

Poètes et pédagogues de la Réforme catholique. Agnès Passot-Mannooretonil.
Bibliothèque de la Renaissance 21. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2019. 656 pp. €64.

In the last decades, a number of historians have fought the common opinion that the second part of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century lacked religious vitality. For too long this skewed vision has served to explain the momentum gained by the Lutheran Reformation at the beginning of the sixteenth century. This common misconception has, of course, been exacerbated by Erasmus's relentless critiques of monastic institutions and by the portrayal of monks, especially the proverbial Cordeliers, by Rabelais and by Marguerite de Navarre in her *Heptaméron*. In her book *Poètes et pédagogues de la Réforme catholique*, based on her doctoral dissertation, Agnès Passot-Mannooretonil seeks to nuance this common vision of pre-Tridentine spiritual literature in France. She methodically explores the complex intertextual network and influences of spiritual texts on devotional habitus, as well as the poetic production in vernacular language of laic authors during the first half of the sixteenth century.

The volume is divided into three parts. The first part offers a survey of devotional practices in France on the eve of the Renaissance. Passot-Mannooretonil stresses the profound doctrinal influences in the development of liturgical and devotional practices informed by the medieval monastic tradition, emphasizing the importance of the *imitatio Christi*, especially the episode of the Passion; the cult of the Virgin Mary; and, above all, the emergence of the figure of Mary Magdalene as an ultimate symbol of transition between the secular and ecclesiastical worlds. This doctrinal introduction is followed by a survey of devotional genres developed in France at the end of the Middle Ages. The author reviews a sample of the devotional textual production, demonstrating the profound influence of doctrinal practices on the poetic production found in liturgical texts, such as books of hours and spiritual-allegorical literature. This survey provides a glimpse of a textual production that is not easily available, except for the works of Marguerite de Navarre, and offers a portrait of a rich and complex network between savant doctrinal influences and popular devotional poetic production of the time. It should be noted that the inclusion of some reproductions of engravings and images, lengthily described in the book, would have benefited the efficiency of the analysis.

The second part of the volume, "Réformes," is dedicated to the exploration of secular influences on monastic reformation at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The great majority of the demonstration focuses on vernacular texts dedicated to nuns and laic women who only had, in most cases, a rudimentary knowledge of the Latin language. The intended readership of these texts is not homogeneous but was very often noblewomen who aspired to a life of piety and austerity modeled after a monastic ideal issued from the reform of Catholic institutions. This section of the book concludes with a detailed analysis of the works of François Le Roy (active between 1499 and 1516), confessor and spiritual guide of the nuns of the Abbey of Fontevraud, who in his pedagogical

writings uses different genres, such as dialogue and lyric poetry, to establish the compatibility of contingent monastic chores and the longing for a spiritual contemplative life. Le Roy addresses the nuns of his order but also educated laic women, using the language and images characteristic of love poetry in an attempt to translate the mystical spiritual experience, which would prove to be a lasting influence in the writings of Marguerite de Navarre.

The third and final part of the book revolves around the transition from religious literature to personal spiritual lyric poetry as exemplified by the models established by Guillaume Crétin (1460?–1525), Charles Fontaine (1514–70?), and Jean Bouchet (1476–1557). Passot-Mannoorettonil illustrates the complex influence of Catholic production on the development of the spiritual lyric poetry of the first half of the sixteenth century. Passot-Mannoorettonil succeeds at showing this intertextuality at play in the poetry of Marguerite de Navarre and her entourage. Surprisingly, this demonstration leads the author to the denial of the evangelical tendencies of the queen of Navarre, and claims her unflinching allegiance to the Catholic faith. Such a unilateral and controversial assertion is sure to stimulate debates among experts.

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I monaci Silvestrini e la Toscana (XIII–XVII secolo). Francesco Salvestrini, ed. Studi sulle abbazie storiche e ordini religiosi della Toscana 5. Florence: Olschki, 2020. vi + 200 pp. + color pls. €26.

This book is a collection of eight essays, with an introduction by Michael Kelly, abbot general emeritus of the Sylvestrines, and covers the history of the order in Tuscany between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries. Three of its chapters focus exclusively or in part on Montepulciano (site of a 2017 symposium from which this volume was published); other areas represented include Chiusi, Petroio, and Florence, with references to regions in Marche. It thus establishes itself as not merely another study of religious orders in Renaissance and early modern Florence, but as an examination of the local and regional history of a Benedictine congregation important to Central Italian life between 1299 and 1658.

Francesco Salvestrini's opening chapter provides a careful historical and historiographic introduction to the order and its founder, with particular attention to his spirituality in the political and local context (i.e., the relationship to other observances, the papacy, and diocesan and civic structure). This theme is also important for the expansion of the Sylvestrines from Marche into Tuscany, particularly to Florence, where in 1299 they took up residence in San Marco, a church they were forced to cede to the Dominicans in 1436. Isabella Gagliardi takes up the story in Florence in the second