century. This new edition is a most welcome and indeed indispensable addition to medieval scholarship, and it is to be hoped that the remaining volumes can be produced at the remarkable pace achieved so far.

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The first part of this book, on historians, discusses the sources of French patriotic legends. R. E. Asher begins with those writers, starting with the seventh-century chronicler ‘Fredegarius’, who record the Trojan origin of the Franks, notably Trithemius, who described a manuscript by ‘Hunibald’ telling of forty monarchs who ruled the Trojans before their move into Gaul, then (conveniently) lost the manuscript. The Trojan origin was sustained by patriotism (French kings were descendants of Hector) and destroyed by scholars such as Pasquier, Hotman, and Du Haillan. Next he considers Giovanni Nanni of Viterbo, who recorded the history of the Gauls between the Flood and the arrival of the Trojans, using a manuscript (which he also conveniently lost) containing fragments from twelve ancient authors, notably the Chaldean ‘Berosus’, who names Samothes as ruler of the Celts in succession to Japhet, son of Noah. Nanni’s material was widely disseminated (by Jean Lemaire, Postel, Forcadell, and others), but it, too, yielded to the scholarship of (among others) Champier, La Ramée, Pasquier, and François Baudouin. Finally Asher examines Ancient Greek and Latin authors who wrote about the Druids: their accounts were interpreted, in the Renaissance, as evidence that the Druids were inventors of philosophy and (notwithstanding their polytheism and human sacrifice) excellent theologians who anticipated Christianity.

The second part of the book, on poets, deals initially with Francus, studying mainly Ronsard and his forerunner (Guillaume Cretin) and successors, then with would-be completers of the _Franciade_ (Claude Garnier, Jacques Guillot, Geoffrin), Latin poets (Geoffrey de Malvyn and Pierre Josset), and Pierre de Laudun and Jean Godard, and finally with poets’ treatment of the Gauls and Gallic kings (Le Fèvre de la Boderie, Jean Le Fèvre, Jean Le Masle, Robert Le Rocques, and Jean Heudon). There is a good bibliography (curiously omitting Isidore Silver, _Ronsard and the Greek Epic_ (St Louis: Washington University Press, 1961), and Anne-Marie Lecocq’s _François Ier imaginaire: symbolique et politique à l’aube de la Renaissance française_ (Paris: Macula, 1987)). More might have been said about the political application of these myths (one thinks of La Boétie’s remark that monarchs cynically exploit patriotic legends to beguile the people). Anyone interested in the history of historiography and the history of popular patriotism (and aspects of the history of poetry) will be fascinated by this lucid and thoroughly-documented book.

ROYAL HOLLOWAY, LONDON

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In this enlightening and comprehensive study, Jean Balsamo questions several traditional notions concerning Italy’s influence on French Renaissance literature, notably the view that although it was at first positive, towards the end of the sixteenth century it served only to corrupt. He focuses on three major aspects: the rivalry between French and Italian writers, translation’s role in the assimilation of Italian influences, and the related aspiration to a linguistic and cultural renewal
underlying French literary initiatives of the period. Balsamo's examination is well supported by reference to works of the time, and although it concentrates on the period 1570–1600, when anti-Italianism was supposedly particularly intense, these parameters are modified with discernment.

Balsamo reviews the often aggressive debate between the French and Italians as to which of the two possessed the better language, drawing attention to the largely political motivation of such prejudice (the French desire for a new Golden Age) and its repercussions, ranging from the fiercely anti-Italian views of Henri Estienne, which exacerbated the anti-courtier trend, to the more temperate conclusions of, for example, Claude Fauchet and Estienne Pasquier, who recognized that the imitation of Italian models was a means of enriching French, and that neither language was intrinsically superior to the other: what gives a language its value is the way in which it is employed. However, as Balsamo shows, although the French came to admire the way in which the Italians had emancipated the vulgar tongue from Latin's monopoly, and saw therein an incentive for the development of their own language and literature, they believed themselves capable of eventually superseding the Italian model.

Translation of Italian models was considered a mere stage in the exploration of the expressive potential of French, and a means of assimilating the ideas of a society which had, for the moment, a more stable and longer-standing cultural tradition (France, for example, unlike Italy, had no tradition of philosophical discourse). In Chapter 4, Balsamo provides an interesting insight into the major Italian authors whose works were being translated into French, although his conclusion that only very few texts in the original Italian were diffused in France relies upon somewhat fragmentary evidence: that is, extant inventories of individual library holdings. The French public was largely dependent upon translations for contact with these authors, since only a minority spoke Italian, a point often overlooked by critics, but stressed by Balsamo. However, the primary concern was not accuracy but the reinvention within the French cultural code of the bank of ideas and images drawn from Italian texts, with which the public was rarely directly acquainted, and which the translator/imitator/plagiarist invariably did not acknowledge. A confident originality, well illustrated by Balsamo in his final two chapters on French Petrarchism, prose narrative, and theatre, evolved out of such a mediation, and consequently, towards the end of the century, the translation of Italian texts became increasingly sporadic.

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Daniel Martin's study attempts to demonstrate that there is a mnemonic system based on mythology and spatial relationships underlying the architecture of the _Essais_ and that this system was devised by Montaigne so that he could remember where he had treated particular subjects. The book deals in detail only with the fifty-seven chapters of Book 1. According to Martin's theory the majority of the chapters fall into groups of five, corresponding to the five points of a pentagon. Each group is linked with a mythological figure whose attributes correspond to the themes, words, or implications of the chapters in question: 'Montaigne se sert des dieux de l'Olympe comme système de lieux de mémoire' (p. 109). Thus Chapters 1–5 of Book 1 are linked with Mars, 6–10 with Ceres, 11–15 with Mercury, 16–20