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**Eliav-Feldon, Miriam, Benjamin Isaac, and Joseph Ziegler
(eds.). The Origins of Racism in the West**

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plus, Michel De Waele ose dire, avec raison, qu'Henri IV n'est pas le monarque absolu que certains historiens ont voulu présenter et que l'on trouve encore dans nombre de livres. Il insiste sur le fait qu'il est un homme de compromis, un homme de contrat et qu'il préfère convaincre plus qu'imposer. De ce fait, il est en avance sur son temps et a manifesté une intelligence politique et un sens extraordinaire de la communication. Comme il s'est beaucoup battu dans l'ensemble de son royaume, il en connaît la diversité et sait qu'il faut en tenir largement compte. De plus, les idées protestantes et celles des ligueurs n'allaient pas dans le sens de l'absolutisme, mais d'une monarchie tempérée, voire d'une république ressemblant à celle des Provinces-Unies du XVII^e siècle. Henri IV ne pouvait ignorer l'effervescence politique, qui avait animé les débats pendant les guerres de religion. Il a su en tenir compte, ce qui explique sa réussite.

Michel De Waele est un excellent spécialiste de cette période des guerres de religion. Son livre, très bien informé et qui comprend une excellente bibliographie, se lit avec plaisir, même pour des historiens, qui connaissent parfaitement l'histoire de ce demi-siècle de guerre civile. Le seul reproche, que l'on pourrait lui faire, est d'avoir trop centré son étude sur la politique et d'avoir laissé de côté la sociologie des soutiens d'Henri IV, ou ceux de la Ligue d'ailleurs, parmi les couches nouvelles, celle des officiers, des magistrats, des poètes et des érudits, ceux qui formeront plus tard dans le premier tiers du XVII^e siècle, cette noblesse de robe, qui sera l'une des armatures de la monarchie. Henri IV en avait compris l'importance.

JEAN MARIE CONSTANT, *University of Maine*

Eliav-Feldon, Miriam, Benjamin Isaac, and Joseph Ziegler (eds.).

The Origins of Racism in the West.

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pp. xiv, 333. ISBN 978-0-521-88855-4 (hardcover) \$99.

Is it still important to study the history of racism? According to some distinguished historians, such as Fergus Millar (2005) and Joseph Geiger (2005), the answer is: not anymore. Scholars Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac, and Joseph Ziegler are convinced of the opposite, and although they

hope that racism may be regarded as illegitimate in the twenty-first century by virtually all major political movements across the world, the three Israel-based professors have decided to edit this collection of fourteen historical studies. To begin with, the three editors have established a definition of “racism” as “an attempt to justify prejudice and discrimination through an apparently rational analysis of presumed empirical facts” (4). As such, the three scholars claim that the origins of racism are to be sought in the West, and trace a pattern of such forms of rationalized prejudice in various periods before 1700. Interestingly, the papers collected do not assume that prejudice and bigotry were invented in the West; they rather claim that the specific form of rationalizing these prejudices was developed in ancient Greece and later developed in early modern Europe.

The collection is organized chronologically, covering a wide period from ancient Greece to the eighteenth century. Among the studies included, the attention of this review falls, in order of interest, on Miriam Eliav-Feldon’s remarkable “Vagrants or Vermin? Attitudes Towards Gypsies in Early Modern Europe” (276–91), which stands out as one of the too few studies in modern historical scholarship concerned with the analysis of the persecution against the Roma. Eliav-Feldon underlines the very surprising absence of evidence, in modern history, of accusations of heresy and witchcraft against Gypsy bands, i.e. nomadic communities made of exotic men and women known for palm reading, fortune-telling, and other magic. The scholar gives two explanations for this absence: firstly, the level of marginality that the Roma suffered was so deep that the various inquisitions did not bother to unmask travellers so clearly and visibly different that no one could suspect they were *disguised* heretics; secondly, the persons accused of witchcraft were practically always members of the local community, not passing strangers.

“Racism: A Rationalization of Prejudice in Greece and Rome” (32–56), by Benjamin Isaac, can be read as Isaac’s follow-up to the critics of his seminal volume *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (2004). In this book Isaac had first introduced the challenging definition of “proto-racism” to indicate a form of racism encountered in Greek and Roman literature. Isaac clarifies that although he intended the definition as the prototype of racism, not a weakened form of it, he agrees with those who have maintained that the phenomenon met in antiquity can be called simply “racism” (54), with the reminder that in antiquity racism never developed into the unified, general ideology of recent times (55). Isaac also agrees with other critics that his volume has some “genuine

lacunae" (47), i.e. it does not deal with the attitudes towards Blacks in antiquity (49), a topic that many expect to see treated in a monograph about the history of racism.

"The invention of Persia in Classical Athens" (57–87), by H.A. Shapiro, suggests that Athenian visual artists created an imaginary world called Persia that fired the imagination of customers both at home and abroad. This paper features also some very interesting figures of Athenian vases that deal with scenes of sexual assaults (such as the famous "Eurymedon," in which a Greek soldier, grasping his penis, attacks a terrified and submissive Persian) in line with a more and more strident Athenian rhetoric of superiority over the effeminate Persians.

"Racism, Color Symbolism, and Color Prejudice" (88–108), by David Goldenberg, responds to the "genuine lacuna" of Isaac's monograph, and deals with the genesis of racism against Blacks, tracking it to the negative colour prejudice that "blackness" always had and has in the West. Such a reflection makes the innocent (or naïve?) reader ponder: given that the skin colour of those commonly called Blacks is actually a shade of brown, would it not be of help to start calling Blacks by what they are, i.e. Browns, thus ending their association with a heavily biased colour they *do not bear* on their skin? And why is this easy consideration not part of the political agenda of the civil rights movements across the world?

"Early Christian Universalism and Modern Forms of Racism" (109–31), by Denise Kimber Buell, focuses on a discursive practice called "ethnic reasoning," which is described as a less recognized factor contributing to the early potential in early Christian universalizing claims. Buell maintains that early Christian universalizing arguments constitute an unstable legacy for later discourses of human difference, and claims that early Christianity has no relationship to later discourses about human difference recognized as racialized or racist.

Robert Bartlett signs "Illustrating Ethnicity in the Middle Ages" (132–56), which takes a preliminary look at this topic for the pre-print era of the Middle Ages, analyzing how ethnic difference was emphasized pictorially in medieval illustration, such as the *Exchequer Roll* of 1233, the *Liber ad honorem Augustii*, by Peter of Eboli, and the *Topography of Ireland*, by Gerald of Wales.

Joseph Ziegler's "Physiognomy, Science, and Proto-Racism 1200–1500" (181–99) is probably the most disputable paper of the collection. Ziegler, after having defined medieval and early Renaissance physiognomy "as a rational

science” (182), claims that the history of physiognomy and the development of its ancient beliefs into racist ones was not one-way. The author maintains that symbols of racist prejudice did not appear as such in texts of learned physiognomy, because they were “so individualistic that questions of parental transmission of traits and hereditary were relegated to a marginal position” (199).

In conclusion, this collection of essays seems to be the proper completion of Isaac’s volume *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, because it plugs its significant lacunae, providing studies on topics that are rarely treated by modern historical scholarship.

SCILTIAN GASTALDI, *University of Toronto*

Furno, Martine (dir.).

Qui écrit ? Figures de l’auteur et des co-élaborateurs du texte. XV^e-XVIII^e siècle. Collection « Métamorphoses du livre ». Lyon: ENS Éditions / Institut d’histoire du livre, 2009. 262 p. ISBN 978-2-84788-178-3 (broché) 19 €

On a claironné jadis la mort de l’auteur. Des sirènes — électroniques — chantent maintenant celle du livre (imprimé). Mais si on s’était trompé quant à notre conception même de la figure de l’auteur comme de la notion de l’objet-livre ? Si ces morts en devenir n’avaient jamais été que des cristallisations récentes et historiquement passagères associées à ce que certains, à la suite du chercheur danois L. O. Sauerberg, ont appelé la « parenthèse Gutenberg », serait-on autorisé à en dramatiser ainsi la date de péremption ?

Ce recueil s’interroge justement sur la nature polymorphe des textes et des auteurs qui sont à la source des livres dans l’Ancien Régime — au XVI^e siècle tout particulièrement (la périodisation XV^e-XVIII^e annoncée en page couverture est un peu trompeuse), alors donc que s’ouvre cette parenthèse Gutenberg. « Qui écrit ? » demande-t-on. Le sous-titre, plus modeste, apporte déjà un élément de réponse en proposant de redistribuer le pouvoir auctorial entre la « figure » de l’auteur et celle des « co-élaborateurs » du texte, terme englobant par lequel les auteurs du volume désignent les éditeurs, traducteurs,