

Philip Ford. *The Judgment of Palaemon: The Contest between Neo-Latin and Vernacular Poetry in Renaissance France*.

Medieval and Renaissance Authors and Texts 9. Leiden: Brill, 2013. xv + 270 pp. \$140. ISBN: 978-90-04-24539-6.

The topic of Latin and the vernacular has never taken central stage in early modern literary studies. Fortunately, the last couple of years have witnessed a slight increase in scholarly attention on the interplay of Latin and various other languages, with publications like Arlund Hass and Johann Rammingner's *Latin and the Vernaculars in Early Modern Europe* (2010), Yasmin Haskell and Juanita Feros Ruys's *Latinity and Alterity in the Early Modern Period* (2010), and Nikolaus Thurn's *Neulatein und Volkssprachen* (2012). Moreover, forthcoming projects like the *Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World* (Brill), *The Cambridge Guide to Reading Neo-Latin Literature* (Cambridge UP), or *Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin* (Oxford UP) will all include contributions on the theme.

In this regard, Philip Ford's *The Judgment of Palaemon* is a welcome addition to an expanding niche. Its title, recalling the Virgilian shepherd Palaemon's refusal to decide between the poetic talents of Menalcas and Damoetas, is well chosen "to represent the relationship between vernacular and Latin poets in the French Renaissance since, although they expressed themselves in different languages, they were engaged in essentially the same activity, with similar goals, similar sources, and similar poetic principles" (xiii). Indeed, this "symbiotic relationship . . . between humanist Latin and French poetry" (xiii) is the core message of this book and it is justly stressed throughout its different chapters.

After a first, introductory chapter dealing with the importance of regional factors, target audience, genre, and other considerations that feed into literary language choice, the book offers six main chapters that focus on the concurrence of French and Latin. Chapter 2 deals with Du Bellay, whose acute awareness of being a bilingual poet makes him an excellent starting figure. Chapter 3 explores the European literary vogue of neo-Catullan poetry, both as it originated in Latin and as it was later taken up in the vernacular. Chapter 4 offers a perspective on the multilateral exchanges between Latin and French evidenced in Marot's assimilation of the Roman epigram into French and the imitation of this poetry by his Neo-Latin colleagues. Chapter 5 broadens the spectrum from Latin and French to full-blown multilingualism, studying funerary literature and its polyglot aesthetics. Chapter 6 explores the motives and techniques of the many Latin translations of Ronsard,

made by authors like Jean Dorat and Franciscus Thorius. Finally, chapter 7 sheds some light on the literary salon associated with Jean de Morel and his family, and the way it supported humanist poetry, in French as well as in Latin.

It is hard to find fault with any aspect of this book. I particularly applaud Ford's courage to translate all original Latin and early modern French — especially since these translations are of the highest philological quality. The same goes for the rest of the book, barring the odd misprint or error (worth mentioning are *him* [4, 204] pro *himself*; *vagantur* [67] pro *vagamtem*; *Gelonis, verbis* [76] pro *Geloni, verbis*; *memordi* [*sic*] [114] pro *memordi* [which is an attested archaism, cf. Gell. 7, 9]; *empensissime* [207] pro *expensissime*; *Arctus exclamat* [115] pro *Arctus* [*sic*] *exclamat*; *patientis* [146] pro *patiente*; *oberrant* [200] pro *oberrat*; and *quadam* [213] pro *quaedam*). One slight critique is that Ford sometimes expects a rather advanced knowledge of French literature from his readers. For instance, whereas he takes the time to explain the Latin terms *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio*, he does not elaborate on French notions like “the form of an *étrenne*” (222) or “*esprit gaulois*” (231).

However, this does not detract from the book's overall value. It is precise, informative, and original. Its emphasis on the “permeability of the vernacular and neo-Latin worlds” (118) is an especially welcome addition to the rather unilateral image of influence in some previous scholarship. Personally, I also greatly appreciated Ford's keen attention for stylistics and the inclusion of large quantities of primary text, which help to make the topic of interlingual symbiosis truly concrete.

In short, it is a great pity that Philip Ford's latest book was to be his last as well. It is, however, a fitting tribute to the man's outstanding career in Renaissance French and Neo-Latin literature, which was cut dramatically short after a brief illness in April 2013.

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