

Henri Estienne. *L'introduction au traité de la conformité des merveilles anciennes avec les modernes ou, traité préparatif à l'Apologie pour Herodote*. Ed. Bénédicte Boudou. 2 vols. Textes littéraires français. Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 2007. 1191 pp. index. gloss. bibl. \$91. ISBN: 978-2600-01136-5.

This excellent and well-presented scientific edition of Henri II Estienne's *Traité préparatif à l'Apologie pour Herodote* should be purchased by university libraries and by Renaissance scholars interested in French sixteenth-century humanism, history, Reformation, and polemics. It is the third critical edition of Estienne's book, and the only one published since the 1879 Ristelhuber edition. The editor, Bénédicte Boudou, is a specialist in early humanism and Henri II Estienne's work and the author of *Mars et les Muses dans "l'Apologie pour Hérodote" d'Henri Estienne* (2000, also Droz).

The critical edition is preceded by a well-informed seventy-page introduction. An overview of Henri Estienne's career is given, followed by a description of the publication context of the sixteenth-century editions. Moreover, in order to understand the humanist's point of view and attacks, Boudou reminds us that Estienne might have more in common with Erasmus and Luther than with the ideology of the Geneva Council. Two centuries before Voltaire, Estienne attacked superstitions and foolish tales that were mixed up with religious beliefs. Works like the *Légende dorée* were targeted, since they kept simple minds in the dark. Using historical texts and fictions, referring to almost 200 tales, grouping analogies, Estienne wrote more than a satire, almost an early anthropological and comparative study of classical and sixteenth-century manners and morals. He developed not only

an acute sense of satire and irony towards the Renaissance world, but created a new connection between antiquity and his time. Since he demonstrates, with numerous examples, that his world, since antiquity, kept generating even more surprising “merveilles” than the ones described by Herodotus, Estienne believes it is now time to refrain this decadent movement, and proceed with a transformation (and reformation) of Christianity.

The different critical tools offered with the edition are more than helpful to identify allusions and quotations taken from Estienne’s work by other Renaissance authors and polemicists. We are first provided with a description of the different editions of the *Apologie*, with a bibliography, a glossary, a list of proverbs and idioms used by Estienne, an index *rerum*, and an index *nominum*. The text itself runs from page 83 (vol. 1) to page 997 (vol. 2). Detailed and informative notes appear at the bottom of each page, and quotations in Latin are translated. The edition reproduced is the second one (1566). This editorial decision was wisely taken since the first edition was confiscated and did not circulate. As for the variants, the editor has compiled evidence from all the editions published before the author’s death.

GUY POIRIER

University of Waterloo