

Louis Du Gardin. *Les Premieres Addresses du chemin de Parnasse*.

Eds. Emmanuel Buron and Guillaume Peureux. Bibliothèque du XVII^e siècle 8; Langue, rhétorique et poétique françaises 1. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2012. 328 pp. €38. ISBN: 978-2-8124-0390-3.

The Premieres Addresses du chemin de Parnasse was written by a little-known doctor for whom poetry was primarily a diversion from more serious occupations. A professor of medicine at the University of Douai, Louis Du Gardin published a series of medical treatises that included the *Alexiloemos, sive de Pestis natura* (1617), as well as the *Anima rationalis restitua in integrum* (1630). He also made a French translation of Justus Lipsius's history of the Hal sanctuary, the *Diva Virgo Hallensis*. Like many men and women in his day, the author of the *Premieres Addresses* considered poetic endeavors to be a form of *otium*; this did not prevent him, however, from claiming that he was the first to provide aspiring young poets with a guide to the intricacies of French versification.

In the pages of their well-researched introduction to this critical edition, Emmanuel Buron and Guillaume Peureux have studied the life and works of a Counter-Reformation author who was especially active in the circles of the Puy de Douai and confraternity of Notre Dame. They show that the *Premieres Addresses* is better understood in light of Walloon Flanders's aspirations toward cultural and linguistic autonomy: the University of Douai, where Du Gardin taught, had been founded primarily to rival the University of Leuven, and giving the *Puy* support and attention was a means for its leaders to assert the city's cultural prestige. Du Gardin's commitment to the *Puy*, an institution that was rooted in medieval times

and traditions, also explains the doctor-poet's intriguing fondness for the *chant royal*, the *ballade*, and other poetic forms that were clearly outmoded in early seventeenth-century France.

Moving away from the precepts and theories of the Renaissance *Ars Poeticae* of Sebillot, Peletier, Du Bellay, and Tyard, the *Premieres Addresses* is in many ways a return to the tradition of the *Jardin de plaisance et fleur de rhétorique* and Pierre Fabri's *Grand et Vray art de pleine rhétorique*. Since Du Gardin considered that poetry was primarily a *techne*, he devised a method comprised of 100 rules concerning structural elements such as the *rime riche*, caesura, pronunciation, and scansion. As the editors note, the *Premieres Addresses* is also a poetic anthology that provides much insight into the culture and tastes of a typical early seventeenth-century provincial gentleman. As they carefully reconstruct Du Gardin's library, Buron and Peureux note his partiality for Ronsard, Desportes, and Garnier, whose tragedies are amongst the doctor's favorite works. Du Bellay and Belleau appear only once in the pages of the *Premieres Addresses*, and its author never mentions Baïf and Jodelle. He remains equally silent on Regnier, Malherbe, and the court poets of his time, but often quotes lesser-known authors like Du Chesne, Valagre, and Maisonfleur. As a fervent Catholic, his preference often goes to religious poetry: Desportes's *Psaumes* are systematically given precedence over Ronsard's *Amours*. As to Marot, he is — not unexpectedly, considering his association with the Reformation — entirely absent from the pages of the treatise.

The second part of Buron and Peureux's edition contains the *Nouvelles inventions pour faire marcher les vers françois sur les piedz des vers latins*, a text in which Du Gardin compared French and Latin prosody, following a tradition that had been instigated by Jodelle, Denisot, and Rapin.

This is an outstanding edition that will be of interest to all who study the history of poetry. One of its great merits is to provide us with a page of literary history rarely found in traditional anthologies.

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