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Natalia Wawrzyniak, Lamentation et polémique au temps des guerres de Religion. Bibiothèque d'histoire de la Renaissance 12. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2017. 279 pp. Bibliography, index nominum, index rerum. €73.00 (hb). ISBN 978-2-406-06014-7; €32.00 (pb). ISBN 978-2-406-06013-0.

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Lamentation et polémique au temps des guerres de Religion, a modified version of Natalia Wawrzyniak's 2015 University of Warsaw doctoral thesis, seeks to demonstrate that French polemic of the period of the Wars of Religion is the "produit d'une longue maturation de la tradition poétique et rhétorique" (p. 13). Focusing on lamentation as a privileged mode of sixteenth-century polemic, rather than looking to highlight discursive innovation or to reconstitute political arguments, Wawrzyniak aims to recover the rhetorical and above all poetic practices that such works inherited and exploited. Although Wawrzyniak does deal with the forms of intellectual persuasion these polemical works employ, one of her main concerns is to highlight the emotional effects that such works were designed to exert via the enlistment of specifically poetic strategies.

Citing as inspiration Florence Alazard's work on Renaissance plainte and lamento, [1] Wawrzyniak does not associate polemical lamentation with any particular genre. Though the polemical works of Pierre de Ronsard frequently appear as points of reference, and there are passing mentions of the writings of the well-known polemical poet Agrippa d'Aubigné, the focus is on the works of what the author fairly describes as minor writers. The analysis remains largely in the realm of the discursive, since the historical record has left little trace of the reception that most of these works might have met.

Rather than put forward a chronological argument, the book inventories the principal rhetorical and poetic elements of a corpus of mostly short, mostly printed publications from the period of the Wars of Religion that exhibit the features of "polemical lamentation." The mode of lamentation, Wawrzyniak perceptively observes, serves to tether polemic to a truth claim by "offr[ant] à la polémique un modèle de discours véridique" (p. 26). She further insists that the polemical claim to speak the truth—although it inevitably involves the symbolic annihilation of an adversary—must be understood in terms of a long-term goal to "pacifier plutôt qu'à inciter de la violence, à unir plutôt qu'à diviser" (p. 22). With its capacity to provoke pity, the poetic mode of lamentation enhances the potential of polemical works to reconcile warring readers.

Following the introduction, the study is divided into four major parts, each of which privileges a different aspect of polemical lamentation. "L'Èthos du polémiste souffrant" examines three figures: the inspired poet, the prophet, and the "bon Français." The first type is exemplified by the royalist poet François d'Amboise (1550-1619). While the few excerpts given of Amboise's lamentatory verse supply ample evidence of a rhetoric of poetic inspiration, the polemical dimension is harder to discern; Wawrzyniak ultimately characterizes his oeuvre as an original contribution to "la poésie des temps belliqueux" (p. 42). The figure of the poet-prophet is subsequently analyzed in a series of (mostly anonymous) works. Here again, the specifically polemical dimension of the texts is not always made clear; at times it seems as if a poet simply moves through lamentation and on to polemic (e.g., Antoine Crespin, discussed on pp. 52-53). The brevity of the individual analyses-some no longer than a short paragraph--and the unfamiliarity of the texts make it difficult to assess the degree to which lamentation actually becomes a mode of polemical utterance. Similarly, while the figure of a suffering "bon Français" as it appears in the half-dozen prose works discussed in the last section of part one undoubtedly serves to ground a truth claim, it sometimes seems as if Wawrzyniak takes the rhetoric of truth-telling to be polemical in and of itself, even when no specific adversaries are targeted. Though the intent here is obviously to expand our conception of polemic beyond that which is overtly "aggressif et haineux" (p. 221), one must ask how far the term can be stretched before it simply turns into something else.

Part two, "Poétique de la lamentation," offers a "genéalogie littéraire de la plainte polémique" (p. 68) and seeks to explain how "le 'voile' de la poésie transforme...les vérités partisanes" (p. 68). Individual texts get a more sustained treatment here, as Wawrzyniak examines what pastoral, allegorical, historical, and tragic lamentation from the period of the Wars of Religion owes to medieval precedents. The analyses of the ways in which bellicose themes are modulated through generic conventions reveals that works that merely represent a debate without necessarily taking sides in it fall under the rubric of "polemical lamentation" in this study. Robert Garnier's tragic theater, known for its political inconclusiveness, is characterized in passing as polemical, for example (p. 120); similarly, in Jean-Baptiste Bellaud's *Bergerie tragique* (1574), "l'enjeu polémique est de représenter dans le contexte de ce paysage champêtre épuré tous les aléas de la politique sous la forme d'une lutte dichotomique suggestive" (p. 85).

Drawing fruitfully on the work of Denis Crouzet, part three, "Rhétorique de la lamentation," examines how various forms of lamentation—in prose and in verse, and in political, juridical, and religious settings—aimed to unify the French polity by provoking pity on the part of readers and thereby reconciling the warring factions to whom they were addressed. Examples including some speeches of Michel de l'Hospital, but ranging from a 1562 manuscript that juxtaposes Catherine de Medicis to Artemisa (pp.148-49) to Jean de la Taille's 1562 Remonstrance pour le roy (pp. 160-62) to the discours and harangues of Jacques Du Perron published around 1600 (pp. 166-69), give rise to a number of stimulating observations on the overarching theme of commiseratio.

If discussion of polemic tends to hover in the background in part three, part four, "Lamentation comme ars polemica," returns to the recent work of Tatiana Debaggi Baranova (A coup de libelles: une culture politique au temps des guerres de Religion, also mentioned in the introduction) and to a more familiar conception of polemic as defamation. [2] Reiterating the insight that even the most aggressive polemical works sought to function as "une sorte de fabrique de l'unanimité" (p. 216), Wawrzyniak reads unanimity in pacific terms, asserting that "la paix et le 'repos' sont,

au final, désirés par tous" (p. 220). This no doubt explains why, in the end, the author privileges exhortations for peace, which she considers "polemical" precisely because of their calls for unity. The ultimate circularity of this chain of reasoning is at the root of the book's approach to polemical discourse.

With its polyvalent corpus and free-ranging mode of enquiry, Lamentation et polémique au temps des guerres de Religion unquestionably manages to "enrichir la perception de la littérature polémique" (p. 221, one way in which the book's aim is formulated). Because of the author's resistance to synthesis, the specific ways in which one's views will be enriched will depend overwhelmingly on what one brings to the work as a reader. As Wawrzyniak states in her introduction, "le sujet de ce livre a été inspiré par les propos des historiens" (p. 23), and the book's case studies appear to be designed primarily with a readership of historians in mind, with the aim of drawing attention to rhetorical and above all poetic techniques that historians who study this material might otherwise not consider. Led along by the polyvalence of her sources, the author has read widely in the secondary literature; thus, the relevant French and American historians of the book, social historians, and historians of ideas are cited throughout, and it is as a response to their interventions that Wawrzyniak most consistently frames her points. At the same time, the frequent yet rather laconic references to Ronsard and Aubigné, as well as the running dialogue with highly specialized literary scholarship, seem to be directed to readers who are not only well-versed in pre-modern poetics and the history of literary reception, but also deeply familiar with the scholarship on these two major authors.

NOTES

[1] Florence Alazard, ed. La plainte à la Renaissance : journées d'études, CESR, Tours (16 et 17 novembre 2005) (Paris: H. Champion, 2008). Florence Alazard, Le Lamento dans l'Italie de la Renaissance. « Pleure, belle Italie, jardin du monde » (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010.

[2] Tatiana Debbagi Baranova, À coups de libelles. Une culture politique au temps des guerres de Religion (1562-1598) (Genève : Droz, 2012).

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