

Joachim Du Bellay. *Œuvres complètes: Tome III, 1551–1553*.

Ed. Marie-Dominique Legrand, Michel Magnien, Daniel Ménager, and Olivier Millet. *Textes de la Renaissance 187*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013. 536 pp. €45. ISBN: 978-2-8124-1142-7.

In this third volume of Du Bellay's *Œuvres complètes*, Marie-Dominique Legrand, Michel Magnien, Daniel Ménager, and Olivier Millet have collected, edited, and carefully annotated poems and translations composed by the Pléiade poet between 1551 and 1553. These include the *Tombeau de Marguerite de Valois*, an "Ode au Seigneur des Essars sur le discours de son *Amadis*," the *Recueil de 1552*, three poems published during the summer of 1552, and the 1553 *Recueil de poésie*.

The opening piece in the volume is the *Tombeau de Marguerite de Valois*, a translation of the Seymour sisters' *Hecatodistichon*. This series of 104 quatrains celebrating the French queen was originally published by Nicolas Denisot in 1550. As the editors note, the *Tombeau* marked an entirely new chapter in Du Bellay's career, since the poet, beyond discovering a new type of spiritual and religious poetry, explicitly presented himself as a translator for the first time in these pages. As a translator, Du Bellay clearly sought to give the vernacular the elegance and clarity of Latin, yet he commented and complemented his translation with his own encomiastic ode titled "Les deux Marguerites."

The 1551 ode to Des Essars, in which Du Bellay salutes the translator of the *Amadis*, must be read in parallel with the *Discours sur la louange de la vertu*, dedicated to Salmon Macrin in the *Œuvres de l'invention de l'auteur*, where the poet praises Rabelais, as well as with a poem printed in summer 1552, where he applauds Jacques Gohory's *Dixième livre d'Amadis de Gaule*. By acknowledging two of the major trends of French novelistic prose in his day, the poet defended the genre against those who lamented its lack of verisimilitude and condemned its supposed corruptive effects.

The 1552 *Recueil* is a composite publication that includes translations of the fourth book of Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's seventh *Heroid*, followed by various *Œuvres de l'invention de l'auteur*. Like the *Tombeau*, it is the work of a writer who is departing from the program set forth in his 1549 *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise*. Although Du Bellay strays from the idea that translating Virgil would amount to losing the *enargeia* of the original text, his ambition is to naturalize the author of the *Aeneid* rather than to simply translate his epic. As Michel Magnien underscores in his introduction and notes, a comparison with Des Masures's translations of the *Aeneid* is revealing of Du Bellay's ambition to provide readers with a French Virgil rather than a Virgil in French. The Pléiade poet's anthological approach privileges passages dealing with love and passion rather than those describing battles and war; where he fails to capture the music of Virgil's richly textured verse, he does not hesitate to resort to paraphrase and amplification.

The *Œuvres de l'invention de l'auteur* are indicative of Du Bellay's intention to imprint *varietas* onto the 1552 *Recueil* by juxtaposing translations of Virgil and Ovid with Christian poetry. He paraphrases an episode of 1 Samuel 17 in the epic style in the *Monomachie de David et de Goliath*, and reflects on the relationship between poetry and the Christian faith in the *Lyre chrestienne*. In the "XIII sonnets

de l'honneste amour," he reexamines the Neoplatonic spirit of his 1550 *Olive*, and bids an adieu to the Muses that inspired the poetry of his younger days. As Olivier Millet notes, the *Ceuvres de l'invention de l'auteur* can also be read as a reply to Théodore de Bèze's views on poetry, since Du Bellay provides a variety of poetic and stylistic alternatives to translations of the Psalms.

Amongst other notable pieces included in this volume are a translation of Buchanan's *Quam misera sit conditio doctentium literas humaniores Lutetia*, as well as a sonnet celebrating the author of the 1552 *Amours*. From Ovid to the Scottish humanist, from Ausonius to the Seymour sisters, from Virgil to Ronsard, the author of the *Deffence* clearly continued to consider numerous models for his own illustration of the French language in the early 1550s. The editors' chronological approach allows us to follow the journey of a poet who constantly sought to renew his sources of inspiration as well as his image as a writer, even at the price of contradiction.

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