

Soviet-era Kozintsev and Welles in Hollywood are not notably sensitive to Christian elements, and Luhrmann's treatment of Catholic imagery is not exactly subtle. The final chapter engages such critics who are alert to religious ideas as G. Wilson Knight and Roland Frye, and Baker properly responds to the issues raised by Stephen J. Greenblatt in *Hamlet and Purgatory*. But elsewhere in the book Baker misstates some crucial facts (Savonarola was burnt, not hanged; Erasmus was associated with Cambridge, not Oxford), and he cites approvingly the work of A. G. Dickens, whose partisan treatment of Protestantism has now largely been derided as naive and simplistic. Worse, he fails to engage at length the most recent scholarship on the persistence of Catholic faith in Shakespeare's age, as in the work of Eamon Duffy and Richard Wilson. The collection of primary documents may well be helpful to students, but a number of the choices are readily available elsewhere. Surely the space devoted to reprinting the Bower of Bliss episode from Book II of *The Faerie Queene* could have been given to key texts that are harder to find in literary anthologies, such as Hugh Latimer's *Sermon of the Plough*. Also, a caveat about the cover illustration: the well-known painting of the interior of the Temple of Lyon is fine, but surely an English illustration would have been more to the point. This book is an interesting grab-bag, but one has to wonder how useful the student or the general reader will actually find it.

Rebecca Ard Boone. *War, Domination, and the Monarchy of France: Claude de Seyssel and the Language of Politics in the Renaissance*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007, xvi + 196 pp. \$99.00. Review by PAUL COHEN, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO.

The traditional view of Claude de Seyssel (c. 1450-1520) sees him as one among many Renaissance men of letters who pledged their learning and pen to the praise and service of the French crown. His translations into French of classical texts are held up as evidence of his humanist credentials, his *Histoire singulière du roy Louis XII* as an example of the learned literature of royal praise inspired by the increasingly powerful and assertive French monarchy, and his political treatise *La Grant Monarchie de France* as an important early contribution

to French constitutional thought.

In her fine book on Seyssel, Rebecca Ard Boone proposes a convincing new interpretation of the man and thinker which departs from older readings in important ways. She argues that Seyssel's writings only make sense when closely juxtaposed with his career. Boone's engagingly written and carefully historicized study paints the portrait not of a lover of classical learning, but rather of a deeply political animal, preoccupied by war and diplomacy, drawn to secrecy in the exercise of his official functions, and interested in classical learning only insofar as it could illuminate contemporary, strategic concerns.

The bastard son of one of the leading families in the independent duchy of Savoy's traditional, military aristocracy, Seyssel was educated in Italy and taught law at the University of Turin before entering the French king's service. In the course of his career, Seyssel translated ancient Greek and Roman histories into French, helped to manage French efforts to establish control over conquered Italian territories during the Italian wars, notably in the duchy of Milan and in the French suppression of the Genoese revolt of 1507, traveled secretly to Switzerland in order to hire Swiss infantry regiments for the French army, and represented the French crown in diplomatic negotiations with the Papacy. Alongside his tireless efforts on behalf of Charles VIII, Louis XII, and François I, Seyssel also promoted the duchy of Savoy's interests throughout his career—an important reminder that the exclusive loyalties of modern nationalism had little purchase in early modern Europe. After years as absentee bishop of Marseille, Seyssel finally took up his episcopal responsibilities at the close of his life, first in Marseille and then as bishop of Turin.

Boone's book, based primarily on Seyssel's published works and his manuscripts housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the Biblioteca Nazionale di Torino, offers a sharply drawn contextualization of his writings emphasizing the importance of their social, cultural, and, above all, political environment. Chapter One examines Seyssel's multivariiegated career as jurist, diplomat, adviser to the duchy of Savoy and the French king, bishop, and humanist, interpreting it as a trajectory appropriate for the illegitimate scion of a powerful aristocratic family. Chapter Two situates Seyssel's writings in the context of his extensive diplomatic service. By comparing his

diplomatic harangues, like the oration he presented to Henry VII in 1506 as part of French efforts to improve relations with England, and the confidential reports he filed from his diplomatic missions, like the secret dispatches he sent to the French king from Rome, with his political treatises, Boone shows that Seyssel crafted his writings as well-informed briefs aimed at assisting his patrons in making crucial policy decisions. Chapter Three likewise analyzes Seyssel's translations of ancient histories not as humanist-inflected exercises in antiquarian erudition, but rather as a means to convey precious military and strategic information to his prince. In Chapter Four Boone presents a reinterpretation of the *Monarchie de France* in light of Seyssel's own work on behalf of the French war effort in Italy. She argues that Seyssel drew on classical history as a means to articulate concrete solutions to the challenges of France's military campaign in Italy. Chapter Five similarly reads the *Monarchie* against the background of Seyssel's work on behalf of the French occupation of Milan and Genoa. In the final chapter, Boone examines Seyssel's brief career as bishop of Marseille and Turin and his religious writings.

For Boone, Seyssel must be seen as a traditional military aristocrat in erudite clothing, a sword noble barred from the battlefield by his bastard birth and episcopal office, but no less committed to serving his French and Savoyard masters' military and political ambitions as best he could: a man more preoccupied by iron, blood, and power than by the contemplative life or classical culture. His interest in Antiquity was motivated by precisely the same imperatives—Seyssel saw in the record of the rise and fall of Greek city states and the Roman empire a toolbox of effective military techniques and political lessons, which could be applied to the battlefields of Europe and the councils of state in his own day.

Boone proposes to read Seyssel's theoretical writings on the nature of the French monarchy, notably the *Monarchie*, in a similar way. Where many scholars have seen in his description of the French king's authority bridled by religion, justice, and custom a blueprint for a limited constitutional monarchy, Boone reads Seyssel's political thought as a hard-minded vision intended to stabilize and reinforce royal authority in light of France's social and political realities. It was also profoundly shaped by Seyssel's educational and diplomatic experience in Italy.

Like many contemporaries, the Savoyard was deeply impressed by republics' military power and capacity for expansion, from ancient Rome and its mighty legions to the Swiss cantons and their fearsome pikemen. Switzerland and Venice's armed citizenry presented at the turn of the century a formidable challenge to more traditional political and social formations like France. For Seyssel, a bridled monarchy offered the possibility to mix monarchy with popular government, and thus to strengthen the crown's military capacities by joining its dynastic organization with the military strength of democratic infantry.

Boone's account thus pushes us to understand Seyssel not as an early chapter in the history of French political thought, but rather as a more complex and, in many ways, decidedly un-French figure. Though he served the French crown with considerable energy and skill, his loyalties, experiences, training and outlook were also firmly anchored in Savoy, Switzerland, and above all Italy. Seyssel was as committed to serving Savoy as France; he was profoundly shaped by Italian intellectual life, his experience as diplomat and French agent in Italy, by his deep familiarity with social structures of Italian city-states (Seyssel's famous tripartite categorization of French society among the nobility, the *peuple gras* and the *menu peuple* in the *Monarchie*, for example, rejected the traditional French estates model in favor of one borrowed from Italian modes of social categorization), and by republican political thought. Seyssel, in short, sits uneasily in the pantheon of public-minded French humanists, which counts men like Guillaume Budé; he is more profitably read, Boone maintains, alongside politically-inclined Italian men of letters like Machiavelli and Gucciardini.

Given the author's argument that Seyssel's writings can only be understood when read against his social trajectory and political career, the author could be reproached for limiting original research to Seyssel's own writings, and relying on secondary sources (notably Alberto Caviglia's 1928 biography) for sketching out his life. A reconstruction of Seyssel's career based on archival sources—a research agenda which admittedly would have produced a different and considerably larger project—might have shed new light on particular questions. The chapter devoted to Seyssel as bishop, for example, relies almost exclusively on his own writings; a detailed account of his tenure and

pastoral activities as bishop of Marseille and Turin informed by episcopal archives could have thrown his religious writings into the same sharp relief as the chapters on his political and diplomatic career do for his political texts.

These criticisms aside, Boone's book represents a stimulating contribution to our understanding of early modern politics and letters, and will be an indispensable text for future scholars interested in Seyssel. Her lively prose, easy and confident familiarity with the complex worlds of Renaissance diplomacy, politics and humanism, and clear analysis of Seyssel's writings make this a sure guide to the Savoyard's thought for students and specialists alike.

R. J. W. Evans and Alexander Marr, eds. *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006. Xvi + 265pp. \$99.95. Review by DARIN HAYTON, HAVERFORD COLLEGE.

Robert Evans and Alexander Marr, the editors, consider curiosity and wonder particularly fruitful lenses through which to investigate linkages between objects, texts, individuals, voyages of discovery and medical practices. In his lucid introduction, Marr surveys the scholarship on curiosity and wonder over the past three decades. The early work of Hans Blumenberg approached curiosity as a coherent and static idea. According to Blumenberg, the renewed celebration of curiosity during the Scientific Revolution represented a key shift toward modernity. Blumenberg's approach has been complicated and refined by Krzysztof Pomian's detailed study of French cabinets of curiosity. Pomian brought curiosity back down to earth from the incorporeal heights of philosophical ideas and located it instead in the material objects collecting dust in cabinets across France. For all of its corrective force, Pomian's work still assumed a static and common "curiosity" that motivated French collectors and structured their cabinets. More recently, Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park have focused attention on the intersections between wonder, on the one hand, and trade, exploration, institutions, and the Scientific Revolution, on the other. Stephen Greenblatt too has highlighted the role of wonder and curiosity in exploring the New World. The essays in the volume