

*Lire Les Tragiques d'Agrippa d'Aubigné.* Frank Lestringant.

With Jean-Charles Monferran. *Études et essais sur la Renaissance* 102. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013. 142 pp. €15.

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Frank Lestringant's book is mainly a reprint of his previous work, *Agrippa d'Aubigné, Les Tragiques*, published in 1986 by the Presses Universitaires de France, which is no longer available for purchase. Almost thirty years later, this book, specifically designated for advanced students, continues to be a very valuable introduction to Agrippa d'Aubigné's masterpiece. Divided into six sections, *Lire Les Tragiques* first contains a brief depiction of the political and theological context followed by a short biographical notice. The third section addresses the pretext ("pré-texte"), and analyzes the textual history of *Les Tragiques*, the sources (biblical, Protestant, and secular), and the genesis of the poem that

is rooted in Aubigné's personal myth. The fourth section is devoted to the text itself and emphasizes fundamental elements of Aubigné's poetic creation, such as testimony, pathos, emotional rhetoric, the question of memory, and the prophetic and apocalyptic dimension of the message. The two final sections consider the position of *Les Tragiques* within the ensemble of Aubigné's works and its legacy, specifically within Victor Hugo's works. The appendix includes three close readings, two of which, written by Jean-Charles Monferran, are new additions from the original 1986 publication. These short but enlightening textual analyses demonstrate the exceptional virtuosity of the Protestant author, the strength of his rhetoric, and the freedom Aubigné takes with his sources, in particular his biblical sources, in order to intensify their poetic effects.

Jean-Charles Monferran's contribution aside, an updated critical bibliography and a new index of commented passages constitute the major changes of the 2013 version. Also, the references for *Les Tragiques* are henceforth the Lestringant (1995) and Fanlo (2003) editions. The other corrections and additions are minor and are essentially concerned with dating of certain parts of the text. Lestringant takes into account the works of Jean-Raymond Fanlo, who argues that *Les Tragiques* must be considered as a work of the seventeenth century, since most of the text has been written after 1600, under the reign of Henry IV. He also follows Fanlo in correcting the date of the second edition of *Les Tragiques*, which is now believed to be posthumous and no longer dated 1623. However, the author did not modify his analysis of the prologue of *Vengeances*, which he considered in 1986 to be the core ("le noyau primitif") of the poem. Lestringant simply refers in a footnote (45) to Fanlo's interpretation that disputes his own hypothesis by proposing a later date for the composition of this prologue. The fact that the author, at the same time, concurs with Fanlo and doesn't change his reading of this passage might appear confusing to the reader.

In conclusion, this slightly updated version of the 1986 publication is valuable: it makes available again to the public a broad, coherent, elegantly written, and enlightening reading of *Les Tragiques* that remains an excellent introduction to this text. The downside of such a publication today, of course, is that it doesn't take into account the most recent scholarly works on Aubigné (with a few exceptions, all the footnotes refer to works published before 1986).

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