

Michel de Montaigne. *Journal de voyage: Partie en italien*.

Ed. Élisabeth Schneikert and Lucien Vendrame. Études Montaignistes 61. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2012. 276 pp. €29. ISBN: 978-2-8124-0780-2.

In providing a new French translation of the *Journal de voyage*, Élisabeth Schneikert and cotranslator Lucien Vendrame seek not only to update the *Journal* for French readers, but, more importantly, to offer a clearer picture of Montaigne's experimentation with "questa altra lingua." The problem is not, as Schneikert points out (confirming the analyses of Concetta Cavallini, Fausta Garavini, and others), with Montaigne's Italian, but with the faulty French translation that remains the basis of most modern editions of the *Journal*. Since the loss of the original manuscript after the 1774 publication of the *Journal*, all versions of Montaigne's *Journal* have had to follow the Querlon edition, which is at times difficult to read, faulty, or even "malhonnête" (27). The most florid example of Querlon's reticence is highlighted in Schneikert's excellent introduction and involves the famous passage in which Montaigne gives birth to a stone "as big and long as a pine-nut, but with the head as large as a fava-bean, having, to tell the truth, the exact, precise form of a dick" (28). Querlon's translation of the stone's shape as having "exactement la forme du membre masculin" is clearly a euphemism

too far, which Schneikert and Vendrame rectify with “tout à fait, tout à fait la forme d'un catze” (171).

The decision to replace the anodyne *membre* with the archaic, though testified in the works of Montaigne's contemporary Brantôme, *catze*, is a testament to the erudition and attention to detail that went into preparing this volume that presents the Italian *Journal* as a problematic writing important to Montaigne's search for self. After providing a general presentation and editorial history of the *Journal*, Schneikert discusses Montaigne's (bookish) relationship with the Italian language, balancing it with his love of “conversation.” This double emphasis of the reader-doer allows Schneikert to emphasize the importance of play in Montaigne's decision to *assaggiare* (taste, try, or essay) this other language. Relating the moment Montaigne decides to speak Italian to his physical and metaphysical suffering, Schneikert shows how the corporeal process of writing relates to Montaigne's *dépossession* (lack of self-possession) caused by his tenuous physical and emotional state.

This volume allows the reader to enter into and account for the act of translation and interpretation. The Italian text uses the 1774 Querlon edition in three volumes (so-called C edition) with Querlon's notes provided at the bottom of each page. Variants of other editions are also referenced within the text and provided in an appendix. The facing translation includes annotations that justify or qualify the translators' choices of words or provide historical, geographical, or cultural information. This process of laying it all out there is exactly what is needed for a text like this one, since on the inevitable occasions where the translators are forced to interpret in order to produce a readable French text, the reader is provided all the necessary information to fully understanding what went into the translators' decision. These decisions, however, are generally made with the principle of remaining faithful to Montaigne's style and content. Because of the convenient layout of the text, passages where the French translation differs in syntax and style, moreover, can easily be used to understand the degree to which Montaigne mastered Tuscan syntax and style. Reading Schneikert and Vendrame, in fact, allows for a better reading of Montaigne in close communication with his body, as in the example of Montaigne writing that “mi voglio stendere e slargare” (“I want to extend and stretch myself”), where reflexive construction and thought are accurately rendered in French for the first time.

This volume represents a significant advance in scholarship on Montaigne's *Journal de voyage* and will be used as the translation of reference for future study. Due, moreover, to its serious consideration of the task of the translator and the *Journal* as essay, it makes a valuable contribution to understanding Montaigne as a philosopher of language.

RICHARD E. KEATLEY
Georgia State University