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Pierre de L'Estoile, *Les Belles figures et drolleries de la Ligue: édition critique avec introduction et notes*, ed. Gilbert Schrenck, Geneva: Droz, 2016. xxxii + 416 pp. Notes, 96 illustrations, black and white, bibliography and index. 103.32€ (pb). ISBN 978-2-600-01619-3.

Pierre de L'Estoile, *Journal du règne de Henri IV. Tome III: 1595-1598 (transcription Ms. fr. 25004 et 13720 de la BnF)*, ed. Marie Houlemare, glossary by Volker Mecking, Geneva: Droz, 2016. Notes, 1 illustration, black and white, bibliography and index. 54.88€. (pb). ISBN 978-2-600-01916-3.

Review by Tom Hamilton, Trinity College, Cambridge.

Pierre de L'Estoile's diaries and collection are among the most significant sources for research into the Wars of Religion. None of L'Estoile's manuscripts were published during his lifetime (1546-1611), but they have appeared in many editions after Pierre Dupuy first edited fragments of them as a *Journal des choses mémorables advenues durant tout le regne de Henry III roy de France et de Pologne* (Paris, 1621). The ongoing publication with Droz since 1992 of the latest edition of L'Estoile's diaries, under the general editorship of Gilbert Schrenck, has surpassed all previous versions, establishing the resources for a new wave of research into L'Estoile and his world.[1] The six volumes of the *Registre-journal du règne de Henri III*, edited by Gilbert Schrenck and Madeleine Lazard, for the first time distinguished between the A and B manuscripts of L'Estoile's diary for the period 1574-89 and provided extensive scholarly notes.[2] Xavier Le Person completed the first two volumes of L'Estoile's *Journal du règne de Henri IV*, covering the period 1589-94, and incorporated intertextual research into contemporary erudite manuscript collections.[3] These volumes are now complemented by Schrenck's facsimile edition of *Les Belles figures et drolleries de la Ligue* and Marie Houlemare's volume of the *Journal du règne de Henri IV, 1595-1598*, both of which maintain the high standards of this ongoing edition and provide further opportunities for researchers to make use of L'Estoile's exceptional sources.

L'Estoile's compilation of *Les Belles figures et drolleries de la Ligue* consists of forty-six folios of printed broadsheets and manuscript pieces, mostly from the final phase of the Wars of Religion known as the troubles of the League (1585-c.1594). The manuscript is one of the treasures of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, stored in the Réserve des livres rares and classified by the individual pieces it contains, separated from L'Estoile's papers on the other side of Paris in the Département des manuscrits. The only previous edition of the *Drolleries*, published in 1877 under the direction of Pierre Gustav Brunet, reproduced the text that accompanied the images but not the images themselves.[4] Yet the *Drolleries* are most significant for the insight they give into the visual culture and the publishing strategies of the party of the Catholic League, an alliance of French nobles and cities under the leadership of the Guise family, with support from the Spanish monarchy and the papacy. The c.150 pieces that L'Estoile collected and compiled retrospectively are often the only surviving copies. They prominently display, for example, satirical broadsheets from the late reign of Henri III, denouncing the assassination he ordered of the duc and cardinal de Guise on 23 December 1588, and celebrating the king's own death after he was stabbed by the Dominican friar Jacques Clement on 1 August 1589. These ephemeral publications were decried by royalists as "scandalous and defamatory," then banned by an

ordinance published soon after Henri IV's defeat of the League in Paris and entry into the capital.[5] L'Estoile's collecting in the *Drolleries* preserved an exemplary copy of the documents that he acknowledged he "should have thrown them in the fire, as they deserved," yet kept "so they may serve in some way to show and expose the abuses, impostures, vanities, and furies of this great monster of the League" (pp. 4-5).

Schrenck's edition of the *Drolleries* does an excellent job of making this compilation available to researchers, with a clear introduction followed by reproductions on pages measuring 25 x 35 cm, including some fold-outs, that come close to replicating the original size of the collection. Although the illustrations appear in black and white, full-color reproductions can be consulted online via Gallica.[6] Schrenck's introduction gives useful information about the compilation, content, and later reception of the *Drolleries*. He emphasizes L'Estoile's commitment to censorship through a practice of compiling and commenting, so that L'Estoile's compiling creates a "palimpsest" that overwhelms the reader with its heterogeneity (p. xxiii). The overall effect is a "monstrous poetics," in which carnivalesque motifs constitute the polemical attacks made in individual pieces, rounded off by the appearance of wondrous sea creatures in the final pieces stuck into the compilation, which suggest how "the irruption of the inhuman and the barbarous is possible at any moment" (p. xxix). Schrenck's literary reading of the *Drolleries* is more persuasive than his claim that the images in the collection serve as a "precise barometer" of "real and symbolic violence" in the troubles, and a representation of "public opinion" (p. xi), terms that historians of the Wars of Religion have discussed critically from a variety of perspectives, but this qualification does not detract from the effectiveness of the introduction as a way of engaging researchers with the wonders of L'Estoile's collection.[7]

In general, Schrenck's edition is beautifully presented and thoroughly researched in the relevant secondary literature. Among the notes to pieces in the *Drolleries*, Schrenck cites several passages of overlap with L'Estoile's diaries for the reign of Henri IV, identifies key individuals, and references general literature about politics and publishing during the troubles of the League. A list of printers, booksellers, and engravers at the end reproduces details mentioned in the pieces. One error in the introduction (p. xix) bears some consequences for L'Estoile's biography, since L'Estoile took up his office as *audiencier* and *secrétaire du roi* in the Paris Chancery not in 1569 but in 1566, acquiring it from his step-father François Tronson.[8] L'Estoile's official activities involved signing printers' privileges, giving him a degree of oversight into Parisian publishing, which reinforced his censorious attitude towards the cheap print he compiled in the *Drolleries*. [9] An omission (fo. 42r of the facsimile and p. 349-50 of the edition) has consequences for understanding L'Estoile's attitudes as a collector. The transcription of a carefully assembled, fold-out *Portraitz de plusieurs hommes illustres* (1601) omits L'Estoile's annotations to two thumbnail portraits. Beneath a portrait of his godfather, the *conseiller* and eventually *président* in the Parlement Mathieu Chartier, and beneath a still-widely reproduced portrait of the humanist and physician François Rabelais, L'Estoile wrote that each image "does not resemble them at all." Perhaps future biographers of Rabelais should take heed of L'Estoile's judgment before selecting the cover image for their books. These comments reveal how L'Estoile assessed portraits for his collection like a connoisseur, privileging those that most closely resembled the original. He took the same approach to a portrait of Henri IV, to which L'Estoile added the annotation "everything is good about this portrait, apart from the face, which does not resemble the king at all" (fo. 38r and p. 308).

University teachers may want to make use of the *Drolleries* as a source of illustrations for lectures and class discussions on the Wars of Religion or early modern visual culture. These pieces might be fruitfully considered alongside, for example, printed broadsheets from across Europe in the Reformation era. Moreover, this volume opens up areas for future research into the politics and culture of the later Wars of Religion, especially inviting visual and literary analysis of the pieces contained in the collection, as well as wider patterns of the circulation of print and manuscript in Paris and throughout France.

L'Estoile's *Drolleries* formed part of his project of collecting and documenting his world in the Wars of Religion. The manuscript complements and expands on the content of his diaries, which combine narrative accounts with miscellaneous literary pieces copied into the manuscripts in the same way that L'Estoile pasted broadsheets into the *Drolleries*. Marie Houllemaire's latest instalment of L'Estoile's diaries takes the Droz edition into the period 1595-98 and so complements the *Drolleries* directly. Houllemaire's lucid introduction to this volume sets the scene in the aftermath of the troubles of the League and Henri IV's attempts to pacify the kingdom. Deploying her expertise in legal history, Houllemaire evokes the response of the Parlement of Paris to Jean Chastel's attempted regicide on 27 December 1594 and execution for *lèse majesté* two days later, and explores the political and legal mechanisms of pacification at the end of the civil wars, such as the *chambres mi-parties* in the *parlements* that allowed Protestants to be tried by a mixed bench of Catholic and Reformed judges.

Among the many strengths of Houllemaire's volume is its indication of L'Estoile's presentation on the page via diacritical marks, which can be checked against the digitalised manuscripts available via Gallica.[10] These annotations help to demonstrate how L'Estoile assembled and annotated fragments into his diaries like he compiled pieces in the *Drolleries*, although there are somewhat fewer libels in this volume than some of the earlier years in his diaries when the troubles of the League were at their peak. The scholarly apparatus is enriched with endnotes following each year of the diaries that are rich in detail concerning people, events, and institutions. They rely on a range of printed memoirs and treatises as well as erudite manuscript collections that correspond with L'Estoile's own, such as the Dupuy collection. Sometimes these notes helpfully contradict L'Estoile's account. For example, we learn that L'Estoile's report about a *conseiller* in the Châtelet, Du Lac, who died of "the illness that people say he caught from a whore that he slept with," goes against a notarial document discovered by Robert Descimon, which explains that Du Lac died of "the plague" (p. 97 and p. 112 n.103). Perhaps L'Estoile was indulging his sense of scandal in this account, or perhaps the notarial document was sparing the Du Lac family's blushes. In any case, it is important to acknowledge that L'Estoile cannot give the last word on events but only one informed voice in a world of gossip, especially around the lives and fortunes of royal office-holders.

Despite the overwhelming benefit of publishing L'Estoile's diaries in this format, the volume inherits some features of previous editions in ways that create distance from L'Estoile's original presentation. Although L'Estoile's two manuscripts for the period in question are titled "Mémoires-journaux depuis la réduction de Paris jusques à la fin de l'an 1597" (Bibliothèque nationale de France [hereafter BnF], ms. fr. 25004) and "Continuation de mes Mémoires, commencans le premier de l'an 1598 jusques à la fin de febvrier de l'an 1602 (BnF ms. fr. 13720), the volume persists with the customary title *Journal du règne de Henri IV* that L'Estoile never quite used himself. This title elides the differences between these manuscripts and L'Estoile's reflective, eyewitness account of the League years in the "Mémoires de P.D. depuis le 2<sup>e</sup> Aoust 1589 jour de la mort du Roy jusques au 22<sup>e</sup> Mars 1594 jour de la réduction de Paris" (BnF ms. fr. 10299) and the more expansive and miscellaneous set of manuscripts from the end of L'Estoile's life (BnF ms. fr. 10299-10302) which he termed the "*registres*" and "*mémoires-journaux*" of his "*curiosités*." The question of titles is raised in Houllemaire's impeccable manuscript description in this volume (pp. xxi-xxiii). Yet, by titling the entire series *Journal du règne de Henri IV*, this volume inherits the national, royal perspective imposed on L'Estoile's diaries by previous editors, to the detriment of his personal perspectives on his life and times.[11]

A further inherited difficulty for the volume is its narrow three-year time frame, which requires information to be repeated from previous volumes. This problem is most apparent in the lengthy glossary, which follows similar sections in the previous two volumes and takes up pp. 219-321 with technical linguistic detail about first attestations of terms, borrowings, regionalisms, and neologisms. Perhaps in the future these somewhat daunting lexical studies will be brought together and given a more substantial presentation, to suggest their usefulness for historians and scholars of the period as opposed to linguists alone. How did L'Estoile's use of language relate to his wider project of record-

keeping? One neologism highlighted by the glossary suggests a strong link to L'Estoile's Gallican attitude: "*desjésuiter*," which signifies "*quitter l'état monastique jésuite*," is one way of describing his hope for the future of the Church in France.

Overall, these volumes present an extremely welcome addition to the ongoing publication of L'Estoile's manuscripts. The edition of the *Drolleries* is particularly significant as the first of L'Estoile's miscellanies to be edited as part of this series. The latest instalment of the *Journal du règne de Henri IV* maintains the high standards of previous volumes and adds a wealth of detail through its textual apparatus. Together these editions open the way for new research into the politics, society, and culture in the Wars of Religion, presenting L'Estoile as a source primarily for historians and literary scholars, but perhaps now also in visual culture and linguistics. Readers will eagerly await the next installments in this series.

## NOTES

[1] Each volume of the Droz editions includes an up-to-date bibliography of work on L'Estoile, mostly short articles. Book-length studies are Florence Greffe and José Lothe, *La Vie, les livres et les lectures de Pierre de L'Estoile: nouvelles recherches* (Paris: Champion, 2004) and my forthcoming book, Tom Hamilton, *Pierre de L'Estoile and his World in the Wars of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[2] Pierre de L'Estoile, *Registre-journal du règne de Henri III*, eds. Madeleine Lazard and Gilbert Schrenck, (Geneva: Droz, 1992-2003).

[3] Pierre de L'Estoile, *Journal du règne de Henri IV, 1589-1594*, ed. Xavier Le Person, (Geneva: Droz, 2011 and 2014).

[4] Pierre de L'Estoile, *Mémoires-journaux de Pierre de L'Estoile*, ed. Pierre Gustave Brunet et al., vol. iv (Paris: Librairie des bibliophiles, 1875-96).

[5] Archives nationales, Y 19, 1 April 1594.

[6] BnF, Département Réserve des livres rares, RES FOL-LA25-6, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k859264h>, accessed January 30 2017.

[7] Most recently, Graeme Murdock, Penny Roberts, and Andrew Spicer, (eds), *Ritual and Violence: Natalie Zemon Davis and Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[8] Greffe and Lothe, *La Vie, les livres et les lectures*, 95.

[9] Hamilton, *Pierre de L'Estoile*, 60-8.

[10] BnF ms. fr. 25004, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9063956c.r=25004?rk=21459;2> and BnF ms. fr. 13720, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000781j?rk=21459;2>, accessed January 30 2017

[11] Notably Dupuy's 1621 edition, cited above, and Pierre de L'Estoile, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France, contenant ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable dans ce royaume, depuis 1515 jusqu'en 1611*, ed. Jacob Le Duchat and Jean Godefroy (Cologne, 1719).

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