

profit, perhaps not always scrupulously. It seems no surprise that a nobleman in his precarious position might attempt to fashion himself as a Maecenas rather than a merchant. Unfortunately, neither his finances nor his political fortunes improved under Felipe IV, and *Los cigarrales* would be the only work dedicated to him by Tirso or any other author.

The book's final chapter focuses on the plays Tirso interpolated into *Los cigarrales de Toledo: El vergonzoso en palacio, Cómo han de ser los amigos, and El celoso prudente*. Gil-Osle effectively demonstrates how these three *comedias* chosen by Tirso dramatize questions of political power and favor, friendship, and reciprocal loyalty, reflecting not only the debates concerning *privanza* that circulated during Lerma's tenure as Felipe III's *valido*, but also the corresponding socioeconomic systems of artistic patronage within which Tirso hoped to form a durable, mutually beneficial connection with Luis Suero. This completes Gil-Osle's argument: from the volume's frontispiece to its narrative frame to the plays interpolated within that frame, Tirso's thematic focus does not waver.

Thanks to Gil-Osle's skillful interweaving of archival research and literary analysis, *Los cigarrales de la privanza y mecenazgo en Tirso de Molina* offers a satisfying, erudite exploration of the complex relationships in early modern Spain between political and literary patrons and the beneficiaries of their support.

Christopher B. Weimer, *Oklahoma State University*

*Valeur des lettres à la Renaissance: Débats et réflexions sur la vertu de la littérature.* Pascale Chiron and Lidia Radi, eds.

Études et essais sur la Renaissance 113; Perspectives humanistes 8. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2016. 286 pp. €29.

The present volume is the record of three conferences held in France and the United States between 2010 and 2012. The twelve essays it consists of, all written in French, tackle the debate around literature's value in early modern France through the complex notion of virtue. While literature's morality, i.e., its *vertu*, has been defended against religious accusations of idleness by writers stressing its edifying purpose, the powerful way in which a text is able to impact the reader illustrates literature's efficiency, in other terms its *vertus*. This capacity for action (very similar to the idea of strength conveyed by the Latin *virtus*) is what makes writers and readers value literature as a powerful experience. Can the pleasure one feels when reading or writing enhance the lessons literature teaches us, or does it lead to a redefinition of literary virtues?

This exciting take on an important debate is carried out through three main sections whose progression conveys a coherent reflection. The first four contributions question the ways in which literature can shape the reader's mind. Claude de France's literary education provides a moral foundation for her political views (Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier); the narrator of François de Belleforest's *Histoires tragiques* uses a combina-

tion of ethos and pathos to restore the social order threatened by the immoral actions he narrates (Hervé-Thomas Campagne); Stéphan Geonget explores the moral ambiguity of rhetoric through the writings of jurists Jean Papon, Louis Le Caron, and Claude Le Brun; François Le Poulchre's *Passe-Temps* updates the moral lessons delivered in Plutarch's *Vita*, so every modern reader can relate to them (Bérengère Basset). The wide range of topics and methods displayed here will resonate with many scholars and students. However, this part's greatest strength lies in the way it balances the two perspectives of reading and writing, thus uncovering many subtle articulations between collective values and individual education.

The second part of the volume, which explores the moral commitment of the authorial figure without focusing on its effect on the reader, seems to contribute less to the whole project. However, the articles it contains all display high levels of research when read individually. Montaigne's self-claimed lack of memory gives the *Essais* their ethical purpose of preventing forgetfulness (Elisabeth Hodges); according to Pierre Martin, the emblems illustrating Maurice Scève's *Délie* symbolize the idea of virtue, whose contemplation is bound to free the poet from an earthly love; Anthony Russel draws a comparison between Joachim Du Bellay's and Philip Sidney's ways of emphasizing the sincerity of the speaker: such sincerity is made doubtful by the changes an unstable world can force on the poetic "I."

The individual quests uncovered in the second part place the virtue of literature in its ability to express an authentic self rather than in its edifying purpose. The last contributions go further still in the questioning of literature's moral value, as they explore the ways in which early modern writers and readers come to claim the entertainment that literature creates as its most valuable virtue. In an extremely profitable contribution to the debate, Nathalie Dauvois stresses that Horace's multiple statements about the futility or utility of literature lead, in early modern France, to a reversible use of the notion of *passe-temps*: defined as a pastime, literature can be seen as an idle occupation, but also as a way of keeping us away from less innocent activities. When made solely for pleasure, literature raises laughs that are able to cure the gout and smallpox of readers to whom Rabelais dedicates his novels (Myriam Marrache-Gouraud). Pascale Chiron explores the temporality experienced through entertaining reading: instead of showing the way to future salvation, it is related to a *hinc et nunc* allowing the reader to indulge his or her personal tastes.

Complementing these twelve articles are opening analyses of the early modern uses of Hesiod's famous analogy—living a virtuous life is like walking through a steep path (François Rigolot)—and a conclusive note on the commercial value a book acquires when it becomes a trading object (Michel Jourde). From morality to mercantilism, this collection sheds much light on literature's many virtues. Well written and well documented, it is most certainly a valuable contribution to early modern studies.

Pauline Dorio, *Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3*