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The scope of Mann's research is impressive. She begins with the first rhetorical manual published in English, Leonard Cox's *The Art or Crafte of Rhetoryke* (1530), and concludes just after the publication of Samuel Shaw's *Words Made Visible* (1679), the first vernacular rhetorical manual seriously to criticize rhetoric's cultural influence. (A chronological appendix of English rhetorical manuals published between 1530 and 1680 allows readers to situate themselves in the sometimes dizzying array of source texts upon which Mann draws.)

Two of Mann's chapters, "The Insertour: Putting the Parenthesis in Sidney's *Arcadia*" and "The Figure of Exchange: Gender Exchange in Shakespeare's Sonnet 20 and Jonson's *Epicene*," are developments of earlier publications: a 2009 article for *English Literary Renaissance*, "Sidney's 'Insertour': *Arcadia*, Parenthesis, and the Formation of English Eloquence," and a 2010 article for *Renaissance Drama*, "The 'Figure of Exchange': Shakespeare's 'Master Mistress,' Jonson's *Epicene*, and the English Art of Rhetoric." While it is certainly good to present these ideas in their proper context, one could wish that Mann had used this space to explore additional figures instead. Nevertheless, *Outlaw Rhetoric* is an extremely valuable tool for understanding the cultural role of vernacular rhetoric in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, not least because of this spatial and chronological specificity—a refreshing change from other discussions of rhetoric in the Renaissance, which treat it as a continuation or resurrection of classical practices.



De Ratione communi omnium linguarum et literarum commentarius.

Theodore Bibliander. Ed. and trans. Hagit Amirav and Hans-Martin Kirn.

Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance 475. Geneva: Droz, 2011. liv + 683 pp.

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REVIEWED BY: Karine Crousaz

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Theodore Bibliander (1506–64), Zwingli's successor in Zurich as professor of Old Testament studies, is still famous today for two main reasons: first, for his edition of a medieval Latin translation of the Qur'an, the first Qur'an's translation to be printed (Basel, 1543), and, second, for his work entitled *De Ratione communi omnium linguarum et literarum commentarius* (Commentary on the common principle of all languages and letters), which can be rightly viewed as one of the pioneering works in comparative linguistics. Until now, this work was often mentioned by scholars, but rarely read. The size of the volume—and the fact that no translation in any modern languages existed—certainly contributed to this situation. This edition and translation by Hagit Amirav and Hans-Martin Kirn thus fills an important gap and will be particularly interesting for scholars working on the histories of grammar, dialectic, and comparative linguistics.

In his vast book, Bibliander aims to discover the right method of learning languages. In so doing, he investigates all the languages he has access to, searching for basic linguistic principles. He opens the book with a description of twenty different languages, but then concentrates on five of them (Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, and Arabic).

One of Bibliander's innovative contributions is that he considers all languages to be of equal value; the vernacular languages are not deprecated compared to the learned languages of the sixteenth century (Hebrew, Greek, and Latin). For instance, he clearly affirms the value of [Swiss] German, his own mother tongue, claiming that if one were to study it closely, one would see that this language obeys the laws of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic

no less than does Latin (72–73). Bibliander also sees that all languages are constantly changing; he tries to find the reasons for these changes and to work out the principles for the evolution of languages.

The author also dedicates dozens of pages to the history of writing, from the invention of the alphabet, to that of printing, through cryptography. Comparing different alphabets (Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, and Latin) and the sounds represented by the letters, he points out their similarities (184–201). Bibliander always considers the rationality behind every aspect of the learning and transmission of languages. For instance, he proposes (410–11) reducing the Latin alphabet to only fourteen letters, the unvoiced consonants being replaced by doubling the corresponding voiced consonant. He gives the example of the Latin word *caput* (head) that would be written *ggabbudd* in this new system.

The main part of the volume is dedicated to method; Bibliander discusses method in general, explains at length what dialectic is, and demonstrates how method can be applied to the process of learning languages. Bibliander presents the structure of what would be, according to him, the perfect language textbook. The structure of the vocabulary is broadly discussed, and the author explains how important it is to understand its learning rationally by breaking down the words into basic elements. Bibliander calculates that if someone wanted to memorize without method the five million words in the Latin language, it would take thirty years, learning each year 166,660 words, which means about 455 words a day. If, instead of this “brute force” method, one concentrates on the thousand basic words of the Latin language and learns the rules of words’ composition and derivation, the memorization task becomes dramatically easier, and one “will surely master the chosen language within one hundred days, even if he takes his studies at a leisurely pace” (471). The author continues this optimistic note by saying that German also contains about a thousand basic forms and Hebrew a little more than two thousand. This is the reason why, according to the Zurich professor, it is necessary for language dictionaries, through which students learn their vocabulary, to be structured by alphabetical order of the basic forms, and that all their derivatives should be listed under them.

The last part of *De Ratione communi* moves away from Bibliander’s linguistic goals. Having shown the common aspects of the different human languages, Bibliander now tries to point out the similarities among the world’s religions. He does this by listing the ten fundamental principles that he thinks are common to Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Hindus. Among these ten principles, he first mentions that all religions announce that human beings are composed of a body and a soul, and that the soul is by far the more important part; next, that there is a life after death, that God is unique and omnipotent, that He likes good deeds and hates wrongdoing, etc. Through this list, Bibliander aims to minimize the differences that are thought to exist among the various religions and to reunite all people in one faith. Of course, there is no doubt for the Zurich professor that the true religion, where all will be united, is the Christian religion, and he tries to prove this idea in the following pages. Finally, combining his linguistic and religious aims, Bibliander ends his book by editing four fundamental texts of the Christian faith (the Ten Commandments, the Nunc dimittis [or Simeon’s Canticle], the Nicene Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer) in a total of fifteen different languages.

This edition of *De ratione communi* has many merits, beyond the obvious one of providing much more convenient access to this important text. The editors made the excellent decision of italicizing all the passages in the book where Bibliander is actually quoting other authors. The reader thus can easily see to what extent some parts of the work are actually

“patchworks,” where Bibliander gathers all the quotations of ancient and modern authors that can shed light on a particular question. The three excellent appendices list the authors and anonymous books quoted in *De ratione communi*, classifying them by alphabetical order, by the number of quotations, and giving graphic representations of the respective place taken by each author in Bibliander’s text. Through these appendices, we can see that it is Cicero (15 percent) and Quintilian (13 percent) whom Bibliander quotes most often, followed by his contemporary Juan Luis Vives (10 percent) and then St. Augustine (9 percent), who represents a little more than half of all the quotations of the church fathers.

The only critique against the book under review is that the translation is not always as close to the original text as historians might wish and it contains a certain number of errors; for instance, speaking about the old German languages, Bibliander quotes (154) some *versiculos Francicae linguae*, which means some “verses in Frankish language” and not “French verses” as has been translated. Dealing with cryptography, Bibliander talks at length of steganographia, steganography being the art of hiding a text to transmit it safely, which has little to do with “stenography,” as translated (221ff.). On page 237, where Bibliander explains how the printing press works, the “*compositores*,” that is, the compositors or typesetters, the specialized workers who arranged each page by hand, are misleadingly translated as “apprentices.” Even if it will remain indispensable for scholars to compare the translation with the original text on the opposite page, we should be very grateful to the two editors for having offered a complete translation of such a significant and complex sixteenth-century text.



Le Palais des curieux. François Béroalde de Verville. Ed. Veronique Luzel.
Geneva: Droz, 2012. 780 pp. \$102.00. ISBN 978-2-600-00915-7.

REVIEWED BY: Michael Wolfe
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For a long time, historians casually dismissed François Béroalde de Verville as a prolific if garrulous figure who wrote tedious miscellanies stuffed to overflowing, much like Fibber McGee’s closet, with arcane, often obscure observations and musings. Victor Saulnier was among the first to challenge this portrayal of Verville back in the 1940s, and in the past twenty years the work of Neil Kenny, Jean Jehasse, and Anthony Grafton has gone a long way in helping to redeem Verville as an interesting, if eclectic, second light alongside such luminaries as Joseph Scalinger and Isaac Casaubon. Based on her 2001 dissertation under Jean Céard at Paris–X, Veronique Luzel’s authoritative edition of Verville’s *Le Palais des curieux* furthers this reclamation project and positions Verville as an important transitional figure between the skepticism of late sixteenth-century savants and the radical views of *libertins érudits* in Baroque France.

Verville was a polymath whose interests and writings encompassed alchemy, optics, and mathematics as well as poetry, fiction, and critical commentary. Born in 1556 into a Huguenot family with close connections to humanist university circles, Verville eventually converted to Catholicism in the 1580s and became active among *politiques* in the Parlement of Paris in exile at Tours in the early 1590s. At that time, Verville received a benefice as a canon at the cathedral chapter of Saint Gatien in Tours, where he remained until his death in 1626. Verville’s writing career began in the 1570s, though today he is best known for his last work, *Le Moyen de parvenir*, which appeared in 1617. No subject of inquiry was outside Verville’s scope of self-proclaimed expertise both in that book and the *Palais des*