THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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1. General

Giora Sternberg, Status Interaction During the Reign of Louis XIV, OUP, xiii + 209 pp., deals with expressions of, and conflicts over, status interaction, which were more widespread than we might imagine, with linguistic, sartorial, spatial, and behavioural consequences. Of particular interest to our period is chapter 6 (129–58), ‘Epistolary Ceremonial: Manuscript Correspondence as Unmediated Status Interaction’, which provides some fascinating lexical analysis of how letters can reveal much, from the initial salutation (‘Monsieur’ or ‘Monseigneur’ to a prince) to other vocabulary such as ‘attachement’, ‘respect’, and ‘estime’. This is a wide-ranging and closely developed study as well as a readable one, all too often an oxymoron with such works.

Anna Blum, La Diplomatie de la France en Italie du nord au temps de Richelieu et de Mazarin. ‘Les sages jalousies’, Garnier, 701 pp., has some revealing insights into relations between the two nations, which often involved questions of taste and art.

La Colonisation des Antilles. Textes français du XVIIe siècle, ed. Réal Ouellet, 2 vols, Hermann, x + 521, 522–977 pp., provides and glosses a rich gamut of texts which include articles of incorporation, travel narratives, documents from religious orders, and descriptions of animals and fruit.

Joan DeJean, How Paris Became Paris. The Invention of the Modern City, New York, Bloomsbury, 307 pp., demonstrates that Paris underwent a degree of image branding and urban change in the 17th c. which was far more substantial and far-reaching than Haussmann’s later reshaping of the city. D.’s analysis allows the reader to imagine the cityscape of the capital during our period and the first chapter, ‘The bridge where Paris became Modern: The Pont Neuf’ (21–44) is a fascinating and illuminating examination of the bridge’s importance in Paris’s emerging international reputation.


Solange Rameix, Justifier la guerre. Censure et propagande dans l’Europe du XVIIe siècle...
FRENCH STUDIES
36 (France-Angleterre), Rennes U.P., 373 pp., looks at the ways in which counter-propaganda and satire changed the attitudes of the British and French monarchy towards free speech, seeing Louis XIV’s 1709 appeal to the people to continue fighting as the culmination of this process in France. The absence of any reference to Annie Duprat’s work is disappointing. Pierre Bonnet, ‘Biographies et libelles de la fin du règne de Louis XIV à la Régence: des “vies privées” avant les vies privées?’, pp. 27–43 of Biographie et politique. Vie publique, vie privée de l’Ancien Régime à la Restauration, ed. Olivier Ferret and Anne-Marie Mercier-Faivre, Lyons U.P., 293 pp., is a brief appraisal of the trend towards ‘la privatisation de la figure royale’ (29).


Florence Lefeuvre, Étude grammaticale du français classique dans les textes, PSN, 193 pp., is divided into sections dealing with specific grammatical uses such as ‘qui et quiconque’, or ‘dont et quel’ and will be of use to scholars editing early modern texts. In fleshing out the six decades it took to produce the official dictionary, L. peppers her narrative with anecdotes, such as Boisrobert writing in 1646 that he would be lucky to live to see the letter G, one of the issues being that ‘not all the academicians were equally talented or even equally enthusiastic’ (33). L. suggests that three complementary types of French dictionary were produced during the period: literary (Richelet); encyclopedic (Furetière); and grammatical (Académie).

Histoire des traductions en langue française: XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, 1610–1815, ed. Yves Chevrel, Annie Cointre, and Yen-Mai Tran-Gervat, Lagrasse, Verdier, 1373 pp., contains much of interest to our period, including a chapter on translators (103–85) which considers the different types of translators (royal, instructors, Jesuits, journalists) as well as biographies of individuals such as Jean Baudoin (151–54) and Marc Pérachon (154–58) who were active during the 17th century.

