

and the Renaissance, and a description of the principles of edition employed in the text. All these preliminary materials are delivered clearly and concisely with a welcome lack of fuss. The edited text that then follows is mercifully uncluttered and eminently readable—though this is not to say that extra detail is not provided. Corrections are acknowledged briefly in footnotes while indicators of foliation, paragraph separation, and use of large capitals and headers are all to be seen on the page in the peritextual matter. Meanwhile, more detailed information is sensibly placed at the back of the book. Indeed, some of the most valuable nuggets are to be found here in the end matter, including notes on the text, a glossary, and an index of names. These navigational and critical tools make this edition particularly usable, and importantly serve to engage readers unfamiliar with the many curiosities of sixteenth-century French phraseology and vocabulary. Indeed, such curiosities abound in the sometimes oddly haphazard modernization attempted by the prosifier, a fact also noted and illuminated vividly by Jane H.M. Taylor (*Rewriting Arthurian Romance in Renaissance France* [2014], chapter 5). It is pleasing, therefore, to see Timelli draw clear, but not distracting, attention to them.

This is a book that, when combined with the related volumes advertised to follow, promises an important opportunity for an entirely new audience to engage with the early modern reception of both Chrétien's work and that of his epigones. Even where digitized microfilms of the extant artifacts have been made available (such as by the Bibliothèque nationale de France's Gallica platform), the combination of poor quality reproduction and the volume's black letter typeface makes for a hard read—even for scholars well acquainted with early modern French and the re-presentation of medieval texts in early printed books. Timelli's achievement here is not only in her delivery of a readable text, but also in her provision of the necessary tools with which to decode it.

Leah Tether, *University of Bristol*

Théâtre, Tome II. Pierre Corneille.

Ed. Jean de Guardia, Liliane Picciola, Florence Dobby-Poirson, and Laura Rescia. Bibliothèque du Théâtre Français 48. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2017. 1,126 pp. €59.

What could be more challenging than publishing a new scholarly edition of the complete works of Pierre Corneille, one of the most famous playwrights of the seventeenth century? Many distinguished scholars have already made a special contribution to this field, from Stegmann in 1963 (the Seuil edition is very handy because it consists of one single volume), to Couton (the *Pléiade* is still the reference edition) and Niderst (PUF) in the 1980s. Do we need another edition and is there anything new to be done?

This collaborative work started three years ago with Classiques Garnier. The first volume was published in 2014. For this second volume, a renewed team of established

scholars (Florence Dobby-Poirson, Jean de Guardia, Liliane Picciola, and Laura Rescia) focuses on five consecutive plays (*La Place royale*, *Médée*, *L'illusion comique*, *Le Cid*, and *Horace*). This volume logically follows the chronological order and stresses the versatility of Pierre Corneille's art. From 1634 to 1641, Pierre Corneille gradually shifted from comedy to tragedy, transformed his art, and made himself a name in the world of theater in spite of or thanks to the *querelles*, pamphlets, and animosity his plays elicited.

This new edition aims at reflecting upon this evolution. Each play is scrutinized and benefits from its own introduction, bibliography, footnotes, and *Variantes*. Each contributor focuses on a play (except for Liliane Picciola who is editing the volume and is responsible for both *L'illusion comique* and *Le Cid*). Thoroughly documented and well written, this edition represents a great amount of work (1,126 pages). However, we must deplore that the intended readership is not clearly defined.

On the one hand, this new edition seems to be meant for a broader audience than the *Pléiade* edition. Indeed, most footnotes define words fairly common in the plays of that time but whose meaning has evolved since the seventeenth century (such as *cœur*). In the same vein, a rich set of pedagogical tools nicely complements this new edition, especially the four indexes (that respectively list names, geographical spaces, mythological and biblical figures, and literary works). A glossary will be very helpful to students or amateurs who are yet not fully familiar with early modern vocabulary. On the other hand, this scientific edition also aims at contributing to the field of early modern studies. The mere length of some footnotes, the numerous analyses, and the rich paratext that goes along with each play are clearly designed for a seventeenth-century scholar, but they could easily overwhelm anyone else.

That said, these scholarly contributions are uneven. The establishment of the text, the care given to each new edition during Corneille's time, the list of misprints, punctuation issues, and stage directions are all testimony to the contributors' seriousness and knowledge. This essential work is a true progress in terms of both scope and depth. This impressive quest for exhaustivity becomes obvious when considering both the bibliographies listed after each play and the general bibliography. However, these references often overlap and they are not up to date. Some recent scholarly works are missing. A single bibliography with appropriate subdivisions would have been more useful. Furthermore, crucial information is frequently lost in the midst of lengthy introductions that sometimes compile an overwhelming work on primary sources (eighty pages for the *Cid* when a typical *Pléiade's* notice consists of ten to fifteen pages). This scientific and well-documented work would more adequately fit a monograph on Corneille than an introduction whose primary goal is to introduce some content by suggesting primary sources, research topics, or debates the plays elicited. As a result, the book is huge and rather cumbersome.

This abundant material sharply contrasts with the little room dedicated to the history of reception. This edition does not provide us with new insights on the many *querelles* at Corneille's time, nor does it present letters, *Avi*s, or documents that would

not be mentioned in the *Pléiade* edition. Surprisingly, these scholars barely pay attention to staging, although there was clearly some room to improve over the previous editions in this field. Indeed, Corneille is still very much present in our theaters and each year the *Festival d'Avignon*, for instance, gives a new representation on *Le Cid*. We could have expected these new *mise-en-scènes* to be emphasized in a 2017 edition of Pierre Corneille's work.

Jennifer Tamas-Le Menthéour, *Rutgers University*

The Evolution of Verse Structure in Old and Middle English Poetry: From the Earliest Alliterative Poems to Iambic Pentameter. Geoffrey Russom.
Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 98. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. xii + 324 pp. \$99.99.

Geoffrey Russom's *The Evolution of Verse Structure in Old and Middle English Poetry* is a technical and wide-ranging analysis of English versecraft from its inception to the beginning of the early modern period, with particular focus on Middle English (ME). Although partly an extension of his previous monographs, which covered Old English (OE), Old Norse, and Old Saxon, this text expands his scope by extending his word-foot theory into a broader concept of universal poetics. The book thus presents a comprehensive viewpoint of early English poetics and its connection to linguistics that Russom hopes will engage literary scholars and poets as well as linguists and metrists.

The eleven chapters can be roughly organized into four sections. The first, chapter 1, explains Russom's theory of universal poetics, which he formulates in analogy to linguistic universals. He connects metrical patterning to linguistic norms, arguing that metrical positions, feet, and lines are abstracted from a language's syllables, words, and simple sentences, respectively. To this foundation, he adds features that cross traditions, using musical concepts of dissonance and resolution to explain some universal aesthetic principles, mainly relating to the idea that poetic mismatches keep the line interesting, but they must resolve to create a regular line ending. This principle of closure, an established poetic universal, becomes central to Russom's argument.

The second section, chapters 2–3, discusses Indo-European poetics and their manifestation in OE. Russom argues that Germanic meter evolved from SOV word order: verb-final structure favors metrical subordination (with the lightly stressed verb ending the line), and the related root stress favors alliteration. Based on these and other universal principles discussed above, Russom establishes a set of norms for OE meter that operate similarly to the constraints in optimality theory. In Russom's theory, norms pertaining to the line outrank those pertaining to the verse, which outrank those pertaining to the foot, and so forth. He considers them all violable rules, though any violation adds to the line's complexity. Using these norms, he explains the different realizations