# INTRODUCTION

## AN APPROACH TO THE SPIRITUALITY OF TIME

In 1564, on the title page of the first edition of Calvin's commentary on Joshua, the printer François Perrin inscribed the words, "With a preface by Theodore Beza, containing a brief account of his life and death."[1] In the following year, the reprint edition of the commentary included a new version of Calvin's life, leading to a change in the title: "With a history of the life and death of Calvin described according to the ordering of time, almost year by year."[2] The more structured narrative of Calvin's life was designed to encourage the purchase of a commentary that had already been published before and was being reprinted without changes. The first lesson I learned while writing this book was that in sixteenth-century Geneva "the ordering of time" had become central. The expression "the ordering of time" also refers to the increasingly rigorous discipline in Calvin's Geneva, and it seemed to me that the phrase provided a fitting title for the topic of this book.

By selecting in French the title "The Ordering of Time" (*L'Ordre du temps*), I was, however, going back to a title already used by Krzystof Pomian.[3] Far be it from me to compare my work to Pomian's, but my title came from François Perrin rather than from the Gallimard publishers. Pomian's book deals with chronometry, chronography, and chronology, mostly in their modern and contemporary forms. He analyzes the

[1] See *Bibliotheca Calviniana* II, 64/4, p. 1055. The Latin text read, "Addita sunt quaedam de eiusdem morbo et obitu" (ibid., 64/9, p. 1070).

[2] See *Bibliotheca Calviniana* III, 65/2, p. 35.

[3] Krzystof Pomian, *L'Ordre du temps* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984). See also the first chapter of J. T. Fraser's short but stimulating essay, *The Genesis and Evolution of Time* (Brighton, UK: Harvester Press, 1982), in which Fraser speaks of a search for order in the measurement of time, pp. 14–18.

philosophy of time, since time is clearly a focus of history.[4] The concept of time is a fundamental building block for historians, and Pomian has studied its various periods and epochs from every philosophical angle including the nature and measurement of time. I will refer to his book in the course of mine.

Reformed Protestants, especially in Geneva but also in Huguenot France, London, or Berne, internalized a different way of relating to time and developed a new approach to their daily schedule. External constraints gave a rigid structure to their relations to time. These constraints, in the form of the all-important church discipline in Geneva, shaped Calvinists' relationship to God. These practices will be described and analyzed. This study of the links between Protestants and ordinary time is not merely a historical one, as I will point out again in the conclusion, where we will revisit Max Weber's theses. I will show that Weber's analysis and its critique by other scholars apply equally to seventeenth-century English Puritanism in Baxter's day and Calvin's Geneva between 1550 and 1560. New links between the Reformed and ordinary time were forged in Geneva, as were social structures of persuasion and control, and a new economy of *time and its component parts* was formulated. All of these aspects of time have continued to shape French Protestants, especially those who come from a Calvinist background.

In his diary, André Gide revealed himself to be the spiritual offspring of the Greek professor Jean Ribit and of the Reformation.[5] On 31 January 1912, he carefully wrote down the hours, the passing of time, and his schedule to within a half hour.

> **I will carefully note down how I make use of my time, in order to be more frugal with it.**
> **7:30 AM: bath and reading of Souday's article on Suarès.**
> **8:30–9 AM: breakfast.**
> **9 AM: piano practice (the Bach–Liszt first organ prelude). The practice session was interrupted by Dr Dussansay's visit to bandage Em's arm.**
> **10–11 AM: letters to Rilke and Eugène Rouart.**
> **11–12 PM: out for a walk, then preparation of a clean copy of my notes on *Les Possédés*.**

[4] Krzystof Pomian, *L'Ordre du temps*, p. xii and following.
[5] See Chapter 3 and, more succinctly, Chapter 5.

**Lunch.**
**1–2 PM: piano practice.**
**2–3 PM: reading *Clayhanger*, then overwhelming fatigue and terrible loss of concentration. I took a nap between 3 and 4.**
**Because I wanted to, and due to my need to do something worthwhile, I started to translate Hebbel's letters (those written in France).**
**I worked hard and became interested in them, so that I continued working on them until dinnertime.**
**I want to focus on the call of virtue with all my heart and soul.**[6]

In his aim to be frugal with his time, and his shame at his "terrible loss of concentration" on a day when he was trying to "do something worthwhile," Gide kept an account of his use of time in what I believe was a very Protestant fashion. By the end of the book, I hope to convince readers of the accuracy of this assessment. Indeed, the next day he confided to his journal, "I would like to organize my day and decide how to use my time, just as I used to do in the rue de Commaille. There I had a 'daily schedule' pinned to the wall, and I took pride in finding no escape from it."[7]

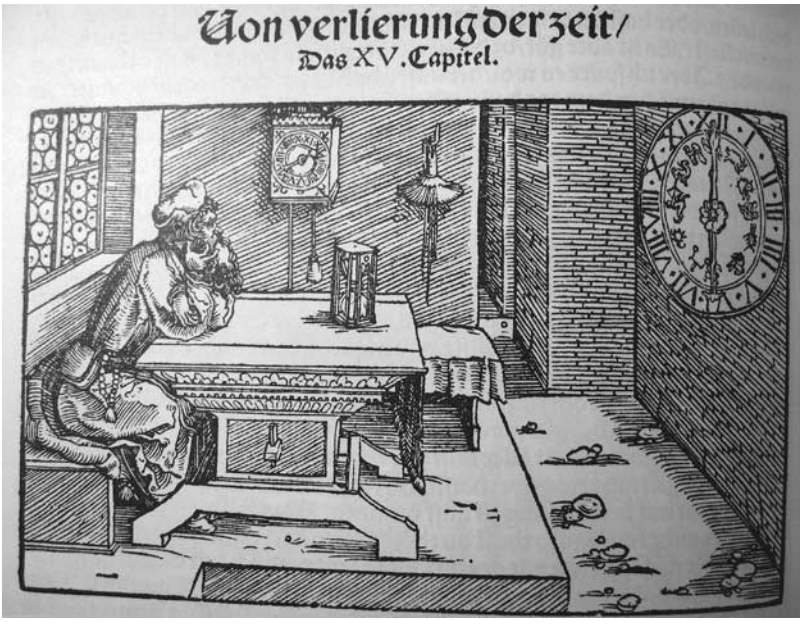
When I began my research, I spoke with many friends with Huguenot backgrounds, and many of them testified to rigorous timekeeping practices. One friend used to set herself a precise schedule during her holidays. Another remembered how uncomfortable he felt whenever he was late. A third affirmed in his old age that he had always been punctual from childhood on. All of these had "found no escape." This book also connects with my own experience of timekeeping, about which I will say little, except to mention the vivid memory I have of my paternal grandfather. In the 1960s, when he was in his nineties, he would play his violin every evening from 5:30 to 6:30 PM before his dinner, which was always served punctually at 6:45 PM. His unvarying routine used to amuse me when I spent my holidays with him as a schoolboy. My amusement was due to both a sense of surprise and reassurance: I was discovering strict daily timekeeping. In a way, this study is intended to write the story of

[6] See André Gide, *Journal*, ed. Eric Marty (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1996), p. 708. The editor did not comment on Gide's meticulous timetable. Over the course of the centuries, there were, of course, many examples of Catholic men and women who kept a minute-by-minute account of their timetable, but it seems to me that the origins of this punctilious relationship with time can be found in the Calvinist branch of the Protestant world.

[7] Ibid., p. 709.

these reactions to *tempus fuget coram Deo*. During the sixteenth century, these attitudes turned out to be mainly held by Calvinists, as we shall see in the following pages.

It is often hard to clearly define the specific characteristics of the Renaissance, especially to medievalists, and this problem seems to be only




**1.** Woodcut of the Petrarca-Meister, nowadays identified as Hans Weiditz, ca. 1520–22. We find the woodcut in the German edition of Petrarca, *Von der Artzney bayder Glück*, Augsbourg 1532, fifteenth chapter of Book II: "to waste his time" ("Von verlierung der zeit"). [By Heinrich Steiner. See reprint Hambourg, 1984, Herausgegeben und kommentiert von Manfred Lemmer, Das Ander Buch … von der Artzney des bösen Glücks, f° XXIv°. Drawings were finished in August 1520, but for different reasons the edition was first published in 1532 (see reprint pp. 195–6). See also Walther Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters*, Berlin, 1955, p. 209, and Guido Messling, who has kept the expression "Petrach Master," "Beck or the Petrach Master," *Print Quarterly* XXI, 2004, pp. 146–54, in particular n. 9, p. 150.] At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Augsbourg was an important center for goldsmiths, clockmakers [See CARDINAL, *Montre*, pp. 18–19. In both of Dürer's engravings, Jerome in his Cell (1511) and Melencolia I (1514), hourglasses are topped by a face with an hour hand that gives the time.], and engravers. In 1530, the city welcomed the Imperial Diet (Reichstag), where Princes close to Luther presented the Augsburg Confessio to Charles V, but at that time the Petrarca-Meister did not work any longer (Geneva, private collection).

getting worse.[8] Indeed, our entry into the twenty-first century, thus adding a century to history, has resulted in an increased loss of identity for the Renaissance, which is tacked on, Jacques le Goff-style (from the end of Antiquity to the end of the Ancien Régime), to the extended period that precedes it. Otherwise, the Renaissance finds itself connected to the "early modern" period, which stretches from the fifteenth century to the end of the Ancien Régime. Scholars highlight the printing "revolution," the use of perspective in painting, and especially the return to classical sources.[9] All this, however, ignores the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century *scriptoria* that could produce as many copies as the first printing presses, makes the Renaissance begin with Giotto, and finally forgets that the return to the sources was only made possible thanks to the copies of ancient manuscripts produced in the Middle Ages (no one could yet read the palimpsests). In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, people's relation to time and space changed dramatically, and this altered relationship may be the clearest indication of the "new features" of the Renaissance. The world of ordinary people during the Renaissance was equally affected by "modern" movements including the major expansion of cities, the discovery of the "new world," and the migration of refugees forced to flee ancestral lands to find religious peace.[10]

The spread of city clocks starting in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, and especially the deep changes to the concept of time in the sixteenth century, made a permanent impact on the European order of time. For instance, the invention of Protestant calendars removed all mention of the saints, and the decision to start the new year on 1 January[11] marked a change from starting it at Christmas (in Geneva), at Easter, or

[8] See Pomian's helpful comments in *L'Ordre du temps*, pp. 45–53.

[9] Alongside the printing press, historians of the Renaissance also highlight the development of artillery and the compass as the other major technical inventions of the period.

[10] In a recent work on travel, Daniel Roche even includes this category, though he only provides a brief overview of the sixteenth-century situation. See his *Humeurs vagabondes: De la circulation des hommes et de l'utilité des voyages* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), especially pp. 319–21 and pp. 330–3. Whether these movements themselves led to the "rebirth" of people in the Renaissance is another question, one that this book is not primarily designed to answer, though in the end it may indeed help to resolve it.

[11] Decision by Charles IX in 1563; Ordinance of Roussillon in January/August 1564, with an implementation date of 1565, though the Paris Parliament only applied the measure in 1567. See G. Tessier, "Le Parlement de Paris et le style du 1er janvier" in *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des chartes* 101 (1940): 233–6.

on the feast of Conception (25 March), or even Roman-style on 1 March.[12] Even more significant was the replacement of the Julian Calendar with the Gregorian Calendar,[13] which led to the deletion of ten days in October 1582, when 4 October was followed by 15 October.[14] Even Montaigne complained about this change, commenting that he "was forced to be a bit heretical about this."[15] We should also bear in mind the intellectual debates surrounding the age of the world. The dominant figure in these debates was Joseph-Juste Scaliger, thanks to his *De emendatione temporum*.[16]

[12] Such was the case in Venice, for instance, where up until 1797, hence very late on, public and official documents put the start of the year at 1 March, while notaries used 25 March. Documents that were intended for use outside the Republic of Venice had to indicate the change of year on 1 January, already beginning around 1520. See Edward Muir, *Civil Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 71, and note 19, citing A. Cappelli's *Cronologia, cronografia e calendario perpetuo dal principio dell'era Cristiana ai gior ni nostril* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1930), p. 16.

[13] One should not forget that this change had been decided already in the first half of the fourteenth century. See Max Lejbowicz, "Computus. Le nombre et le temps alti-médiévaux" in *Le Temps, sa mesure et sa perception au Moyen Age*, ed. Bernard Ribémont (Caen: Paradigme, 1992), pp. 151–87, esp. p. 175 and note 151 p. 187. See also Frederick J. Baumgartner, "Popes, Astrologers, and Early Modern Calendar Reform" in *History has Many Voices*, ed. Lee Palmer Wandel (Kirksville, MS: Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, 2003), pp. 41–56.

[14] The choice of October was due to a papal decision and to the introduction of this change in Rome. In the rural world, the calendar-change led to some unnoticed but significant adaptations. Among these, Jean Tabourot in his *Almanach ou prognostication des laboureurs reduite selon le Kalendrier gregorien avec quelques observations particulieres sur l'annee 1588, de si long temps menacée* (Paris: Jean Richer, 1588) rewrote all the popular weather-related proverbs, since the older ones no longer worked. For instance, the saying for 22 January used to be: "A la Sainct Vincent/ Tout gelle ou tout fend,/ L'hyver se reprent,/ Ou se rompt la dent. Lequel jour se rapporte au premier de fevrier selon le nouveau Kalendrier, et partant faut dire: La veille de la Chandeleur/ L'hyver passe ou reprend vigueur." fol. 6r. In France, the Gregorian calendar came into force two months late, when 9 December was followed by 20 December 1582. See Jérôme Delatour, "Noël le 15 décembre. La réception du calendrier grégorien en France (1582)" in *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des chartes* 157 (1999): 369–416.

[15] See Michel de Montaigne, *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, trans. and ed. M. A. Screech (London: Penguin Press, 1987), p. 1143: "The recent suppression of ten days by the Pope has brought me so low that I really cannot wear it: I belong to those years when we computed otherwise: so ancient and long-established a custom claims me and summons me back to it. Since I cannot stand novelty even when corrective, I am constrained to be a bit of a heretic in this case. I grit my teeth, but my mind is always ten days ahead or ten days behind; it keeps muttering in my ears." See also p. 1160: "The error of our practices was never felt beforehand."

[16] Scaliger's work appeared in 1583. See, of course, Anthony Grafton's masterpiece, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983–93), but also Antoine Coron's article, "'J'ai changé le temps …': Joseph Scaliger au

A lesser-known change was the disappearance of unequal hours over the course of the sixteenth century, yet it too played a role in the reorganization of time in Europe.[17] Furthermore, when Nicolas Barnaud wrote his monarchomachian treatise after the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, he selected *Le Reveille-matin des François et de leurs voisins* (*the wake-up call of the French and their neighbors*) as his title.[18] What other century, described by some as "the last and the black hole of all the others,"[19] saw as much creativity in speaking and writing about time and making corrections to it?

In this context of the recent figuration of time, I have focused primarily on Protestant sources, especially Reformed ones, for these rapidly seemed most significant to me. In fact, one can find evidence of a spirituality that is more conscious of time, set within a movement that could be summarized as follows: from the age of spirituality to the spirituality of time. For its part, Catholic spirituality clearly seems to focus more on space. However, it would be simplistic to suggest that Reformed spirituality concentrated on time at the expense of space, while Catholic spirituality focused on space and left time aside. Indeed, canonical hours, Books of Hours, liturgical calendars, not to mention the clocks of wisdom and other spiritual clocks

travail" in *Revue de la Bibliothèque nationale de France* 4 (2000): 16–19 (dealing with the working copy of the 1583 *De emendatione temporum*, extensively annotated by Scaliger in anticipation of the second edition of 1598). Apart from Scaliger, numerous theologians, particularly in the last third of the sixteenth century, focused on the chronology of the world, blending biblical chronology and pagan chronography. David Chytraeus, Kaspar Peucer, Gilbert Génébrard, and a few others published various *Chronologiae* and *Chronographiae*.

[17] The idea behind unequal hours was to divide day and night, regardless of the time of year, into twelve equal parts, thus making the hours unequal in length when compared across the whole year. See Emmanuel Poulle, "L'Horlogerie a-t-elle tué les heures inégales?" in *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des chartes* 157 (1999): 137–56. We should recall that when dealing with houses and domification in horoscopes, astrology made use of the unequal lines of the astrolabe, which are not time zones but rather geometric lines indicating the division of the diurnal arc into twelve equal sections throughout the year. Thus the same set of unequal lines on the astrolabe played two different and unrelated roles: one was to give a specific indication of the unequal hours and the other was to provide a permanent domification.

[18] "Composé par Eusebe Philadelphe Cosmopolite, en forme de Dialogues" (Edinburgh: James James, 1574). The preface indicates, "Written in Eleutheroville on 20 November 1573" fol. [aiii]v. The author hoped that the book "awakens the minds of too many people" fol. aiiiir.

[19] Pierre de L'Estoile was echoing the title of poems written against Henri III and his favorites in 1577. See De L'Estoile, *Registre-journal du règne de Henri III, 1579–81*, ed. Madeleine Lazard and Gilbert Schrenk (Geneva: Droz, 1997), 3: p. 48. The comment appeared in September 1579, but the poem had been published in 1577.

of the fifteenth century, remind us of this. In her brief yet concise analysis of the emergence of Genevan calendars, Natalie Zemon Davis noted the existence of a calendar that accompanied the *Heures de Nostre Dame à l'usaige de Romme*, published in Paris in 1550.[20] This calendar listed several dates including the death of François Vatable, the concordat between Leo X and Francis I, and the birth of Henry II. I will bear this Catholic calendar in mind when discussing the development of the Genevan calendar in Chapter 4.

Prior to that, I will start by focusing on John Calvin's daily schedule, based on evidence from his correspondence, his treatises, commentaries, and sermons. I will show how the Reformer was sometimes caught short when it came to preparing his lectures or even his sermons. Calvin's days were very full, and his relations with time were tense because he felt time flew by too quickly for his taste. The second part of this first chapter will focus on the strategies he used to organize his timetable and respond to the numerous and varied appeals he received, in spite of his lack of time.

Overall, this book will move from the specific to the general and back again, aiming to provide a full history, including the history of ideas, the complex history of astrology, the history of theology, literacy history, the history of the book, the history of education, and even the history of philology. All of these domains provide essential elements for the structure of my overall argument. Moving from Calvin the man to the city of Geneva, the second chapter will analyze the time of the sermon, including both the starting time and the length of the service. The daily sermons offered dedicated opportunities for the many French refugees who had chosen Geneva to acquire or consolidate their new faith. This teaching approach can rightly be termed confessional. Calvin and the Genevan pastors sought to construct the converted faithful's new social and religious identity. All of these converts came out of the ancient Catholic tradition and had to be completely disentangled from it, both spiritually and in a bodily sense. For instance, they had to abandon making the sign of the cross, dipping their fingers in holy water, and genuflecting numerous times in favor of learning to raise both arms during the prayers, and so on. The time of the sermon may seem to be a minor detail, but the setup and subsequent changes

[20] See Natalie Zemon Davis, "Printing and the People" in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 189–226 and notes pp. 326–36, especially note 39, p. 330. The *Heures de Nostre Dame à l'usaige de Romme* were published by Magdaleine Boursette.

to its schedule, as well as the disciplinary measures that were linked to worship attendance, all mark the stages of a timetable that was in process of being reformed. The sixteenth-century ecclesiastical ordinances provided detailed rules about the schedule of worship services, of the catechism service, and about the appropriate time for worship and liturgy. As Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum rightly pointed out, this obsession with accurate timekeeping was first and foremost a Protestant trend.[21] Only later did this phenomenon affect the post-tridentine Catholic Church.[22]

Furthermore, the daily sermon in the period from 1540 to 1550 gave Protestant parishioners the opportunity for a first encounter with punctuality. Various paraliturgical practices in Berne or London helped them to develop this skill. The social standards tied to the worship schedule, followed by the constant shrinking of the time allotted to the sermon, will introduce readers to the social concept of time as defined in the Genevan civil ordinances in the latter half of the sixteenth century. It is somewhat surprising to learn, for instance, that Genevan schoolboys had less time for their mid-morning meal in winter than in summer, because in winter they started their school day an hour later and they had to make up for "lost time." Hence, in wintertime their half-hour break disappeared, and their meal did not interrupt lessons.

Benedetto Croce rose every day at seven AM and began his day by preparing a "bilancio preventivo," or "advance reckoning," in which he wrote an hour-by-hour account of everything he wanted to accomplish during that day. Before stopping work for the day, at around one AM, he wrote out his "bilancio consuntivo" or "full reckoning."[23] By using these techniques, he was following the advice of Pliny the Elder, Seneca, or Cicero. Their advice was also advocated by Alberti, Erasmus, and finally Casaubon, as we shall see in Chapter 3. The ancient dislike of wasting time, human beings' most precious possession, was a view shared by an architect, Humanists and Reformers, Erasmus and Bucer, Castellio or Bullinger. Yet Protestants, and Genevan Calvinists in particular, used this dislike to target the vice of idleness and to favor a positive value, namely punctuality. Quotations from

[21] See Gerhard Dohrn-Van Rossum, *L'Histoire de l'heure: l'horlogerie et l'organisation moderne du temps* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1997), p. 271 and following.

[22] Ibid., p. 273 and note 128 p. 429.

[23] See the work by Croce's student Fausto Nicolini (born in 1879), *Benedetto Croce. Con 21 tavole fuori testo* (Turin, Italy: Unione tip.-ed. Torinese, 1962), p. 418 and following.

works by Erasmus, Vives, Heinrich Bullinger, Mathurin Cordier, Isaac Casaubon, and others will show how specifically Protestant this focus on punctuality was, and how this focus led to training in timekeeping.

As noted above, the fourth chapter will concentrate on the new calendars established by European Protestants.[24] Genevan calendars are bibliographical entities in their own right, generally consisting of a short booklet of four, six, or eight sheets. Lightweight and easily handled, they were an ideal propaganda tool. The calendars removed the saints' names but added in the names of Luther, Edward VI, and later Calvin. Saint Bartholomew's Day was only retained in the calendar to keep the memory of massacred French Protestants alive. These *calendriers historiaux* appeared in the mid-sixteenth century, in the same period as the new Anglican calendars of 1549 and the new Lutheran ones of 1550. These works dropped liturgical circular time in favor of a cumulative linear time, which included the great names and key dates of Protestant history as they occurred. I will describe the creation, development, and decline of the calendars by the end of the seventeenth century, and here too we will note Calvin's influence on their initial expansion, especially because of his aversion for their predecessors, the Catholic almanacs.

The next two chapters will deal with the literary world of the French Renaissance. First, I will analyze two treatises on time: the *Discours du temps, de l'an et de ses parties* (1556), written by the philosopher-poet Pontus de Tyard and the *De l'institution des heures canoniques et des temps determinez aux prieres des Chrestiens* (1564), by the Reformer Pierre Viret.[25] These two works offer a distinctly different understanding of time, with Viret displaying the Protestant focus on the importance of punctuality. This chapter will also look at Ronsard's contribution to the topic, since he exhibited his own understanding of everyday time in some of his poems. The second literary chapter will focus on leading figures including Montaigne

[24] I discussed these calendars, and especially their presentation, during a one-day conference held at the Ecole Nationale des Chartes on 13 December 2001. See Max Engammare, "Mise en page du calendrier réformé (mi-XVI$^{e}$–mi-XVII$^{e}$ siècle)" in *La mise en page du livre religieux, XIII$^{e}$–XX$^{e}$: actes de la journée d'étude de l'Institut d'histoire du livre organisée par l'École nationale des chartes, Paris, 13 décembre 2001*, ed. Annie Charon, Isabelle Diu, and Elisabeth Parinet (Paris: Ecole des chartes, 2004). My article provides many more illustrations than this introduction.

[25] Chapter 5 will present an extended version of my contribution, "Ronsard et Tyard versus Viret et Calvin à propos du temps" in *Ronsard figure de la variété. En mémoire d'Isidore Silver*, ed. Colette H. Winn (Geneva: Droz, 2002), pp. 137–46.