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Michèle Clément

Brooke D. Di Lauro

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Scève, Maurice.

*Œuvres complètes: Tome V. Microcosme*, ed. Michèle Clément.

Textes de la Renaissance 189. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013. Pp. 389. ISBN 978-2-8124-1251-6 (paperback) €32.

In her critical edition of the 1562 *Microcosme*, editor Michèle Clément announces that her primary goals are to bring light to the “structures mentales” (31) in which Scève worked and to the texts that he read and transformed into French verse, and especially to reveal the meaning of the text for the modern reader. Clément is extremely successful in illuminating countless previously overlooked sources and in underscoring the sheer breadth of Scève’s erudition, but this reader would have preferred that she focus more on *Microcosme*’s significance during the sixteenth century. Although Clément includes some discussion regarding the lack of interest in the text—the eleven extant exemplars have no marks at all—and a rare, comprehensive list of the works Scève published during his lifetime, as editor she does not spend much time relating the work to the rest of Scève’s corpus, especially *Délie* and *La Saulsaye*, nor does she relate it to that of his contemporaries other than Pontus de Tyard.

In rendering an edition accessible to modern readers, Clément claims to both rely on and distance herself from the three previous editions by Hans Staub (1970), Pascal Quignard (1974), and Enzo Giudici (1976). Of these, Clément declares that Giudici’s is the “first and only scholarly edition” (31) and yet she finds serious drawbacks to that edition, noting that the voluminous annotation is often too far from the text, no glossary is provided, the poetics are ignored, some corrections are questionable, and the significance of Gregor Reisch’s *Margarita Philosophica* is overlooked. Accordingly, Clément provides what she found lacking by responding to Giudici’s own suggestion to add a glossary, returning more systematically to *Margarita Philosophica* (first suggested by Staub), including poetic analysis, adding supplementary sources, and accounting for criticism published since 1976. But Clément also includes a variety of indexes and appendices which are indispensable resources for Scève scholars specifically and for sixteenth-century scholars in general.

In addition to the aforementioned list of Scève’s complete works, Clément’s edition includes illustrations from *Margarita Philosophica* and their corresponding passages in *Microcosme*, an extensive glossary, a detailed explanation of typographical choices made in reestablishing the text, and an

exhaustive bibliography including primary sources, lexicological references, and secondary sources on *Microcosme*, on Scève, and on sixteenth-century epistemologies and poetry. All but the *Margarita Philosophica* illustrations are invaluable. Although the revelation of the central importance of this text is crucial, it is unclear how its illustrations contribute to our understanding of *Microcosme*. Perhaps a discussion of Scève's more visual works—the *Blasons anatomiques* or the emblems of the *Délie*—would have helped to solidify the affinity between the two. Furthermore, although supremely useful, the bibliography has two shortcomings: its curious organization of secondary sources on *Microcosme* in chronological rather than alphabetical order and some notable absences in the list of books on Scève (i.e., Baker 1986, Hegelson 2001, Sieburth 2003).

The most significant supplement to the text is the editor's 118-page introduction, which is divided into seventeen sections on the influences on and the structure of *Microcosme*. Although the sections—mainly covering influence/sources, poetry and stylistics, structure/framework, and theology—do tend to overlap and repeat information from time to time, the introduction constitutes a veritable monograph on *Microcosme* as studied through the context of Renaissance poetics, philosophy, and religious thought. The editor admits that Scève's extensive second-hand erudition is odd for a scholar whose knowledge was often touted by his friends. She concludes, however, that such borrowing reveals the author's educational intention of disseminating knowledge in the vernacular. This, for Clément, is what constitutes Scève's modernity and distinctiveness: choosing the vernacular as the "essential vector of knowledge" (13) and using it to represent the average man, "l'honnête homme" (115), who is neither hero nor scholar but who is educated and able in matters both practical and intellectual. Ultimately, Clément's overview of Scève's influences reveals how his rewriting of earlier texts unites pagan and humanist knowledge without needing to allegorize, and how this syncretism further allows for poetic freedom. (73)

Indeed, most interesting in Clément's extensive study of Scève's sources and the liberties she takes with them is its underscoring of Scève's unconventional foci in the text. Scève's originality, according to Clément, lies in his representation of an individual with universal value: he manages to "narrer l'histoire de l'humanité sans faire œuvre d'historien et construire une vision globale de l'homme sans écrire un traité philosophique" (41). More significantly,

Clément's introduction highlights that the biblical revisions undertaken by Scève expose his unique perspective which touts the beneficial nature of original sin ("la capacité de l'homme à erreur semble définir le rapport de l'homme au monde" 43), valorizes the human body, highlights Adam and Eve's grief at Abel's death, which, in turn, reveals that "l'origine du monde s'articule avec le deuil, le deuil comme origine du devenir" (76), and rejects the notion of women's evil nature and intellectual inferiority, presenting instead a "[proto-]feminisme qui n'est donc pas seulement social et intellectuel, il est aussi épistémologique et théologique : le féminin est un modèle du macrocosme, voire de Dieu" (82).

Finally, Clément rejects the conclusions of critics like Françon who claimed that Scève's didactic intentions are anti-poetical, and instead undertakes a painstaking analysis of the poetics of the text and asserts that Scève's "collage quasi surréaliste" (109) is a mark of *Microcosme*'s poetic complexity and stylistic singularity. Clément demonstrates how Scève, using a lexicon characterized by its density and inventiveness, creates a rare and eclectic language which relies more heavily on *Rhétoriqueur* sound games than *Délie* or *Saulsaye*. The glossary Clément provides confirms her assertion that the author's lexical ingenuity matches the inventiveness of *l'homme-microcosme*. The poetic aspect—that which makes it different from the sources on which Scève relies—is essential to understanding *Microcosme* and was a surprising oversight in previous editions. Overall, Clément's edition will prove quite useful to Scève specialists and especially to Renaissance scholars unfamiliar with the vast array of primary sources on which he relied.

BROOKE D. DI LAURO

University of Mary Washington

**Souiller, Didier, ed.**

***Maniérisme et Littérature.***

Paris: Orizons, 2013. Pp. 375. ISBN 978-2-296-08872-6 (paperback) €35.

In 2010, a conference in Dijon focused on defining Mannerism in European literature. This book is a collection of articles stemming from that conference. The authors look at how Mannerism in art relates to contemporary literature in order to discuss the concept of Mannerist literature. As such, the book is