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espionage, few more influentially than Auden: "Our hopes were set still on the spies' career" he recalled, self-reproachfully. What Smith shows is that the play-acting had, for the authorities, some substance, and that suspicion of the true allegiance of certain left-wing fellow-travellers, in the pre-war period, led to their need to prove themselves patriots during the conflict that followed. This then paved the way for actual cooperation with the post-war dispensations when, for example, it appears that Stephen Spender was not quite such an innocent as he pretended to have been (his contribution to *The God That Failed*, itself serving Intelligence interests, was an important factor in his rehabilitation).

Smith attests: "Many previously radical authors with MI5 files suddenly found themselves courted by these covert arms. This was often a turning point in their careers … it marked a rapprochement with the Establishment" (27). Smith is alert to the "almost comical" aspects of some of this, but asserts that the cause for concern was genuine: "Only the most stubborn of apologists could today deny that Britain was subject to a campaign from an extensive foreign intelligence service" (19). His study is a dispassionate attempt to penetrate rumour and establish fact – showing, for example, that Orwell was neither as much of a left-wing firebrand nor, subsequently, as much of a traitor to the left-wing cause as he has been depicted in some quarters. In certain aspects, what Smith discovers is quietly reassuring. Whatever nonsense could emanate from local levels, there was often an official at the centre discounting their prejudices: "MI5 actually often functioned as a mollifying influence on the nervous police" (89). Yet there remains, when we learn of how completely the post-war CPGB had been penetrated by MI5, an element of wonder at how comprehensively they in their turn had been bamboozled by Blunt and others.

Smith can strike a dry note, as when noting that the epilepsy that saved MacColl from prosecution for desertion was not a condition previously or subsequently apparent. The little-known fact, established by his file, that MacColl rejoined the CPGB in the early 1950s leads, Smith suggests, to a re-understanding of the political networks within which Theatre Workshop operated; he asserts that the MI5 file, albeit inadvertently, therefore constitutes a valuable research resource. Elsewhere he shows glints of something more than dryness, coming close to contempt when describing Koestler's ideological malleability.

This is a ground-breaking study: its only limitations are those imposed by its timeframe and the nature of its source.

Tony Sharpe
Lancaster University, UK

Dalia Valdez Garza. *Libros y lectores en la* Gazeta de literatura de México *(1788–1795) de José Antonio Alzate*. México. D.F.: Bonilla Artigas and Monterrey: Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey; Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2014. 266p. ISBN 9786078348414 (Bonilla), 88484898634 (Iberoamericana).

Book history has been a research focus for historians and literary scholars in Mexico for a while now, so that Valdez Garza has a formidable task in situating José Antonio Alzate (1737–1799) and his work in that accumulation. Alzate was a clergyman of independent means at a time when the Spanish colony was producing its own scientists yet was curious about European advances, and he used the emerging press industry to produce several publications. In the case of the *Gazeta de literatura de México*, he opportunely took advantage of his countrymen's curiosity – and their desire to modernize – to publish a twice-a-month, twelve-page journal whose claim to "literature" meant several things: the sciences (physics, mathematics, botany, medicine, mining technology, etc.) and also the fine arts such as theater and poetry. Alzate himself conducted experiments and observations (electricity, astronomy), wrote articles, and also extracted news from any books and periodicals from Europe on which he could lay his hands and which he judged to be pertinent (he was a corresponding member of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris and of the Royal Botanical Garden in Madrid, as well as the Spanish *Sociedad Bascongada*, a philanthropic body in the Basque country). He often translated these selections and, in addition, published letters from subscribers.

Valdez Garza's book, then, makes several important points. The "sciences," a focus of this journal of Alzate's (though she also brings in material from other publications he wrote and edited), were a way residents of New Spain, under Spanish censorship, could talk about new ideas; scientific literature permitted challenges to authority and disputation in a way that earlier colonial literature did not. The "sciences" asked for rational criticism, requiring the writers and readers of New Spain to adapt new information to their country's needs. As Valdez Garza claims, this was more than just a change in tone that the literary establishment might adopt, but rather a challenge to the thinking of the whole colony as it approached nationhood.

She is particularly concerned with Alzate's criticism of foreign travelers' views of Mexico, singling out Joseph de La Porte and George Anson, whose unfavorable judgments deriving from their politics and Protestantism she links to the accusations of American inferiority of De Pauw and Buffon. Their denigration of Mexico's population and geography is counterbalanced by Alzate's satire and opposing arguments so as to teach readers to rethink their self image.

Her title's emphasis on "readers" points to reception. Here she examines Alzate as a reader concerned with diffusing knowledge in his newspaper and in the *tertulias* or informal gatherings where he shared his reading. In considering Mexican readership, however, she also points to New Spain's participation in an emerging international republic of letters, wider than the previous elite composed of theologians, high administrators, and legal scholars. She adduces reception from the holdings of the libraries of New Spain, as well as bookdealers' and importers' records – but also readers' contributions and attributions.

In the climate of colonial censorship, Alzate represents himself as his own censor, editing out potentially offensive material. French journals represented 91% of the extracts he printed, so that indebtedness, ignoring Spanish sources, is significant. Politics was off-limits, despite the fact that the Barcelona-printed *El Pensador Matritense* (1780?) did discuss law and civil society. The *Gazeta* was closed down by Mexican administrators for reasons that are not entirely clear, but it is thought that two reasons were the *Gazeta*'s criticism of the viceroy and fear that French revolutionary events might spread violence in the colony.

Valdez Garza's background reading has been extensive, taking in the work of Mexican scholars but also theories of communication by, for example, Robert Darnton, Roger Chartier, Dena Goodman, Jurgen Habermas, and Hans Jauss. Their ideas about the privacy of reading, borrowing habits, authorial rights, and censorship are suggestive for New Spain; and she usefully reviews New Spain's own

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evolution, which in the eighteenth century saw an appetite for newsy periodical literature alongside other literary popularizations and secularizations. Although she presents no new archival findings relative to the readership to which her title refers, her coverage of the implicit reader in Alzate's text suggests a literate elite increasingly self-aware and assertive. Questions, however, remain. Although her book assumes that the readers of New Spain uniformly desired modernization according to French and other northern European, English, and U.S. standards, scholars like Isabel Terán supply contrary evidence. Scientific developments in Mexico – mining advancements and the work of Mexican scientists such as Antonio León y Gama – made their way to Europe, but how Alzate's journal might have contributed to that transmission is not clear.

Valdez Garza's study deserves praise for sorting through existing scholarship and suggesting possibilities for new research.

Nancy Vogeley
University of San Francisco, California

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Dominique Varry, ed. *50 ans d'histoire du livre: 1958–2008*. Villeurbanne: Presses de l'enssib, 2014. 224p. ISBN 9791091281157. €34 (paperback).

This publication includes the conference proceedings of the colloquium *Cinquante ans d'histoire du livre. De L'Apparition du Livre (1958) à 2008: bilan et perspectives d'une discipline scientifique*, held in Lyons 11–13 December 2008 under the direction of Frédéric Barbier and Dominique Varry. *L'Apparition du Livre* (translated into English as *The Coming of the Book* in 2010), written by Lucien Febvre, co-founder of the École des Annales, and young researcher Henri-Jean Martin, gave birth to a new history of the book. The colloquium aimed to assess this scientific heritage while highlighting its major innovative aspects. Nonetheless, right from the start of their introduction, Varry and Anne-Marie Bertrand express concerns about the future of the history of the book in France as an identified and recognised field of research.

The chapters in the book are organised into five sections, corresponding in part with the structure of *L'Apparition du Livre*. First, Jean-Dominique Mellot and Valérie Tesnière retrace the publication history of *L'Apparition du Livre* and its influential contributions. A synthesis between a tradition of erudition and the École des Annales, the book ensues from a history of problems: not only a medium for the history of ideas, it is also an object by which to study the history of economics (a "good") and an object by which to analyse mental tools (a "ferment"). Significantly, Martin, who died in 2007, succeeded as early as 1958 in establishing a dialogue with other researchers, in particular linguists and anthropologists.

The second section contains contributions about the book as a "good." Sabine Juratic exposes brilliantly state-of-the-art research on the commerce of books in eighteenth-century France, Alan Marshall gives a disturbing assessment of the limited research conducted on the technical history of printing, and Pascal Durand and Tanguy Habrand discuss the status of the history of the book in Belgium. The third section approaches the book in terms of materiality. Varry comes back to the history of physical bibliography in France (including the decisive Anglo-Saxon approach) and Michel Melot to Martin's work on the image; the latter diverges from strict history of art to investigate the book as a graphic object. In the fourth section, Christian Jacob (a specialist in Antiquity) and István Monok adopt an original approach, studying Central European private libraries in the modern period to analyse the book as a cultural history medium. The last section is a prospective one: Robert Damien writes on the subject of Gabriel Naudé; Raphaële Mouren, perhaps more convincingly, on the methodological analysis of sixteenth-century scholarly books; and Bertrand on the history of libraries.

As both a conclusion and an answer to the introductory anxieties expressed about the future of the discipline, Roger Chartier raises a number of additional issues in the epilogue. These include the relationships between manuscripts, printed documents, and digital media; the intellectual and physical circulation of books; the role played by the codex in an author's construction of his work; and the renewal of physical bibliography brought about by an interest in compositor studies. Chartier calls for the continuation of the École des Annales, advocating the use of a longer timescale and thus considering the codex (and not just the printed document) from a broader and more wide-ranging perspective.

Indeed, the challenge does not consist in studying the book for itself – though perfectly acceptable, this erudite performance verges on the sterile – but rather in using the book to interrogate a particular society and its social and historical context. Some contributors do not manage to achieve this – a sign that reverting to a traditional history of the book, however interesting, remains both an easy and dangerous path to tread. Only a few of the essays in this volume concern other countries, and this gives an accurate picture of the current history of the book in France. Importantly, though, there are a number of French specialists out there who wish to come together with researchers abroad and particularly with researchers from other disciplines, and one can only hope that this picture will soon become a thing of the past.

Marie-Cécile Bouju
Université Paris 8, Vincennes Saint-Denis
trans. Claire Niemkoff

E-Resource Reviews

Dot Porter. *The Manuscript Collation Project*. Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies. <http://dorpdev.library.upenn.edu/collation/>.

Scholars who wish to work and teach from particular medieval manuscripts are often faced with a problem of access, limiting their interaction with these works to facsimiles, images gleaned from another scholar's work, or the edited edition with its attendant apparatus, rather than coming as close to the intention of the scribe who composed the work as possible. In the Internet age, researchers and teachers have a number of high quality images of manuscripts available to them from places like the Walters Art Museum or the British Library. Often, though, these manuscripts are presented as decontextualized stacks of images and metadata. There is no sense of how large or small they are, or where in the codex they might be. Folio numbers are provided, but these require viewers to consider the structure of the book abstractly rather than intuit it as they might if they picked up

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