

Paul Scott, ed. *Le gouvernement présent, ou éloge de son Eminence, satyre ou la Miliade*.

MHRA Critical Texts 14. London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2010. 196 pp. \$24.99. ISBN: 978-0-947623-77-7.

Critical editions of early modern satires open a window upon forgotten episodes of heated political battles. While the pamphlets they present to the modern reader were once “hot” media (to use Marshall McLuhan’s term), in the sense that they offered already familiar information to readers who were expected to react immediately, we cannot understand them without a critical apparatus that provides missing information and analyzes and places them in historical context. Paul Scott’s critical edition of the most notorious anti-Richelieu pamphlet, first published in 1636, allegedly in the Low Countries, and best known under its short title *Miliade* (a reference to the nearly 1,000 lines that make it up), provides twenty-first-century readers with ample tools. Moreover, Scott also shows us that this work, which employed the language of the street and satirical images that circulated in other satires attacking the cardinal, remains enigmatic when it comes to the identity of the author, which eluded its contemporary readers, including even Richelieu himself. In

his introduction, Scott shows just how unpopular Richelieu was during the Thirty Years' War, when the government's increasing financial demands drove a wedge between the parliament and the government. He also points out the cardinal's remarkable efforts to micromanage the public sphere by personally reading and collecting satires directed at him in an effort to censor and counter them with satire written by poets he hired. In this atmosphere in which the cardinal tried to assert absolute control over the printed word, the *Miliade* strove perhaps not better than others but in a more elusive fashion, which contributed to its power and its ability to define the efforts of an entire generation of his political enemies. The editor convincingly argues that the *Miliade* deserves our attention today as not only the first significant satire since the years of the Catholic League in the 1580s, but also the pamphlet that, in an increasingly centralized and controlled public sphere, made an audacious claim for the possibility of resistance.

The most original part of Scott's edition is the portion where, in addition to laying out the historical context of the piece and Richelieu's role in censoring satire, he undertakes the historical and philological detective work of identifying the pamphlet's author. In this endeavor, the reader learns much from his list of likely authors: Louis d'Espinay (an abbé with ties to libertine authors and an addiction to opium, as well as the author of an anti-Richelieu satirical poem similar to the *Miliade*), René de Bruc (a soldier and poet), Jacques de Favereau (a satirical poet with an obsession for elliptical references, puzzles, and numbers), and Guy Pasquier (grandson of the humanist lawyer and historian Étienne Pasquier). The first two of these individuals were suspected, imprisoned, and later released by Richelieu, while de Bruc's name appears scribbled upon one of the extant manuscripts. Scott makes the case for de Favereau's authorship, which he presents as a puzzle, since the author expressed himself in favor of Richelieu's government. Using both stylistic (especially Favereau's proclivity for using anaphora) and historical (Favereau's membership in the Cour des Aides, which responded with resistance, as did the parliament, to the government's increasing fiscal demands in the 1620s) arguments, the author builds a convincing case for de Favereau's authorship, presenting an intelligent guess from which the reader can learn much about the historical context of political polemics and vituperation in the period.

Other sections of the editor's introduction analyze the "techniques of discontent" and the *Milliade's* legacy. In the former, Scott's efforts to find models and precursors for the satire's images fall short by forgetting to mention the most important precursor, the satires written in the 1580s during the years of the Catholic League. In the latter, he convincingly argues for the text's influence in the *Mazarinades* and points out the title *Mazarinade* as an imitation of the *Miliade*, connoting a mock epic or burlesque poem that becomes a dominant genre around 1650. An appendix includes poetry written by satirists who were de Favereau's contemporaries. This erudite edition will interest students of seventeenth-century history, literature, and all those interested in the history of political dissent.

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