

Denise Carabin. *Henri Estienne, érudit, novateur, polémiste: Étude sur Ad Senecae lectionem Proodopoeiae.*

Études et Essais sur la Renaissance 66. Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2006. 346 pp. index. bibl. €65. ISBN: 2-7453-1354-1.

Henri Estienne's contribution to the rediscovery of ancient philosophy is well acknowledged but many of his books still lack detailed study. In a previous work (*Les Idées stoïciennes dans la littérature morale des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles (1575–1642)*, 2004), D. Carabin considered the Neo-Stoic movement in early modern French literature from a general point of view: this new (and much shorter) book allows

her to complete the survey with a new chapter entirely devoted to the erudite publisher of Geneva, which was left aside in the former. This book, despite its comprehensive title, is in fact a close reading of the introduction and apology for Seneca that Estienne wrote in Latin and published in 1586, entitled *Ad Senecae lectionem Proodopoeia* (not *Proodopoeiae*, a misprint on the cover). The project cannot but remind the reader of his famous *Apologia pro Herodoto* (1566), but this time philology and philosophy prevail over history and satire. Who are the enemies of Seneca that Estienne decides to attack? Less the Ciceronians, grown weak by the end of the century, than the ancient critics themselves, namely Aulus Gellius and Quintilian, who did condemn the frivolity and bad taste of the philosopher. According to the author, Estienne's contribution to the revival of Stoic ideas in the 1580s is significant — at a time when Montaigne and Lipsius were publishing works much influenced by the ideas of the Roman philosopher. Estienne's defense of Seneca's style helps building a countermodel to the still prevalent influence of Cicero. Religious antagonism also plays a part in this erudite project, since Estienne mainly wrote his *Proodopoeia* as a response to Muret's edition of Seneca, published in Catholic Rome in 1585.

The book begins with a brief overview of the reception of Seneca in antiquity and during the Renaissance (part 1): Erasmus, Vivès, Muret, and Lipsius are closely dealt with, but Budé and Montaigne are rather neglected. Unfortunately, this part seems disconnected from the rest of the book, since Estienne is rarely mentioned in these first hundred pages: one could ask why the author has neglected here to build bridges with the following sections.

The second part of the book is more satisfactory, tracing the genesis of Estienne's project of an apology for Seneca and the use he makes of previous works in writing the *Proodopoeia*; the *Ciceronianum lexicon graecolatinum* (1557) and the *Thesaurus graecae linguae* (1572) constitute a useful basis to legitimate Seneca's choice of certain philosophical words to express Stoic notions. Part 3 analyzes with accuracy Estienne's approach to Seneca's philosophical vocabulary, translated from the Greek and partly borrowed from Cicero (*pathos* is rendered by *affectus*, *egemonikon* by *principale* rather than *principatum*, and so forth). The following chapters show how Estienne underlines the specificity of Seneca's own Stoicism within his own school, and how he opposes his philosophy to contemporary Epicurism and Platonism. Part 4 concentrates on Estienne's views on Seneca's literary style: the structure of sentences, the use of verbal tenses, the rhythm, the art of conciseness, the use of dialogue, and neologism. Estienne praises Seneca's style for its natural flow and persuasiveness. Part 5 analyses Estienne's own argumentative and polemic style. Estienne enlivens his erudite topic by dramatizing his opposition to his Catholic rival Muret, and by building a confident and pedagogical relationship with the reader. The book's general presentation is somewhat clumsy: one regrets the lack of introductions, at the beginning of the book and again at the beginning of each part, to announce the topic dealt with at each stage. The presentation of bibliographical references in footnotes and at the end is somewhat neglected and chaotic, with the name of the publisher or place of

printing sometimes missing. The final bibliography is rich, but is divided into so many subsections that it takes a lot of time to find the complete references to the books mentioned. Despite these flaws, this book gives precise and new information about Estienne's reading of Seneca, and enriches our reading of the early modern period in various fields such as the history of philosophy, the history of rhetoric, and the knowledge of European humanist circles.

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