

Louise Katz. *Guillaume Budé et l'art de la lecture.*

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Guillaume Budé (1468–1540) was a leading figure of the French Renaissance; his best-known work is *De ase*, a treatise on the coins and measures of antiquity. Louise Katz, PhD candidate at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, looks at the art of reading as reflected in Budé's life, philosophy, and works.

Budé's approach to reading may not have been startlingly different from that of his learned contemporaries; but he offers Katz, as chronicler, the advantage that substantial documentation of his views and actual practice survives. We have his

correspondence with other scholars (notably Erasmus); seven of his commonplace books survive in a private collection; some books from his personal collection bear annotations in his distinctive hand; and he alludes, in his own writings, to what he has been reading, and, sometimes to where. Scholars and students might read aloud to a group, a friend's books might be lent or examined at his home, the scholar might have access to an institutional library as well as the books he owned himself.

The balance between a scholar's need to assimilate the writings of antiquity without generating conflict with a Christian worldview is a tension that goes back as least as far as the *Institutiones* of Cassiodorus. Passages in Budé's works and correspondence suggest that Budé felt a young scholar should read widely in order to nourish his mind or furnish it with experience analogous to travel (food and voyage metaphors are both used in his writings). Budé read widely in an attempt to develop what he called *érudition encyclopédic*, an encyclopedic familiarity with the content of classical literature. He is even credited with importing the cognate *encyclopédie* into vernacular French. His commonplace books testify that the study of rhetoric was a parallel interest, as he kept separate notes on the stylistic guidance found in classical authors. But for Budé a stage should be reached in the maturation of a philosopher at which he generates in his own writings a synthesis of what he has read with thoughts of his own. The developing scholar has steered clear of the dangers of classical lore if he lands his craft with hands still firmly on the tiller of Christian revelation.

The most thought-provoking section of Katz's monograph is her discussion of Budé's approach to writing and publication. Her analysis relies heavily on the first two editions of *De asse* and the author's correspondence with Erasmus concerning the annotation of that text. Katz surmises that Budé sought an ideal readership among an elite circle of his intellectual acquaintances. He deliberately cultivated a reputation for density that would require and reward careful study and re-reading, fostering a demand for subsequent annotated editions. Katz has left for some future venue, perhaps, an analysis of the economics of such a program. How were publishers and distributors found for texts allegedly planned to be difficult to read? Katz discusses the dedication of only one of Budé's works; the patronage of the remainder needs to be examined. Were the first editions self-funded? Did his books circulate in manuscript, before printing? One hopes for an expansion of this argument that deals with the role of his publishers in the diffusion and marketing of his writings, the pace at which he supervised expanded editions of works other than *De asse*, and any interest he felt in seeing his works translated into modern vernaculars.

In the mean time this book is intelligently organized and makes exemplary use of the apparatus of scholarship to stick to the point. It has been kept to manageable length by guiding the reader to the writings of Marie-Madeleine de la Garanderie, Michel Simonin, Louis Delaruelle, Annie Charon-Parent, Anthony Grafton, and other well-selected sources for further study rather than rehearsing what is already known. Katz exhibits an admirable reluctance to cite as fact assertions found in older scholarship that may rest on evidence too slender to support them. Her judicious

discussion (34–35) of whether Guillaume Budé ever actually exercised any real functions that matched his title as Master of the *Bibliothèque du Roi* is excellent.

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