

Claudine Scève. *Urbain le mescongneu filz de l'empereur Federic Barberousse*. Ed. Janine Incardona and Pascale Mounier. Cahiers d'Humanisme et Renaissance 112. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2013. 334 pp. \$50.40. ISBN: 978-2-600-01610-0.

To modern readers, Claudine Scève, like her sister Sybille and their contemporaries Anne Tullonne, Jeanne Gaillard, Claude Perron, Catherine de Vauzelles, Clémence de Bourges, and others, has been little more than a name associated with Lyon's intellectual society. Although the knowledge and writings of these women earned the praises of Marot, Pontus de Tyard, Louise Labé, Charles de Sainte-Marthe, and François de Billon, the absence of actual texts keeps the women marginalized. Consequently, Janine Incardona and Pascale Mounier's meticulous edition of a work credited to Claudine Scève is greatly appreciated. Scève deservedly acquires a place in literary history for, as Droz's publicity states, *Urbain le mescongneu filz de l'empereur Federic Barberousse* is the "second translation into French accomplished by a woman in the sixteenth century and the first one published." It is the story of Urbain, the son of a poor girl raped by the Roman emperor, who after numerous adventures is recognized by his royal father.

While Claudine Scève's translation is the *raison d'être* for the volume, Incardona and Mounier offer the reader much more than a nicely edited early modern French text. The background and supporting information they provide is extensive and solid and ensures that this volume will appeal to anyone interested in the literary culture of Renaissance Lyon as well as to feminist scholars. The volume begins with a thorough introduction that includes a brief summary of the plot, a concise look at fifteenth- and sixteenth-century editions and variations of the Italian text, an argument attesting to the authorship and dating of the French translation, an analysis of the French text, and a discussion of the popularity of such sentimental *chevaleresques* novels in Renaissance Lyon. The editors have also included a bibliography, a table comparing passages from several editions of *Urbanol Urbain*, and an extensive glossary.

The bilingual presentation that places the 1526 Italian *Urbano* facing Scève's *Urbain* (ca. 1533) allows the reader to examine Scève's translation style. She exhibits a marked fondness for rare and archaic vocabulary and a tendency toward Latinized and Italianized word forms that, along with a certain fluidity of syntax, remind this

reader strongly of Helisenne de Crenne's vocabulary and style in *Les Angoysses douloureuses* (1538). The subject matter of both *histoires* appealed to the popular taste for romance commingled with chivalry; however, their shared overintellectualized and ornamental vocabulary was perhaps inspired by the authors' desire to show off their erudition and assert equality with their male counterparts. This is particularly easy to believe in Claudine Scève's case given her family ties (she was Maurice Scève's sister and Matthieu de Vauzelles's wife) and close association with many of the greatest writers of the time. The same influence may account for her doubling of adjectives, nouns, and verbs in a translation that is otherwise faithful to the Italian original.

The main departures from the original are not in the text but in the paratext. The title itself has been subjected to a major revision. The Italian title makes no mention of any character and merely announces a "delightful story by Boccaccio recently rediscovered." Scève's complete title names Urbain and his royal parent, mentions Boccaccio, and touts a brand-new translation. Thus the connection to Boccaccio is secondary to the characters. The focus of the liminary passages is also different. In the Italian text, the author begins with a short plot summary, briefly mentions a fraternal friendship with a "lost" male friend, and then proceeds directly to the story. Scève reverses this order. She first announces her intention to provide a summary of the plot and indicates that both author and recipient of the story are female. The paragraph that follows gracefully describes the friendship that inspired this offering. Only then does the author provide a résumé of the story. Scève's major innovation is the addition of twenty-nine chapter headings that provide brief synopses of the action to follow.

Although visual comparisons of the title pages of the French and Italian texts are interesting, the authors do little with the Italian text. On the other hand, Scève and her modern editors do everything possible to provide access to the French translation. Consequently, *Urbain* is not only an important addition to the canon of early modern works by women writers, but a rewarding and entertaining read.

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