clear sentences