

Bayle, Jurieu, and the dictionnaire historique et critique

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Abstrak

This book presents a new study of Pierre Bayles *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (1696), with special reference to Bayles polemical engagement with the theologian Pierre Jurieu. While recent years have seen a surge of interest in Bayle, there is as yet no consensus on how to interpret Bayles ambiguous stance on reason and religion, and how to make sense of the *Dictionnaire*. This book aims to establish a new method for reading the *Dictionnaire* under a dual premise: first, that the work can only be rightly understood when placed within the immediate context of its production in the 1690s; second, that it is only through an appreciation of the mechanics of the work as a whole, and of the role played by its structural and stylistic particularities, that we can attain an appropriate interpretation of its parts. Special attention is paid to the heated theological-political conflict between Bayle and Jurieu in the 1690s, which had a profound influence on the project of the dictionary and on several of its major themes, such as the tensions in the relationship between the intellectual sphere of the Republic of Letters and the political state, but also the danger of religious fanaticism spurring intolerance and war. The final chapters demonstrate that Bayles clash with Jurieu was also one of the driving forces behind Bayles reflection on the problem of evil; they expose the fundamentally problematic nature of both Bayles theological association with Jurieu, and his self-defence in the second edition of the *Dictionnaire*.