records of the Grand Lodge of Amsterdam, the collected correspondence of the printer Marc-Michel Rey, and the papers of the D'Argenson family—that Yvon's professional decisions were largely dictated by his material circumstances. Strapped for cash and in need of a patron, Yvon was willing to write for whomever would employ him. In this way, Yvon's tale fits perfectly with the stories of other Grub Street “hacks” compellingly told in the works of Robert Darnton and Darrin McMahon. While Burson is willing to dive into the depths of eighteenth-century philosophy, his book also makes a compelling case for the centrality of social and economic conditions to the lives and careers of Enlightenment *philosophes*.

The Culture of Enlightening does nothing less than offer a new vision of the Enlightenment, one that is less about portioning off the intellectual movement into distinct, reified groups and more about a shared, common culture of borrowing and mutually constructive debates. In emphasizing the *process* of enlightening over the phenomenon of “Enlightenment,” Burson seeks to find a *via media* between those who would doggedly defend a vision of the Enlightenment that is nothing other than radical and secularizing and those who seek to fragment the very concept of Enlightenment until it no longer retains any intellectual coherence. Burson's culture of enlightening is akin to the art of remixing—the creation of something new through borrowing, transforming, and appropriating. And in Burson's telling, everyone from famous *philosophes* to Jesuits to overlooked, irascible abbés played the role of DJ.

Daniel J. Watkins

History Department, Baylor University, Waco, TX, USA

Daniel_Watkins@Baylor.edu

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Sophie Nicholls, *Political Thought in the French Wars of Religion*. Ideas in Context. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. xiv + 269. Hb, \$99.99.

Despite the title, this is a study of the political thought of the (second) French Catholic League, from roughly 1585 to 1595. The League was a significant movement, controlling the bulk of France for several years (though not without Spanish military intervention), provoking the assassination of King Henri III, and successfully pressuring his successor, Henri IV, to convert to Catholicism. Its internal fractiousness, rapid dissolution after Henri's conversion, and

penchant for terrorism, along with the subsequent triumphs of the Bourbon dynasty, have, however, left it with a persistent reputation for being unserious and radical to the point of irrelevance. Nicholls sets out to rehabilitate the Leaguers' significance as political thinkers, making a convincing argument that they owed little to the Protestant monarchomachs but instead shared a reasonably coherent commitment to a Catholic monarchical commonwealth understood in terms derived mainly from Scholastic and neo-Scholastic philosophy. It is less obvious how this reinterpretation should change our evaluation of the League's place in early modern European politics.

The book is organized thematically in eight chapters, each one built around the analysis of a few texts drawn from the extensive polemical literature of the time. After an introductory chapter, Nicholls considers the relationship of the League to its opponents, demonized as *politiques*, arguing that this did not constitute a rejection of political reason itself but rather a claim to superior political science based on a true understanding of the role of religion in human society. The following two chapters continue to trace out commonalities between Leaguer thought and the rest of sixteenth-century French political discourse. Like Protestants and *politiques*, the League idealized the role of both the Estates General and the parlements (particularly that of Paris) in France's "ancient constitution," and they shared the Gallicanism of most French Catholics, arguing strongly for the uniqueness and relative independence of the French church. This was the source of some embarrassment given the centrality of the (papal) excommunication incurred by the two Henris to the Leaguer struggle. In response, Leaguers emphasized the role of the French clergy as guardians of the Christian commonwealth in excluding insufficiently Catholic kings. Throughout this discussion, Nicholls notes the frequently clerical character of League political thought.

Chapter 6 digs more deeply into the sources of League political thought, particularly through a close reading of the *De justa reipublicæ christianæ autoritate*, one of the most extensive League treatises but a difficult one to interpret given its uncertain authorship. Here she traces a significant dependence on neo-Scholasticism, recently championed in France by the Jesuit Juan Maldonado. The *De justa* drew on such theories to emphasize the natural powers of the political community and the extent of ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Christian monarchies, as well as to defend the role of assassins. Its author also drew on thinkers like Domingo de Soto to argue against the proposition that the king was the primary owner of all property in the kingdom—perhaps overkill, since private property had been defended by a consensus of political thinkers since Aristotle. That consensus included Jean Bodin, who despite his strongly

royalist outlook joined the League once it seized Laon, where he then lived. Nicholls points out that this need not have involved excessive mental gymnastics given his theoretical position that royal sovereignty was limited only, but truly, by natural and divine law. The final chapter delves into the Leaguer ideal of *patria*, an issue made fraught by their (rather reluctant) acceptance of Spanish military support and (for a minority) serious consideration of Spanish candidates for the French throne. Nicholls argues that their conception of a Christian republic made the Catholic Church a common *patria*, such that no good Catholic could truly be a foreigner in France, just as no heretic could truly be a native. She supports this with a reading of the works of English Catholic exiles, particularly William Allen and the Jesuit Robert Persons.

That argument is her least convincing one. Not only does it place undue weight on the English exiles—and on the French supporters of Philip II who were hardly more representative of the movement as a whole—but it ascribes a false symmetry to the proposition that the Roman Church was the common homeland of all Catholics. Rome may have been the *patria* of all French Catholics, but France was hardly the *patria* of all Roman Catholics. Still, this careful and thorough study has considerable virtues. It underlines the continuities that the League, like contemporary groups of militant Catholics, had with the mainstream of early modern Europe. By laying out the major works of Leaguer theory and tracing the network of borrowing and influence that connected them, including the European networks of which they were a part, it provides a useful tool for understanding how the movement worked. Thus, even though, as Nicholls notes, the Jesuits were later accused of being the moving spirit of the League, in fact (except for the English exiles) their main contribution was to provide intellectual tools at a very high level of generality. In that context, one might note one outright factual error. Nicholls describes Jean Chastel, who attempted to assassinate Henri IV in 1595, as a “Jesuit” (56): he was merely a student at the Jesuit college in Paris.

Nicholls’s account of the League also raises questions about its place in the longer trajectory of French political life. The project of building an opposition movement around Aristotelean/ Scholastic ideals of a Christian royal commonwealth was not new: it had recurred in France since at least the 1350s. More explicit comparisons between the League and its ideological predecessors would be illuminating. But the League was also the last such movement. If, as Nicholls claims, this was not because its unique radicalism and fanaticism discredited the entire enterprise, we are left with something of a mystery. Perhaps the rising tides of modernity were simply making such modes

of thought obsolete, though Nicholls seems reluctant to take that view either. At any rate, there is clearly more work to do to fully understand the political thought of this period.

Jotham Parsons

History Department, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA, USA

parsonsj@duq.edu

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Larissa Brewer-García. *Beyond Babel: Translations of Blackness in Colonial Peru and New Granada*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. 321. Hb, \$99.99.

In the last decade, scholars of Colonial Latin America have increasingly turned their focus to the role of translators and intermediaries in the production of knowledge for and about native populations. Less studied, however, has been the role Black interpreters and mediators played in contesting and creating notions and discourses of blackness. Partly, this is a reflection of the archive itself. Unlike Indigenous languages that were studied and described by Spanish missionaries and for which a rich corpus of grammars, vocabularies, and sermon collections (among other genres) survive, no equivalent linguistic efforts were carried out by priests in regard to the different languages spoken by those who survived the Middle Passage. Larissa Brewer-García's *Beyond Babel* aims to cover this gap. By focusing on archival material—particularly the Jesuit *litterae annuae* and the beatification inquest of Pedro Claver—Brewer-García brings to the fore the lives and works of several enslaved Black interpreters working for the Jesuits in Cartagena and Lima. The book highlights how, occupying an intermediary space between the authority of the priests and their lack of knowledge of African languages, they adopted a position of interpretive authority that allowed them to redefine notions of blackness, in particular, black beauty, and black virtue. The reading of the spiritual diary of Úrsula de Jesús, a freed Black woman who took vows at Lima's Convent of Santa Clara, and whose role as a mystic and spiritual mediator led to the writing of two anonymous hagiographies of her in the seventeenth century, allows Brewer-García to probe how the conceptualization of blackness born out of the work of Black interpreters in Cartagena circulated throughout the Peruvian viceroyalty.

Beyond Babel is comprised of five chapters. Chapter One analyzes the different stereotypes about Black people that circulated in Iberian culture during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Brewer-García identifies three kinds of