

The Reception of Bodin. Howell A. Lloyd, ed.

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One of the major outcomes of a research project on the French jurist, economist, natural philosopher, historian, and political theorist Jean Bodin, which was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council of the United Kingdom, is, besides a very useful website, this rich collection of essays on the reception of Bodin. Each single contribution was originally presented as a paper at a conference and clearly bears the fruits of mature reflection and thorough discussion. What makes the volume so valuable is its double perspective. On the one hand, Bodin is considered as an author himself, who read and collected material, arranged it in a specific order, and used it to construct his own ideas and arguments. On the other hand, Bodin's work is approached as the starting point of a tradition of its own, whereby the focus is not on the (passive) influence of Bodin, but on the (active) interpretation of his readers. By approaching the Angevin and his followers that way, the editor and contributors could shed a unique light on the dynamics of cultural continuity and change. These methodological insights are explained in a first chapter written by Peter Burke that stands a bit apart from the other texts in that it is not devoted to Bodin in particular. Burke's contribution discusses the concept of reception but does not look at it from the point of view of the donor. He consistently speaks of receptions, in the plural.

At the heart of the volume are three of Bodin's works, viz. the *Methodus ad Facilem Historiarum Cognitionem*, on the nature of historical interpretation; *Les Six livres de la République*, in which he introduces and analyzes the concept of sovereignty; and *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, which contains his views on sorcery and witchcraft. One-third of the contributions look into the ways in which Bodin himself was active as a reader and an author. Marie-Dominique Cuizinet explicates Bodin's methodology by reflecting on how he used (some of) his sources and how his methodological principles related to those of Ramus. Focusing in more detail on Bodin's sources, Mark Greengrass examines what he calls Bodin's *Lebenswelt* — that is, his experiential world based on a combination of the senses in accordance with reason. Greengrass studies how this experiential material fitted within and worked among the other citations and figures. Looking at a very particular kind of source, Virginia Krause treats the role and function of confessions in the *De la démonomanie* by elucidating what methods Bodin used to interpret them and what place he accorded to (self-)censorship. In his contribution Christian Martin urges us to rethink the reception of the Dutch physician Johann Weyer in Bodin's writing on witchcraft, pointing at the Angevin's ambivalent attitude that not only rejected Weyer's position on witchcraft, but also accepted the latter's ideas on possession.

The chapter by Ann Blair functions as a kind of Janus chapter: she looks both at Bodin's practice as an author and the first traces of his reception. She does so by

analyzing how he controlled the first editions of his works and how he responded to critics of his *République*. She thereby pays special attention to the construction of his various personas through the conscious use he made of his Latin and vernacular writings.

The bigger part of the volume is devoted to the reception of Bodin with chapters on his afterlife in England, the German Empire, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, the Roman Catholic Church, and France. Several contributors devote themselves to the reception of his *République*. Jan Machielsen studies how two pamphlets in the Netherlands incorporated so many Bodinian ideas that perhaps Bodin himself acted as author. Harald E. Braun turns to Castilian political thought and shows how the *République* became part of the Castilian canon on political science. Evidence thereof can be found in Gaspar de Añastro's translation of the *République* and the many traces of Bodinian political thought that can be found in the work of the jurist Jerónimo Castillo and the theologians Juan de Mariana and Juan Márquez. The reception of Bodin in the Holy Roman Empire is discussed by Robert von Friedenburg, who not only analyzes the place of Bodin in the work of Hermann Conring, but also presents a very useful review of the current research on the jurisdictional, political, and cultural developments in the empire. Luc Foisneau looks at the fate of the *République* across borders by focusing on the relation between sovereignty and reason of state in Bodin, Botero, Richelieu, and Hobbes. The theme of sovereignty is also at the core of Vittor Ivo Comparato's chapter on Bodin's readers in Italy. He convincingly argues that notwithstanding the condemnation of Bodin's works by the Church in 1596, they were still eagerly read during the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century. Diego Quaglioni focuses on the Italian reception of Bodin as well, but now on the Italian reception of Bodin outside Italy, more specifically in the work of Alberico Gentili, who is mentioned as an important precursor of Grotius. In the last chapter Glenn Burgess deals with the multiform reception of Bodin during the English Revolution. After a succinct but instructive overview of the various uses that were made of Bodin, Burgess shows how the work of the Angevin was appropriated by both Royalists and Parliamentarians and how he played a crucial role in formulations of a true commonwealth.

At the beginning of the book Howell Lloyd, the editor of the volume, has clearly set out the goals of the present collection of studies. Now, at the end of it, he summarizes the major findings and shows how the various chapters have met the expectations. By doing so, he strongly contributes to the coherence of the volume, which — it has to be said — even surpasses the goals that he set at the beginning. This is undoubtedly a major scholarly work, exemplary in many ways, that sheds a unique light on the practice of Bodin as an author and the ways in which many of his ideas were incorporated and appropriated.

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