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**Haglund, Timothy. Rabelais's Contempt of Fortune:  
Pantagruelism, Politics, and Philosophy**

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In his study of another undervalued play, Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy*, Griffin finds that in its depiction of England's recent long war in the Netherlands, the play demonstrates a comingling of biographical (to the English audience) history and conventional tragedy (although the "honest man" in the play's subtitle actually survives the machinations of the "atheist," his uncle). Because the play stages a version of England's military engagement in the Low Countries, it plainly epitomizes history writing. In addition, Griffin finds *The Atheist's Tragedy* to be singular among militaristic dramas of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries because it addresses untimely deaths whenever fatalities occur.

In addition to a reading of *The Magnetic Lady*, Griffin's final chapter situates Ben Jonson as central to a study of untimely deaths because his own death occurred years after the publication of his *Works*, rendering Jonson's final years as "bathetic overliving."

English Renaissance scholars will find Andrew Griffin's book an agreeable re-visioning of some familiar plays, while it brings attention to some neglected plays. It's also an intriguing approach to late Elizabethan and Jacobean drama.

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### **Haglund, Timothy.**

#### ***Rabelais's Contempt of Fortune: Pantagruelism, Politics, and Philosophy.***

Lanham: Lexington Books, 2019. Pp. 165. ISBN 978-1-4985-7545-4 (hardcover) US\$90.

In the prologue to *Gargantua*, François Rabelais (1494–1553) says his writing will be about private matters, politics, and religion, as Timothy Haglund argues in chapter 1 of *Rabelais's Contempt of Fortune: Pantagruelism, Politics, and Philosophy* (1, see 2–12). In *Tiers Livre*, Rabelais relates the political state to private and religious spheres, a focus for Haglund, particularly to the marriage problem of Panurge (3). The first translator of Rabelais into English, Sir Thomas Urquhart (1611–60), saw Panurge's problem as one of fortune and not of marriage, thereby drawing on the ancient tradition on fortune as Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) did. Cuckoldry is the motif through which Rabelais



and Machiavelli approach the theme of fortune, although in his work Rabelais never mentions Machiavelli—whose *The Prince* (written 1513–14, published 1534) discusses fortune and whose comedy, *Mandragola* (1518), represents cuckoldry—and seems to oppose the Florentine (4–8). In chapter 2, Rabelais sees that reading requires moral benevolence and philosophical benevolence (13–36). Chapter 3 discusses the Diogenes’s problem in which he rolled in a barrel to avoid Corinthians accusing him of being idle, something akin to Panurge building a wall and the Pantagruelism of Pantagruel, the first showing the civic element of philosophy but also being a deflection from independent thought, the second seeing politics as part of life but not solving its problems (9, 37–60). In chapter 4, Haglund analyzes the first chapter of *Tiers Livre* and sees the conquest of Dipsody by the Utopians as a discussion and critique of Machiavelli’s regime (9–10, 61–78). Chapter 5 examines duty in Machiavelli and Panurge’s “eulogy of *debtes* in chapters 2–5 of the *Tier Livre*” (79–92), and analyzes chapter 6 and chapters 29–44 in which Panurge meets with experts in law, philosophy, medicine, and theology who teach him to accept fortune as a way of protecting himself from it (10, 93–124). Chapter 7 concludes Haglund’s idea of the *Tiers Livre*, including the view that Rabelais’s description of the Pantagruelion herb there, which, along with the function of the herb in *Quart Livre*, shows that Rabelais’s view of nature balances the intelligible and the mysterious (10, 125–46). Rabelais represents the life of the mind in private and public—in terms of philosophy but also in regard to politics and theology, and he considers the philosopher in ways that remind Haglund of Diogenes in chapter 8 (10–11, 147–54).

Rabelais is difficult to interpret (13). Haglund emphasizes philosophical benevolence and moral benevolence in reading Rabelais, the first presuming coherence and the second assuming innocence and “conformity with custom” (24). One of the puzzles is the connection between the serious and the comic in Rabelais (32). Haglund understands Rabelais’s representations of the private, political, and religious most evidently “in the transition from *Pantagruel* to the *Tiers Livre*” (37). Moreover, Haglund also traces philosophy in Rabelais chronologically (39). Rabelais represents the debt of Pantagruelism to Diogenes the Cynic; he portrays him in the context of Corinth preparing for war with Macedon and relates him to Alexander the Great and Aristotle (40–41). Haglund reminds us, quite sensibly, that it is not easy to interpret Rabelais’s poetic fictions (44). This has been a problem for philosophers in regard to



Homer and even to the allegories in Plato, not Machiavelli: for instance, of the cave and of the lion and fox respectively. Haglund is in the position of arguing both that Panurge is a Machiavellian obsessed with fortune and that to associate explicitly with Machiavelli would have had Rabelais risking condemnation (44–45). Haglund views Pantagruelism in terms of Diogenes and Machiavelli—that is, as philosophy not readily resolving “a tension between independence and responsibility” (51)—and says that Pantagruelism leaves this stress between “an ancient philosophy that retreats from politics” and “a modern philosophy that favors politics to the neglect of philosophy proper” (55). Haglund thinks of Pantagruelism as, above all, a political philosophy concerned for the whole (58), and he outlines attempts at solving Diogenes’s problem through “Panurge’s Machiavellianism and Pantagruel’s Pantagruelism” (61). Haglund thinks that Machiavelli’s *Discourses on Livy* (printed 1531) deserves more attention as a source for chapter 1 of *Tier Livre* than does *The Prince* because *Discourses* and Rabelais’s chapter concentrate on the role of necessity in the shaping of the city (62). Haglund asserts that the Utopians and Dipsodians, the ruled, are dutiful and obedient, so that philosophers must also be the same (74). Debt and duty in Rabelais reside in *devoir* (*devoir*), including the ambivalence Panurge shows to social duty and “Pantagruelic individualism” (79–80, see 89). Haglund, who also explores the banquet of experts, says: “Panurge’s praise and Pantagruel’s condemnation of debts culminates in a discussion between vassal and lord about the marriage question” (93). These consultations lead to questions about whether Panurge’s building of walls is better than the old way and, more generally, about “the nature of nature” (121). Haglund argues that the Pantagruelian plant helps to answer “the question of whether Panurge should marry” and gives him the proper disposition to “his future and happiness” (125), but maintains that gleaning the meaning of the plant is difficult (143).

Rabelais’s poetic or fictional representations of how a good prince should act are also hard to interpret (147). Haglund says that although Rabelais called Erasmus his intellectual “father,” his approach differs from his mentor’s (148). For Haglund, the experts giving advice to Panurge show different strands of Western thought, and Pantagruelism is an antidote to the problem of Diogenes (148–49). That problem relates to vanity, self-interest, and boastfulness, and to how much the philosopher cares for his city (149). Rabelais, then, represents the nature of philosophy, his books being Silenus, with both outward folly and inward wisdom (153–54). Haglund’s thoughtful and informative volume is



about more than Rabelais's contempt for fortune because it is also about the nature of nature and philosophy in relation to Machiavelli and Diogenes but also more generally.

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**Houghton, L. B. T., and Marco Sgarbi, eds.**

***Virgil and Renaissance Culture.***

Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 510 / Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and Renaissance 42. Tempe: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in collaboration with Brepols, 2018. Pp. ix, 227 + 7 ill. ISBN 978-2-503-58190-3 (hardcover) US\$75.

Virgil's enormous impact on the artistic, political, and scholarly cultures of early modern Europe is well known and has generated an enormous bibliography, to which the volume under review makes an attractive and innovative contribution. Arising from a conference on "Virgilio e la cultura del rinascimento," convened by the editors at the Accademia nazionale Virgiliana di scienze, lettere e arti in Mantua in the fall of 2012, the collection includes a rich array of studies that illuminate not only a few well-tilled fields but also some unexplored nooks and crannies of Virgilian reception. Among the former are treatments of Virgil's biographical tradition, his literary relations with Dante, and the reuse of his poetry in early modern *centos*, while among the latter are investigations of Virgilian quotation on medals and tokens, and of Virgilian imagery in Italian maiolica.

A helpful "Introduction" by L. B. T. Houghton reviews the paramount position enjoyed by Virgil and his texts in the elite culture of Renaissance Europe, and subjects to critical qualification the individual words of the volume's title while acknowledging the ensemble's utility as an indispensable shorthand for the reception of the humanist enterprise represented by the conference papers and their collection here. Peter Mack offers an interesting and succinct survey of the use of Virgilian *exempla* in Renaissance rhetorical theory, especially in the work of Agricola, Erasmus, Melancthon, and Ramus. On Mack's reading,