

Anne Schoysman, ed. *Jean Lemaire de Belges: Lettres missives et épîtres dédicatoires*.

Collection des Anciens Auteurs Belges 17. Brussels: Académie royale de Belgique, 2012. 310 pp. €12. ISBN: 978-2-8031-0295-2.

In the past twenty years, studies of Jean Lemaire de Belges (1473–1524?), perhaps the most prominent of the French-language poets known as the *Grands rhétoriciens*, have shifted away from seeing him as a transitional figure between the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Instead, such scholars as Adrian Armstrong, Cynthia Brown, and François Cornilliat have shown how Lemaire adapts his rhetorical strategies to manuscript and print, how he increasingly exhibits authorial consciousness and self-promotion, and how his work is characterized by metadiscursive reflection on the stakes and ethics of poetry and historiography. It is within this scholarly context that Anne Schoysman, previously responsible for editions of Lemaire's *Légende des Vénitiens* and *Chronique de 1507*, situates her edition of his *Lettres missives et épîtres dédicatoires*.

This collection does not represent Lemaire's entire correspondence, but two distinct groups of letters. The *lettres missives* consist of twenty-five letters dated from between 1507 and 1512. Most are exchanged among Lemaire, his patroness Margaret of Austria, and her functionaries, and detail Lemaire's supervision of the monastery and chapel at Brou built to house the tomb of Margaret's deceased husband, Philibert II of Savoy, as well as Lemaire's departure from Margaret's service to become Anne of Brittany's historiographer in early 1512. Schoysman also includes letters exchanged between Lemaire and Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, who met one another at Dole. The *épîtres dédicatoires* consist of fourteen dedicatory epistles found in the paratext of Lemaire's editions or in other printed works like Symphorien Champier's *De quadruplici vita*. The appendix contains two letters from Jean de Pins, a humanist from Languedoc, to a "Maïor" plausibly identified as Lemaire.

Schoysman's edition is meticulously prepared and documented, and its robust commentary and critical apparatus make it a valuable research tool for students of

Lemaire. It unites in a single volume a body of letters previously scattered across disparate and often antiquated editions or critical studies. Moreover, Schoysman's juxtaposition of handwritten missives with printed dedicatory epistles invites the reader to compare Lemaire's relationship with Margaret to the relationship he tried to forge with readers of his printed works, while providing a sense of how the epistle allows Lemaire to articulate these relationships. For example, in the *lettres missives* Lemaire continually voices his concern that others are taking credit for his work: "que je ne soie celui qui bat les buissons, et ung autre prend les oisillons" ("that I am the one beating the bushes, and someone else is catching the birds" [133]). The structure of Schoysman's edition reveals that this obsession with gratitude and recognition eventually comes to govern the demands Lemaire places upon his readership in dedicatory epistles appended to the *Concorde du genre humain* or to the third book of his magnum opus, the *Illustrations de Gaule et Singularitez de Troye*.

However, Schoysman's criteria for the dedicatory epistles may have been a bit too restrictive: only addressed and dated letters are included, and while this restriction is consistent with the edition's focus, there are several instances where the reader would have benefited from a more flexible policy. Why not include the double virelay in praise of Champier that Lemaire mentions in his dedicatory epistle to Pierre Picot? Additionally, having included an epistle to Lemaire from one "Johannes Regis" found in the paratext of the first book of the *Illustrations*, Schoysman omits two other Latin epistles from the same paratext, one from the Dominican preacher Pierre de La Vigne to the archbishop of Lyon, François de Rohan, and another from Humbert Fournier to Champier. In the ongoing absence of a much-anticipated scholarly edition of the *Illustrations*, these letters could contribute to our understanding of how the author figure is constructed through the epistolary form, even when the author is not a correspondent.

This minor complaint aside, Schoysman's edition is masterful in conception and execution, and reflects and augments current scholarly interest in Lemaire and the *Grands rhétoriciens*. It is a must-have for specialists, and would also be of great use to scholars more generally interested in the evolution of epistolary practices, patronage, reception, or intersections between manuscript and print.

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