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Mita Choudhury. *The Wanton Jesuit and the Wayward Saint: A Tale of Sex, Religion, and Politics in Eighteenth-Century France*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015. xiii + 176 pp. Maps, figures, notes, bibliography, and index. \$64.95 U.S. (hb). ISBN 978.-0-271-07081-0.

Stéphane Lamotte. *L'affaire Girard-Cardière: Justice, satire et religion au XVIII^e siècle*. Preface by Joël Foulleron. Aix-en-Provence: Presses Universitaires de Provence, 2016. 266pp. Figures, notes, and bibliography. 28€ (pb). ISBN 9-791032-000359

Review by Annette Chapman-Adisho, Salem State University.

Mita Choudhury's and Stéphane Lamotte's recent studies of the Girard-Cardière affair are important, but divergent treatments of a sexual scandal in the early eighteenth century French Church. Choudhury and Lamotte pose distinct questions as they examine the relationship between Father Girard and his young penitent Catherine Cadière. For Choudhury, the affair's importance lies at a national level because it reveals that even before the Enlightenment crested, a rich network moved information across eighteenth century France. Lamotte's commitments are to a regional analysis that delves deeply into the relationships between actors and place. This review will examine each book in turn.

Fear not the tedious introduction. Mita Choudhury opens her examination of the Girard-Cadière affair with a scene of spiritual incest, eighteenth century idiom for clerical sexual misconduct, from the novel *Thérèse Philosophe*.^[1] Literally whipped into an ecstatic state by her confessor Father Dirrag, the young penitent secretly observed by Thérèse is then entered from behind as Dirrag encourages her to “oubliez-vous, laissez-vous” (p. 2). Written at mid-century, *Thérèse Philosophe* borrowed plot points and Dirrag's refrain from the trial record of Catherine Cadière's seduction by her spiritual director, Jesuit Jean-Baptiste Girard, nearly twenty years earlier. The Girard-Cadière affair is thus an intriguing case study that Choudhury uses to explore the role of the public and the development of public opinion in eighteenth-century France. Choudhury's analysis of the affair crosses several other important streams of historical inquiry for the period, including Jansenism and the opposition to the papal bull *Unigenitus*; the mid-century Enlightenment's critique of Catholic institutions and practices under the rubric of fanaticism and superstition; and anti-Jesuit sentiment that ultimately led to the order's suppression. *The Wanton Jesuit* consists of eight chapters divided into three parts: an account of the affair, then of the trial, and finally a consideration of the affair's resonance in public opinion.

Choudhury opens her account with an exploration of the religious life of young Catherine Cardière, a nineteen-year-old *dévot*e when she began spiritual direction with Father Girard. Within a year of her work with Girard, Cardière experienced spiritual ecstasies and even stigmata that marked her as a mystic and potentially even a saint. In June 1730, at Girard's urging, Cardière moved from her family home in Toulon to the convent of St. Clares in Ollioules, a few miles outside of the city. The Claristes, a female order of the Franciscans, practiced an austere, contemplative life that appealed little to the celebrated mystic. After a tumultuous summer in which she continued to be directed by Girard, Cardière

abruptly left the convent in mid-September. This move marked the break between Girard and Cardière. Under the guidance of a new confessor, father Nicolas, Cardière revealed the story of Girard's seduction. Cardière's confession set into motion an investigation that ultimately brought her and Girard before the *grande chambre* of the *parlement* of Provence in Aix.

The second part of *The Wanton Jesuit* explores the construction of the legal positions of Cardière and Girard as well as the course of the case. In response to the heavy handedness of Toulon's bishop, Cardière appealed to secular authorities in the person of the city's *lieutenant-criminel*. Unfortunately for Cardière, the secular and ecclesiastical investigators soon began to cooperate in their pursuit of the case's facts, even deposing witnesses together. Further, while Girard retained his liberty, Cardière was detained in various convents.

As a Jesuit, Girard enjoyed the protection of his order that had the sympathy of several highly placed officials in the province. With public discussion of the scandal spreading across France, members of the order looked for a means to resolve the case quickly and quietly. Within months, they won the intervention of Louis XV, who ordered the case heard by a closed session of Aix's *parlement*. While hardly succeeding in dampening public interest, Choudhury argues, this intervention transformed the case from a provincial to a national affair (p. 83). One stroke of good fortune for Cardière was the talent of her attorney, Jean-Baptiste Chaudon. Publishing a two-hundred page *mémoire judiciaire*, he early established her narrative of the relationship, and charged Girard with witchcraft, Quietism, spiritual incest, and abortion. Chaudon appealed to the public as the most just judge.

Choudhury carefully develops the broader ramifications of this case for Father Girard and his order. Jansenists, including the editors of the *Nouvelles Écclesiastiques*, seized upon the scandal to link Jesuits with Quietism, due to the order's support for the devotion to the Sacred Heart. The charges of witchcraft found fewer enthusiasts and were dropped in the end. In response to Chaudon's initial *mémoire judiciaire*, Girard's attorneys questioned how he could promote both sorcery and Quietism that involved mystical union with God. They denied the occurrence of any spiritual incest that also resolved the charge of abortion. Girard's defense centered on a campaign to discredit Cardière and her brothers who were cast as invested in their sister's beatification. Presenting Cardière as a dramatic poser, Girard's attorneys asserted that she mislead her confessor, faked her visions, and fabricated stigmata by using menstrual blood. Ultimately, pivoting on the vote of one magistrate, the *grande chambre* dismissed the case against Girard and returned Cardière to her mother. The scandal that had animated France ended in a draw.

Having developed a complex and detailed narrative of the case, its parties, context, and reverberations across France, Choudhury turns in the last section of *The Wanton Jesuit* to the life of this legal case in public opinion as the Enlightenment crested in the next three decades. Tracing correspondence, verse, and literary productions, Choudhury demonstrates the public fascination with Cardière's seduction and its use to vilify the Jesuits. She also considers the outcome of the trial for Cardière and her supporters. Within two years of the judgment, she and her brothers, Étienne-Thomas and François, disappear from the historical record. Choudhury speculates on the possibility of a Jesuit manipulated retribution that resulted in her imprisonment. This is not an entirely fantastic proposition given the punishment meted out to magistrates and ecclesiastics who had supported her as well as the nearly two-year incarceration of her oldest brother Laurent after authorities seized the family's papers. Left for history as well is Elisabeth Pomot, Cardière's mother, last recorded refusing to reveal her daughter's whereabouts despite threats of imprisonment.

There are many points of interest in Choudhury's fascinating and eminently readable account of this *cause célèbre*. The efforts to manipulate the outcome of this case in both the ecclesiastical and secular realms demonstrate the web of connections the Jesuits enjoyed in eighteenth century France. Just as apparent is the opposition that developed to this order and the vocal Jansenist critique lodged in organs

such as the *Nouvelles Écclesiastiques* and institutions such as the *parlements*. Significantly, and this is the story heard less often of the *parlements*, half of the magistrates in Aix towed the line laid down by their first president and voted for Girard. The resistance of Cardière, her mother, and her brothers to ecclesiastical oppression as well as their appeals to civil authorities both locally and at the highest levels of state is instructive. Although of modest means, (Elizabeth Pomet and her eldest son Laurent Cardière were olive oil merchants) they did not see justice as outside of their reach. Cardière's religious devotion and perseverance is interesting as well. Most of Choudhury's interpretative interest focuses on the strength, expressions, and efficacy of public opinion in France even as early as the 1720s and 1730s. Central to her argument is the idea that there is a long trajectory of skepticism, irreverence, sedition, and critique of church and state expressed through the multifaceted public of eighteenth century France that predates the usual discussion of the prerevolutionary era or the ascendancy of the Enlightenment from mid-century. Her multi-vocal public traced through correspondence, literary sources, and the archives map a bit more of the terrain leading to Robert Darnton's *Tree of Cracow*.^[2] Finally, Choudhury argues that in the Girard-Cardière affair and its afterlife, we see yet further evidence of the desacralization of French society during the *ancien régime's* last century.

Choudhury's portrait of young Cardière underscores like Steven Ozment's *Anna*, the self-possession of young women even in centuries when authorities of church and state were less amenable to it.^[3] Among the many intriguing issues raised in this very fine book is Cardière's experience as a young, Catholic woman. Choudhury explores the early modern relationships developed among lay Catholic women known as *dévotés* and fits Cardière's spirituality within that tradition even before Girard arrived in Toulon. The family support Cardière received for her spiritual life is a striking aspect of this tale as is their tenacity in pursuing justice for her once they realized Girard's betrayal. Was it family honor that motivated their zeal or were they struggling to rectify a great spiritual wrong? Michelet judged Cardière's visions and ecstatic behavior before and after her rift with Girard as revolt against the abuse she experienced (p. 176). While not ignoring the gendered nature of Cardière's tale, Choudhury's interest in public opinion and the Jansenist and Jesuit conflict in eighteenth century France leaves less time for exploration of Cardière's horizon as a young French Catholic woman.

Upper-level undergraduates could engage this tale and the historical developments it explores with guidance. The involvement of ecclesiastical and secular authorities in Cardière's case would require some unpacking. As an account of the Jesuit and Jansenist conflict in eighteenth century France, this scandal makes what is usually a rather arid discussion of ecclesiastical reform forced underground due to *Unigenitus* much easier to appreciate as a political division within the church that gained partisans in society. The rapid circulation of the news of this scandal as well as its long afterlife is fascinating and should be easily relatable to all those updating their snap chat story as they sit in class and discuss young Cardière's turbulent entry into adulthood. Outside of pedagogical considerations, Choudhury's tale merits the attention of a wide range of readers, from specialists in the eighteenth century to those interested in the many issues raised by this case.

In *L'Affaire Girard-Cardière: justice, satire et religion au XVIII^e siècle*, Stéphane Lamotte pursues several intriguing lines of analysis. His account differs in important ways from Choudhury's and merits the attention of specialists of the period as well as others investigating religion, gender, print culture, and legal history. Among Lamotte's interests are Cardière's religious and emotional experiences. Taking his cue from recent calls for an exploration of the histories of love, Lamotte mines the depositions of witnesses as well as the case's *mémoires judiciaires* to reconstruct aspects of this young woman's attachments to friends and eventually to Girard.^[4] A second concern is anti-Jesuit sentiment in eighteenth century France. While not ignoring the Jesuit-Jansenist conflict, Lamotte places the critique of the order within the broader anticlericalism of the eighteenth century. The circulation of information and the development of public opinion are additional avenues of inquiry Lamotte explores. The study is characterized by an expansive archival reach, full discussion of the sources consulted, and extensive citation. Although divided into twelve chapters, these fall into three broader groupings: Chapters one

through four offer a narrative of the affair and its judicial procedures; five through eight examine the varied literature generated by the scandal including *mémoires judiciaires*, satires, correspondences, and illustrations; and nine through twelve examine the aftermath of the trial for Girard, Cardière, and her supporters, as well as the historical and literary treatments of the affair in the next three centuries. For Lamotte, the Girard-Cardière affair is like the Rubic's cube; it defies a simple solution (p. 15).

Lamotte's treatment of Cardière and Girard is balanced, careful, and nuanced. Both individuals emerge from his text as fully drawn as the sources permit. He notes the difficulty of the sources. Several important items, such as the minutes of the *grande chambre's* deliberations, are missing. For Cardière, we hear her voice only through her attorneys, both male. To work around these limitations, Lamotte reconstructs the biographies of the two protagonists by utilizing witness depositions, satirical writings, and the *mémoires judiciaires* of each one's opponent. For Cardière, he applies a close, against-the-grain reading to the brief of Girard's legal team. For Girard, the opposite is the case. One source to which Lamotte returns at several points in his study is an anonymous satirical manuscript, *Philocathedras: Histoire anecdote de l'affaire du P. Girard avec la demoiselle Cardière, ses frères et le P. Nicolas*, that he discovered at the *Biblioteca civica centrale* in Turin. From Lamotte's research and analysis, the reader gains some interesting information about Cardière and Girard. For example, Cardière's devotional life began at the age of twelve, and Girard was her fifth confessor. As Lamotte notes, when Girard became Cardière's spiritual director, he gained a penitent and mystic well versed in spiritual and devotional practices. Girard's position as a rising star in the Jesuit institutions of Provence is discussed in detail. Before coming to Toulon, he was at the *Collège Bourbon* in Aix, the most important Jesuit institution in Provence. Living in Aix for ten years before moving to Toulon, he developed acquaintances and connections with the magistrates of the *parlement* and other figures who would play a role in the proceedings surrounding the affair. He even served as the confessor for the mother of Chaudon, Cardière's principal attorney.

A second intriguing aspect of this study is Lamotte's discussion of the legal and judicial proceedings it involved. One hundred and fourteen witnesses were deposed in Toulon. Officials from Toulon's episcopal (*officialité*) and district (*sénéchausée*) courts took the testimony of the first ninety, ending their efforts when Louis XV transferred the case to the *parlement* of Aix. The *parlement* sent two commissioners to Toulon who deposed another twenty-four individuals. The last of these witnesses was an individual who made religious accessories for Girard's penitents, showing that no stone was left unturned in the investigation of Cardière and her claims. Among those deposed were the household's servants, the neighbors, the young woman's friends, her fellow *devotes*, and the sisters of Saint Clare in Ollioules. Only the Jesuits in Toulon managed to remain off the record, refusing as a group to testify. The legal process came to its first conclusion when the *parlement's* commissioners pronounced against Cardière, her brothers, and father Nicolas, her confessor after she left the convent in Ollioules. To counter this victory by the "techniciens de justice et des jésuites," Cardière filed an appeal, and her supporters took her case to the public (p. 82). Lamotte's account of the twists and turns of these legal proceedings is fascinating, as is his account of the strategies used by Cardière's attorneys, brothers, and father Nicolas to put the affair before the public in the late spring and early summer of 1731.

In examining the several extant correspondences that discuss this case, Lamotte is far less interested in tracing the routes to the Tree of Cracow than he is in the particularities of these records. Who was writing, to whom, and why? What aspects of the case interested different correspondents? One of the most extensive correspondences is that of Jean Bouhier, president of the *parlement* of Burgundy and Antoine Marais, a friend and attorney living in Paris. In over one hundred letters in 1731 alone, Bouhier and Marais followed the legal proceedings. Describing their commentary on the unfolding affair as droll and serious, Lamotte notes that they did not dwell on its scandalous aspects but were more interested in its legal proceedings and their implications. Most of the other correspondents he examines had at least one party based in Aix or Provence. Lamotte notes the importance of Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin (papal territories) for the production and distribution of information about the case. He

concludes that the varied correspondences represent a cross section of the Enlightenment's elite and offer insight into the opinions of *le monde* on it.

While Lamotte recognizes the widespread interest in this affair, and through Louis XV's intervention and the campaign of the journal *Nouvelles Écclésiastiques*, its role in the Jesuit-Jansenist conflict, his study is regionally oriented. He explores Toulon as a character in the drama and traces the web of connections linking characters and commentators across Provence. In his concluding chapter, he argues that above all, this story belongs to the region. "L'affaire, malgré son retentissement national, voire européen, au moment des faits, reste une histoire provençale" (p. 241). His privileging of the local is especially well developed in his discussion of Toulon. He gives attention to the town's role as a naval port, in decline in the 1720s and 1730s, and the establishment of different religious orders within it. The Jesuit direction of the *séminaire royal de la marine*, where Girard served as rector from 1728, dated only from the late 1680s, and despite local resistance, notable Jesuit educators in engineering and science established the institution's prestige and effectiveness in its first generation. Lamotte's careful attention to the affair's local and regional context allows one to see more clearly not only Provence, but France in the eighteenth century.

Lamotte concludes his study with three very intriguing chapters on the historiography of this affair. The author provides several extended and fascinating discussions of individuals such as Voltaire and Michelet and their interactions with this history. In the 1730s, Voltaire could not put enough distance between himself and this scandal, writing a protesting letter when he was linked to one satirical effort. By mid-century, however, the case became a useful trope for his anti-clerical meditations. Lamotte notes that Michelet's *La Sorcière* (1862) is now a standard account and point of entry into the history of the affair. The great nineteenth century republican researched and wrote his story in three months, shaping it to serve a virulent anti-Jesuit perspective. There is more, much more, but one will only discover it by reading the book.

Choudhury's account explores the Girard-Cardière affair and uses it to extend our understanding of the networks of public opinion in eighteenth-century France and their strength. Through her analysis, we see more clearly how the Jesuit-Jansenist conflict played out in the religious orders, homes, and institutions of France in a region at least physically remote from Paris. Cardière as a young Catholic woman, would-be-saint, and inspiration for a community comes to life through Choudhury's text. This is a book that will not soon leave one's thoughts.

Lamotte likewise presents a dense account of this affair that defies light reflection. Straining to find a middle course, Lamotte sees the power of the Jesuits, but refuses to condemn them for holding a prominent position in society. Likewise, he presents Cardière with compassion and intelligence, rejecting the idea that she is only Michelet's victim. Lamotte's text covers a lot of ground efficiently. His varied lines of analysis remain true to his opening insight. He is turning the Rubik's cube, presenting the many sides of an affair that has inspired historical and literary retelling for three centuries.

NOTES

[1] [de Boyer, Jean Baptiste, marquis d'Argens]. *Thérèse philosophe ou Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du P. Dirrag, et de Mademoiselle Éradice*, in *Œuvres anonymes du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1986), vol. 3.

[2] Robert Darnton, "The News in Paris: An Early Information Society," in *George Washington's False Teeth: An Unconventional Guide to the Eighteenth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), p. 75.

[3] Steven Ozment, *The Bürgermeister's Daughter: Scandal in a Sixteenth-Century German Town* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997).

[4] Jocelyne Dakhlia, Arlette Farge, Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, Alessandro Stella, eds., *Histoires de l'amour. Fragilités et interdits, du Kâmasutra à nos jours* (Paris: Bayard, 2011).

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