

risquer de la part de Richelieu, au moment de la Querelle (à savoir la prise de corps) et du travail qu'il a ensuite accompli, pour *Horace*, en reprenant par sécurité le thème moral richelien de *L'Aveugle*, à savoir l'obéissance absolue. Le trajet cornélien de 1634 à 1640, de *La Place royale* à *Horace* en passant par *Le Cid* et le genre tragi-comique (dont l'abandon se trouve ainsi éclairé de façon nouvelle) est donc balisé de façon extrêmement importante, à notre avis, dans cette seconde partie de l'introduction, la plus nette, la plus dynamique et la plus polémique, aussi, de l'ouvrage.

Cette édition des deux comédies des Cinq Auteurs est donc à la fois un utile présent à la communauté universitaire et étudiante et un tour de force cornélien qui mérite un intérêt durable.

Curiosité. – F. Lasserre signale que l'illustration originale de *L'Aveugle de Smyrne* est due à un certain C. Le Brun, et attire l'attention des historiens de l'art.

Humour. – L'érudit ironise heureusement, à l'occasion, sur son matériau. Ainsi, le personnage d'Asphalte est-il qualifié (p. 26) d'esprit piquant, serviable, un peu superficiel. Les compatriotes de McAdam apprécieront ce précurseur !

Mise en page. – On notera une erreur de pagination dans la table des matières, due à n'en pas douter à l'étoffement de l'index qui précède : la liste des livres cités est p. 455 et non 453. On déplorera aussi peut-être, au risque de se répéter, le manque de détail dans les surtitres de haut de page, qui ne permettent pas de se repérer dans la richesse de l'argumentation. Ainsi, pour les pages 106-120, au lieu du monotone « le poète en 1634 » on aurait aimé avoir : « la dédicace de *La Veuve* oriente vers Shakespeare » puis « Corneille et la connaissance de l'anglais » puis « stratégie d'auto-promotion auprès de Richelieu » puis « pourquoi *l'Excuse* est de 1634 » puis « la chronologie des dédicaces cornéliennes ». Le même regret s'applique à d'autres passages très denses comme pp. 125-139 (sur les Campion) ou pp. 71-85 (sur Richelieu auteur).

Emmanuel Minel

Aurore Evain, Perry Gethner, Henriette Goldwyn (éds.) :
Théâtre de femmes de l'Ancien Régime: XVII^e siècle. Publication de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 2008 (Collection « La cité des Dames »). 622 p.

The second volume of *Théâtre de femmes de l'Ancien Régime*, directed by Aurore Evain, Perry Gethner, and Henriette Goldwyn, is an excellent intro-

duction to some of the most important dramatic productions written by female playwrights in the second half of the 17th century. A pioneer in the field of research on French female playwrights of the Old Regime, Gethner has already published two other volumes featuring plays written by females in the 17th and 18th centuries (*Femmes dramaturges en France (1650-1750), pièces choisies*. 2 vols. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, « Biblio 17 », 1993 and 2002). Evain, an actress herself, is currently preparing her thesis on the topic of 17th-century female authors. And Goldwyn has published several articles on Mme de Villedieu's theatrical works (See for instance « Mme de Villedieu, la transformation théâtrale: de l'héroïsme à l'épicurisme galant. » *Cahiers du dix-septième* 11: 1 (2006): 107-119).

Divided into five sections, this volume highlights the dramatic works of five female playwrights; Françoise Pascal, Mme de Villedieu, la sœur de La Chapelle, Anne de la Roche-Guilhen, and Mme Deshoulières, representing divergent social and economic milieus. Each author is introduced by her respective editor, who gives information on the life and career of the playwright in question and a brief preface to the dramatic works to follow. The introduction to this volume gives a helpful overview of the social, cultural, and artistic climate in the second half of the 17th century and explains how these conditions created a favorable environment for female playwrights' reentry into the world of theater. The editors have chosen the works of these female writers in particular since they represent innovative contributions to the diverse dramatic genres of the 17th century: mainly the comic play in one act, the tragicomedy, the comedy ballet, and the tragedy. Although some of the plays have been published in other editions, at least half of them have been reproduced in this volume for the first time.

The initial section dedicated to Françoise Pascal, the first professional female playwright, includes two of her one-act comedies inspired by the traditional French farce and the Italian comedy, *L'Amoureuse extravagant* and *L'Amoureux vaine et ridicule* (1657). Gethner's analysis demonstrates how the physical comedy, which so characterizes the farce, has been replaced by the frivolous language and manners of the *société mondaine* in these plays. Also included in this section is Pascal's charming comic play *Le Vieillard amoureux*, performed at the *Hôtel de Bourgogne* in Paris, and her full-length tragicomedy *Sésostris* performed in Lyon in 1661. The latter, edited by Deborah Steinberger who has published a critical edition of Françoise Pascal's epistolary novel *Le Commerce de Parnasse*, is a fairly faithful rendition of the story of the corrupt King Amasis of Egypt found in *Le Grand Cyrus* by Mlle de Scudéry.

Featured in the next section is la sœur de La Chapelle's *L'illustre philosophe, ou l'histoire de sainte Catherine d'Alexandrie* (1663), a lost

martyr play rediscovered by the editor himself, Paul Scott, who has done extensive research on representations of Saint Catherine in sacred drama. La Chapelle's work is situated within a new literary female tradition of producing plays on the theme of martyrdom in the 17th century. As Scott demonstrates, La Chapelle's play is set apart from other hagiographic plays featuring Saint Catherine from the same time period since her interpretation of the female martyr seems to celebrate the triumph of female reason and the intellectual equality of men and women.

The following section, edited by Goldwyn, contains Mme de Villedieu's full-length tragicomedies *Manlius* (1661), performed by Molière for the King at the court of Versailles, and *Le Favori* (1665). According to Goldwyn, the former, performed at the *Hôtel de Bourgogne* in 1662, marks an evolution of the tragicomic genre and the development of the post-Fronde romanesque tragedy in which history serves only as a backdrop. *Le Favori*, a wonderfully entertaining comedy, demonstrates the changing values of courtly society. Particularly intriguing is Goldwyn's suggestion that the play, featuring a gracious monarch who forgives his subjects, is perhaps a commentary on the King's harsh ruling in the case of Nicolas Fouquet who was arrested the year the play was written.

Anne de la Roche-Guilhen's comedy ballet, edited by Juliette Cherbulez, is also presented as a transitional piece. *Rare-en-tout*, performed at the court of England for Charles II in 1677, combining music, singing, dancing, and theater, bridges the gap between the comedy ballet and the lyrical tragedy which emerged at the end of the century. Most interesting is the editor's discussion which points out the propagandic elements seen in this play, written by a descendant of a Huguenot family forced to flee France, and printed in Amsterdam by a publishing house operated by Huguenot families.

And finally, Mme Deshoulière's *Genséric*, performed at the *Hôtel de Bourgogne* in 1680, is a pessimistic political tragedy based on the legend of the notorious Genséric, King of the Vandals and of Africa who invaded Rome in 455 and kidnapped the Empress and her daughters. As Gethner underlines, the play is dominated by anti-heroes, who are more motivated by greed and ambition than by love. This tragedy is an appropriate ending to the volume since, as the editor notes, it witnesses the destruction of the gallant world illustrated in *L'Astrée* and marks an evolution of the tragedy through its rejection of the concept of heroism.

In terms of annotation, the editors have made careful modifications to the original typography of these plays in order to render them more accessible to 21st-century readers. The editors focus on clarifying the original meanings of words in the glossary. In addition, some spellings as well as

vocabulary expressions have been modernized to make them more comprehensible. In the case where a syllable is missing in a verse, prefixes and suffixes have been added in brackets so as to respect the rules of versification.

In sum, instructors who wish to include female playwrights' contributions to 17th-century theater in their course syllabi will find this volume to be an essential tool in choosing which authors and plays to include in their programs. The editors' efforts to make these plays available to researchers, readers, professors, and students encourage the study of female playwrights and how they contributed to the dramatic genres of the 17th century. We impatiently await the arrival of the final volumes of this edition which will feature plays written by female playwrights from the very end of the 17th century and throughout the 18th century.

Theresa Varney Kennedy

Christian Zonza : *La Nouvelle historique en France à l'âge classique* (1657-1703). Paris : Honoré Champion (Lumière classique n° 68), 2007. 776 p.

Christian Zonza commence son étude en rappelant l'importance des travaux de René Godenne pour la connaissance de la nouvelle des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles. Un même jugement peut être porté sur *La Nouvelle historique en France à l'âge classique*.

La première partie de cet ouvrage, issu d'une thèse soutenue en 2003 à la Sorbonne sous la direction du professeur Gérard Ferreyrolles, est consacrée à l'examen des différents critères qui permettent de constituer un corpus de « nouvelles historiques ». L'ouvrage de René Godenne, paru en 1970, a montré que les récits brefs de la seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle étaient très hétérogènes, d'une part, et, d'autre part, que de nombreuses nouvelles, par leur structure et par leur matière, s'apparentaient aux romans qui les avaient précédées. De plus, comme le fait remarquer C. Zonza au terme d'une minutieuse analyse des titres, les mentions génériques sont d'une utilité relative pour constituer un corpus : quand elles sont employées, ce qui est loin d'être toujours le cas, c'est approximativement. Ainsi « historique » peut-il signifier très largement « vrai ».

Le corpus est constitué selon trois critères principaux : la présence de la matière historique (une même période de l'histoire de France est généralement le cadre de ces nouvelles : le règne des derniers Valois), la brièveté des histoires, qui sans cesser de recourir aux procédés romanesques les ont