

such as commenting multiple times on the four-syllable *diarèse* of *inquiète* (295), but for the most part their observations were accurate and thorough. Several grammatical observations were particularly helpful, such as the not uncommon dropping of the “ne” even in the 17th century (as explained in footnote 42 on p. 117).

I only found one editorial choice unsettling. Throughout their introductions, the editors made several allusions to Quinault’s characters without bibliographic reference. The assumption is that the reader is someone like me who is reading straight through the text and will be familiar enough with Quinault’s works to remember the key characters from the preceding plays in the volume. However, this approach is not helpful for someone who is reading a play in isolation or who is not fully familiar with Quinault’s corpus. Apart from this, however, the volume is very helpful and will be a vital tool for scholars of seventeenth-century literature.

Raymond Poisson. *Théâtre complet*. Marie-Claude Canova-Green and Suzanne Jones, eds. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2022. 1105 pp. 89€. Review by PERRY GETHNER, OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY.

Raymond Poisson was one of a number of actor/authors working in France during the time of Molière. As an actor with a long career (1650–1685), he was widely acclaimed for farcical valet parts, becoming mainly associated with the character type Crispin. He was a competitor, rather than a friend, of Molière, since he worked at the rival Hôtel de Bourgogne troupe starting in 1660, following a start in small touring companies. He would go on to join the Comédie-Française after the merger of Parisian troupes in 1680. Like his fellow actor/authors, he composed his plays for the troupes to which he belonged, and these were all comedies, mostly afterpieces in one or three acts. His plays were so successful that he published all of them individually, then published collections of his complete works starting in 1678. Several of the plays would remain in the repertory of the Comédie well into the following century, and the protagonist of one of them, the Baron de La Crasse, would become a proverbial figure. However, Poisson’s superficiality, as well as the highly topical nature of some of

his comedies, finally caused him to fade into obscurity. Several of the plays have previously received scholarly editions, but this is the first complete edition of the full corpus since the seventeenth century.

Poisson's greatest strength was his ability to write funny scenes, frequently moving into the realm of the outrageous. His background in farce shows especially in several early plays that are composed in *octosyllabes* and rely to a large extent on physical humor. Several of the comedies have documentary value, either as slice-of-life sketches of provincial characters and locales (automatically foolish for Parisians) or satire, both literary and political. Because his plays were intended as mere entertainment, audiences were willing to overlook his main deficiencies, especially substandard plot construction and weak characterization, often moving into caricature. The fact that Poisson lacked the profound humanity of a Molière or the stylistic verve of a Regnard may disappoint the modern reader but did not bother his original audiences.

Poisson's corpus of nine plays is remarkably diverse in sources, themes, and techniques. For example, he was willing to revive formulas associated with the baroque that had faded in popularity. These include the play-within-a-play, paired in one case with the *comédie des comédiens* framing device; the setting of a comedy inside a madhouse, with primary emphasis on the lunacy into which skilled practitioners of the arts may fall, but largely ignoring the metaphorical aspects (life itself as a kind of madness); allegorical plots used for satire. At the same time, he could anticipate future trends in comedy, especially in the cynical portrayal of marriage in *Les Femmes coquettes*, though all the blame for such vices as hypocrisy, snobbery and lavish expenditure is unfairly placed on the women alone. His wide range of targets includes foreigners and people from the provinces (complete with bad accents and bad grammar), gamblers, thieves, and people from the artistic community (poets and performers, pretentious but ignorant patrons). Like Molière, he sometimes resorts to crude effects, such as beatings and scatological humor, and, like most of his contemporaries, he treats the insane, sick, and disabled with no sympathy.

One of the strengths of this edition is the inclusion of the music used in the original productions, compiled and edited by Naomi Matsumoto. To facilitate performance today, she has modernized

clefs and time signatures. Remarkably, nearly all the music has been identified and recovered. Poisson adapted the stand-alone songs from existing popular songs, but not always in full or with the same titles, so locating the right music required much digging in period collections of airs, both published and manuscript. (Only a small percentage of this research had been done previously.) In two cases, the music was newly composed: Lully provided the score for the *mascarade* into which *L'Après-soupe des auberges* was originally inserted, and *Les Fous divertissants*, which is essentially a comedy-ballet, has extensive vocal and instrumental music by Charpentier. Since the Lully score was not published separately, the individual numbers had to be gleaned from other surviving Lully manuscripts in which they were reused. Poisson incorporated songs and/or dances into nearly all his comedies, so he clearly viewed those arts as essential to his concept of total entertainment.

Another useful feature of this edition is the listing of all known performances of Poisson plays, compiled by Suzanne Jones. This table, using information drawn from records kept by theatrical companies, as well as gazettes and memoirs, noting the place and troupe, plus number of performances, if known, and going up to 1763 (when the most successful comedy, *Le Baron de la Crasse*, finally dropped out of sight), reveals how different types and generations of audiences reacted to plays designed to be mere ephemeral amusement. Not surprisingly, plays that were entirely farcical or dealt with political affairs of the moment disappeared very quickly, whereas those that contained aspects of *comédie de mœurs* had a longer life span.

Marie-Claude Canova-Green provided the general introduction, plus the introductions to the nine individual plays, the textual apparatus, and the annotations. The introductions are excellent, giving all the relevant historical background and examining all the specific aspects of the plays that make them of interest to the modern reader. She gives full explanations of the numerous cultural references and archaic or technical expressions, plus foreign words and patois. However, the presentation of the texts could have used more care. Lines of verse that are divided among multiple characters do not always receive the requisite indentation; most of the *vers faux* are not indicated in the notes, and the largest group (involving the distinctions *encor!*

encore and *avecl'avecque*) should have been automatically corrected; occasionally a speech is assigned to the wrong character.

In sum, this is a welcome addition to Classiques Garnier's series of neglected French playwrights. Poisson's status as a minor playwright remains unchanged, but he is fun to read and has real historical importance.

Vittorio Frajese. *Une histoire homosexuelle: Paolo Sarpi et la recherche de l'individu à Venise au XVII^e siècle*. Julia Castiglione, trans. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2023. 132 pp. 25€. Review by SHANNON MCHUGH, UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON.

Paolo Sarpi (1552–1623) was a Venetian prelate, theologian, and jurist. His intellectual interests also ranged to mathematics and science, and he was a friend and interlocutor of Galileo's. Having entered the Servite Order at the age of fourteen, he lived over fifty years in relative peace before finding himself one of the most high-profile enemies of the papacy of the Counter-Reformation (or Catholic Reformation). By early 1606, the Catholic Church's discontent with Venetian clergy had culminated in Pope Paul V's Interdict against the Republic. Sarpi was called upon by the Venetian Senate to weigh in; his trenchant writings resulted in his excommunication in 1607. The next decade would see Sarpi's completion of the *History of the Council of Trent*, a work that condemned papal monarchism and denounced the Church's decades-long reform efforts as a "deformation."

Sarpi's writings have long fascinated historians, evoking an array of interpretations of his religious and philosophical beliefs: from skeptical to libertine, proto-Protestant to atheistic. For the last half-century, his most public texts have been increasingly studied alongside his more private, unpublished writings—especially his *Pensieri medico-morali* and *Pensieri sulla religione*, both published for the first time only in 1969. Such examinations have served to nuance scholarly understanding of the writings published during Sarpi's lifetime and of his larger worldview.

Vittorio Frajese's new study, *Une histoire homosexuelle: Paolo Sarpi et la recherche de l'individu à Venise au XVII^e siècle*, does something new: