

self and the impossibility of knowledge? But one makes these quibbles with trepidation. For the school of Montaigne has had—and continues to have—textbooks in many editions, countless students, myriad teachers. Warren Boutcher is, quite simply, one of its finest instructors.

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*Montaigne à l'étranger: Voyages avérés, possibles et imaginés.* Philippe Desan, ed. Rencontres 260. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2016. 354 pp. €39.

As the volume's editor makes abundantly clear in his introduction, travel is instrumental to Michel de Montaigne's thought and to the *Essays*. Above all, it enables one to engage in situ with other nations' beliefs and customs, and so, to arrive at a more enlightened understanding of one's own and to a greater flexibility of intellect and character—all invaluable qualities, especially in times of dogmatic and political implacability, as were the French civil wars. The *Travel Journal* is arguably all the more valuable to appreciating the *Essays* because it brings a unique experiential dimension to Montaigne's writing about human society. However, the text poses considerable challenges to analysis. Montaigne never published his travel journal, and it was not until the 1770s that the manuscript was discovered, published for the first time, and subsequently lost. Analysis is further complicated by the fact that it is written in part by a secretary and in part by Montaigne, who expresses himself for a significant portion of it in a (relatively) foreign language, Italian. Inspired by such challenges, this volume invites the reader to consider anew the status of the *Travel Journal* within Montaigne's oeuvre, specifically as a record of critical practice (*pratique critique*) rather than as a literary text. Far from questioning the *Travel Journal*'s centrality, this collection means to show that studying Montaigne while he is far from home can “broaden reader reception of the *Essays*” (9).

The volume's most salient quality in this regard is the rich intellectual, political, and cultural context it provides for appreciating the places and people that capture Montaigne's attention. Having eschewed the constraints of literary analysis, contributors are free to explore the significance of ostensibly peripheral details as well as material fundamental to Montaigne's works. Some aspects of Montaigne's journal explored here, and often from different perspectives, include his place in the nascent genres of literary and didactic travel narrative; how he navigates the challenges of traveling through early modern Europe, including Montaigne's appropriation of the Italian language; his commerce with the intellectuals, thermal baths, and books that punctuate his itineraries; his experience as a humanist abroad; and, in one instance, Montaigne's small but decisive contribution to the recent reconstitution of a lost marvel of hydraulic engineering. Moreover, as announced, some of the present studies originate in journeys inspired by Montaigne's and the contributor's imagination (*voyages imaginés*), as well as in journeys Montaigne likely made (*voyages possibles*), and those he documented substantially

(*voyages avérés*). The former are especially compelling when events pertinent to Montaigne's life serve to clarify a briefly recorded yet arresting detail and its relevance to the larger scope of his travels (e.g., Élisabeth Schneikert on Montaigne's unfulfilled desire to see Cracow). Considering the *Travel Journal* from yet another perspective, it is fitting in a volume where this text figures as a record of critical practice that several contributors study Montaigne in various postures of essaying himself against the practices and opinions he encounters abroad. Whether Montaigne is testing his mind or his character, or using his body as a laboratory to process physically as well as intellectually local cuisine and established medical wisdom, this approach often conveys the underlying consonance between Montaigne, the *Essays*, and his journal, as imperfect as it may be (e.g., Amy Graves-Monroe on the parallels between Montaigne's authorial, apodemic, and intestinal digestion).

While Montaigne and his works may appear marginalized in the contributions that address more narrowly defined fields of inquiry, ultimately this volume offers an impressive breadth of insight into the diverse milieus that shaped Montaigne's experience abroad, and so facilitates access to the now-remote realities to which he responds and which he records in his journal. In terms of presentation, the quantitative and technical studies contain helpful illustrations and, as a whole, the volume is complemented with rich footnotes, bibliographic references, an *index nominem*, and summaries of individual contributions. Although *Montaigne à l'étranger* speaks especially to readers familiar with the *Essays*, it may well inspire readers more and less familiar with Montaigne's works to continue exploring them, in a different light.

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*Playing the Martyr: Theater and Theology in Early Modern France.*

Christopher Semk.

Scènes francophone. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2017. xxiii + 174 pp. \$75.

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Christopher Semk's elegant and economical study affords a refreshingly evenhanded treatment of the two terms of his title. This is not, in other words, a book about the theater with a few gestures in the direction of theology, but rather a serious scrutiny of the implications of different modes of representation as they are understood dramatically, liturgically, and sacramentally. After the introduction, in which he advances the broad hypothesis that martyr tragedies are a kind of staged variant on the thematics of the *Imitation of Christ* (translated into French in 1651–56 by Pierre Corneille), Semk divides the central part of his inquiry into four chapters. The first covers the broad question of the separation of church and stage, beginning with some unexpected links between the (theatrical) Hôtel de Bourgogne and the (pious) Confrérie du Saint-Sacrement, as well as such vernacular manifestations of sacred drama as the cycle of plays performed in the Burgundian town of Alise-Sainte-Reine. In so