

Théodore de Bèze. *Abraham sacrificant: Tragedie Française.*

Textes de la Renaissance 122. Ed. Marguerite Soulié and Jean-Dominique Beaudin. Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2006. 120 pp. index. gloss. bibl. €23. ISBN: 978-2-7453-1513-7.

Written in 1550, de Bèze's French tragedy embodies the tension between Renaissance humanist pursuits of eloquence and Reformation quests for pure theology. The editors explain the evolving role of the fine arts in Swiss Calvinism, and highlight this same evolution in the Reformer's written corpus. "Car je confesse," de Bèze writes in his preface, "que mon naturel j'ay tousjours pris plaisir à la poésie, & ne m'en puis encores repentir" (33). De Bèze's effort to place his poetic skill in the service of Protestantism is almost as poignant as the pathos of Abraham, who tries to make sense of the conflicting data he gathers from natural reason and divine revelation. Soulié and Beaudin provide a helpful guide to all this by addressing each connection, from the literary influences of Euripides and the *Mistère du Viel Testament*, to evangelical themes like grace, predestination, vocation, providence, and the role of Satan (who, for this play, wears the garb of a monk). The editors note de Bèze's subtle jabs at the Roman Catholic clergy, and establish that they focus on controversies about the doctrine of justification, not primarily the hypocrisy and licentiousness lampooned in some late medieval satire. De Bèze's somber but moving couplets should be of special interest to scholars of early modernity who specialize in literary or intellectual history. They will appreciate the edition for its elucidation of biblical and classical allusions, guides to pronunciation and meter, and the glossary of sixteenth-century French vocabulary.

JEFFREY MALLINSON

Colorado Christian University