

Journal du règne de Henri IV, Tome II: 1592–1594 (transcription Ms. fr. 10299 et 25004 de la BnF). Pierre de L'Estoile.

Ed. Xavier Le Person and Gilbert Schrenck. With Mecking Volker. Textes Littéraires Français 630. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2014. xxiv + 548 pp. \$73.06.

This *Journal* completes the previous volumes of the *registre-journal* of the Parisian parliamentarian Pierre de L'Estoile and it reads like a political and military war of nerves. A true information mine about a crucial period in France's history, it recounts two major events: the conversion of Henri IV to Catholicism and his victorious entrance into Paris. This *Journal* is endowed with particular dramatic tension: the concerns due to the hesitations of the king regarding his conversion and the terror spread by the Catholic League disappear as by enchantment with the victorious entrance of Henri IV into Paris, which is marked by the emotions of the people exhausted by the war and who, besides a small opposition, do not hide their joy at the return of the king and the promise of peace it represents.

This journal conveys the pulse of the capital by means of pamphlets, satirical verse in French and Latin that circulated in the streets, and other types of discourses that were held there. L'Estoile presents the view of a moderate Catholic, close to the Politiques, and keeps track of the operation of the league in order to denounce its strategies, which consist in blocking the road to the king and supporting the Duke of Mayenne while terrifying the Parisians. Our retrospective knowledge of Henri IV's success gives us the wrong impression of a smooth move and makes us forget that for the Parisians on the ground, nothing was less

certain. The *Journal* traces life in Paris as Henri IV approaches, following his victories that mark the conquest of the realm, and it describes the violence of the conflict, the fanaticism of the league, and the disempowerment of the Politiques. Paris was ruled by the Duke of Mayenne, who is described as trying to maintain peace without galvanizing the people against the king; also, the marshal de Brissac did not oppose his activities. In contrast, certain churchmen raged in their sermons — a true propaganda to which everyone was expected to obey in order to avoid the reprisals of the league. The most zealous one, the priest of Saint-André des Arts, spared no insult against the king he refused to accept. In this atmosphere of fear, violent battles erupted between the habitants.

The text's primary interest is to show us the way the people of Paris anxiously watched Henri IV's hesitations until he finally decided to convert to Catholicism and could then be crowned at Saint Denis. This crucial moment represented the growing recognition of the king by his people and the beginning of a massive rallying that infuriated the league. After the conquest of Vitry, the king entered Paris without a fight and everyone came to greet him. The king was animated by the spirit of forgiveness, and if he quickly won the support of the people of Paris it was because of his magnanimity, a politic dictated by the will of reconciliation and oblivion. The king wanted to turn the page and to work on the reconstruction of the devastated realm. Tried by the war, the people of Paris welcomed the king enthusiastically. L'Estoile, who normally wrote in an objective tone, took a more personal stance regarding the theatrical entrance of the king to Paris. The crowds were so numerous that Mesdames de Nemoux and de Montpensier, well-known league supporters, needed to stop in order to let the troupes approach the king; almost no one came to greet them and L'Estoile noted, "I looked with pleasure and considered the vanity of the world and wheel of fortune, that God operates, turning and returning as he pleases" (356).

The text is accompanied by a short preface, abundant historical notes, a lexicon (25 pages) helpful for the reconstruction of L'Estoile's idiolect, and a glossary (106 pages) composed by Volker Macking. As carefully prepared as the previous volumes of L'Estoile's *registre journal*, the bibliography is nonetheless succinct. This edition is a unique historical source, giving voice to the people, illustrating the difficult beginning of the reign of Henri IV, and presenting the birth of public opinion as well as the origins of the myth of Henri IV. (Thanks to Helena Skorovsky for her help in editing this review.)

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