Gianluca Mori. *Athéisme et dissimulation au XVIIe siècle: Guy Patin et le* "Theophrastus redivivus," avant-propos par Antony McKenna. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2020; Genève: Éditions Slatkine, 2022. 414 p. including liste d'abbrev., appendices, bibliographie, index de personnes citées, et table des matières. Review by Jeffrey D. Burson, Georgia Southern University.

In the winter of our recent pandemic-related discontent, Gianluca Mori has published a book that boldly and convincingly revisits a question largely abandoned and considered nearly impossible by scholars of heterodox freethinkers and clandestine texts to answer. Just who was the author (or were the authors) of *Theophrastus redivivus*—the earliest openly atheistic manuscript treatise to emerge within a European scholarly culture then transitioning from late humanism to early Enlightenment? Professor Mori's landmark study written in spirited, forceful, and often suspenseful prose, and standing on impressively artful and intricate philological and historical erudition, convincingly proposes that the work's final form, achieved in 1661, can soundly be attributed to Guy Patin (1601–1672), a regent or Regius Professor of the Collège Royal de France (17). Beyond advancing this claim for attribution, Mori has uncovered impressive evidence favoring a highly probable theory that Patin was the last man standing after his more famous collaborators, Gabriel Naudé and Pierre Gassendi, died. Much like the *Theophrastus redivivus* itself, Mori's book was undertaken very much in the spirit of admirable scholarly collaboration. He released portions of this book in the form of pre-print working papers on *Academia.edu* during 2020, and solicited the expert advice of a truly impressive array of experts on clandestine texts and radical texts of the seventeenth-century—the partial list includes (but is not limited to) Antonio Della Prete, Guido Canziani, Christine Jackson-Holzberg, David Wooton, Jonathan Nathan, Jonathan Israel, Martin Mulsow, Gianni Paganini, Winfred Schröder, Anna Maria Vileno, and Anthony McKenna, who wrote the helpful forward to Mori's work (25n., and "Avant-propos par Antony McKenna, 7–12). In this reviewer's judgment, this book stands as a monumental scholarly achievement under unusually trying scholarly circumstances for many of us.

In the introduction to *Athéisme et dissimulation au XVIIe siècle*, Professor Mori details the manuscript genealogy and citation history by which *Theophrastus redivivus* became known to later eighteenth-century figures, and later, to scholars. Just four copies of the treatise have ever been known to exist: two are housed in Vienna, one in Paris, and another in Belgium in the manuscript collection of Jeroom Vercruysse (13). The reader is referred to Appendix II (329–81), in which Mori details his evidence for why there is no need to posit other lost versions to explain discrepancies among the four extant versions (14). Only in 1706, did the mercurial existence of the *Theophrastus redivivus* surface thanks, ironically, to Jesuit Father René-Joseph Tournemine, whose then anonymous preface to "Remarques" appended to *De la connoissance de Dieu* by his fellow Jesuit Louis Ferrand, cited several passages from the manuscript version soon to be purchased by Prince Eugene of Savoy (it was Prince Eugene who identified his manuscript as the original). *Theophrastus redvivus* also informed *Réflexions morales et métaphysiques* by Camille Falconet, grandson of Patin's friend, the late André Falconet, and son of Patin's pupil, Noël Falconet. But, with the exception of cryptic references to the manuscript in posthumous book inventories in the 1720s, which lacked any author or provenance details, another citation of the manuscript is not known until *L'Art de despoiler la rate* (1754) by André-Joseph Panckucke. Then in 1758, in note 85 of Propser Marchand's article on the *Treatise of the Three Impostors* for *Dictionnaire Critique*, Marchand spoke of the work as having been infected by Spinozism. Gianluca Mori notes that this is unlikely since Spinoza is scarcely mentioned. Only once more, in 1770 was a portion of *Theophrastus redivivus* published in French translation (and without any authorial attribution) as *Fausseté des miracles des deux Testaments.* After that, the work fell into oblivion, only to be studied seriously again in the twentieth century (15–17).

Mori contends that Ira O. Wade's pioneering work on the clandestine manuscript circulation in 1938 merely complicated the question by speculating that the *Theophrastus redivivus w*as a later compilation of textual fragments associated with earlier controversial manuscripts. It was left to J.S. Spink, in his *French Free Thought from Gassendi to Voltaire* (1960) to discover and study the complete Parisian version of the manuscript, which, Spink posited, had been written by a regent or

professor of one of the colleges. At this point, however, Mori indicates that productive work on the manuscript stalled for a number of years—a development attributed to what Mori considers the deleterious effects of René Pintard's thesis that most mid-century thinkers were *libertins érudits*—disenchanted gentlemen scholars whose philosophical works constitute an overcorrection to the age of confessional conflict in an era of calcifying absolutism. However much these seventeenth-century *érudits* may have been private free-thinkers, Mori contends that Pintard and others such as Henri Busson nevertheless concluded that they were not atheists who made any enduring contributions to the reemergence of free-thinking during the eighteenth century. Only with the appearance of Tullio Gregory's monograph, *Theophrastus redivivus: Erudizione et ateismo nel Seicento* (1979), followed by the magisterial and still indispensable critical edition of the manuscript by Guido Canziani and Gianni Paganini in 1981 did serious work on this atheistic treatise resume. But, as Mori contends, in 1981, it remained largely impossible to seriously undertake examinations of the texts paternity (18–20). Thanks to the advent of many more searchable databases and digital editions of both published and unpublished clandestine material, and to the forty-year proliferation of interest in the role of clandestine manuscript circulation in the origns of radical Enlightenment discourses (begun in earnest by Margaret Jacob and continued by numerous others including Gianluca Mori himself), it is now, Mori insists, possible to return to the question of the manuscript's paternity (19–25).

Mori's method of attributing *Theophrastus redivivus* hinges on several important observations detailed largely in the introduction (13–25), and in the first two chapters (37–61, 63–93), but reiterated throughout the book. First, while the manuscript does not betray details of its author's life, there is in places a strong first-person authorial presence, especially in the manuscript's *Proemium* (prologue)—something that enhances the likelihood of a single author. Second, numerous citations very clearly place the manuscript in France, if not in Paris in the middle of the seventeenth century (14–15). Third, and with the exception of less frequent citations to Hobbes, Gassendi, and LaPeyrère, the manuscript virtually never cites a more contemporary seventeenth-century author: the manuscript treatise is

almost entirely anchored in the Greco-Roman classics (e.g. Cicero, Diagoras, Protagoras, Theodorus), as well as controversial sixteenth-century humanists (Vanini Pomponazzi, Cardano, and occasionally, Jean Bodin)(14–15). Those contemporary works that are cited refer to works published or known to the republic of letters only between 1630 and 1659. But, as Mori observes, there is one notable exception: the numerous, often quite favorable references to obscure medical theses by one Guy Patin, who otherwise published very little. The body of citations throughout the manuscript versions, Mori further notes, comports well with favored patterns of citations found in Patin's correspondence, his medical theses, and his small, published output (23). One is left wondering why, if one is trying to avoid detection as closeted atheist, Patin would praise himself openly throughout the work? Hypothetically but plausibly with reference to other contemporary examples of the phenomenon, Mori suggests that this tactic would actually deflect suspicions for precisely that reason (and of course, as Mori suggests, it's a way of quietly praising and promoting one's worth without accusations of arrogance [24])! But, Mori does not stop with presupposition. Thanks to his own indebtededness to digital versions of Patin's *Correspondance* online (most notably that edited by Loïc Capron), and to the online edition of the Vienna manuscript version published by a research team directed by Jean-Pierre Cavaillé, Mori has uncovered an impressive array of conceptual and semantic correspondences now known to exist between the texts of Guy Patin and the *Theophrastus redivivus*, as Mori details in Appendix I (24, 91–92, and see Appendix I: 281–328).

Accordingly, in chapter 3 (95–113), and again in chapter 8 (241–61) where he respectfully but painstakingly responds to his leading critics (Loïc Capron, and Jonathan Nathan, author of a recent and, as of 2020, still unpublished Cambridge University Ph.D. thesis on *Theophrastus redivivus*, cited on page 389 of the bibliography), Mori elaborates his evidence for the differences that exist between Guy Patin's secret atheism and his publicly expressed professions of orthodox Catholic doctrine. Mori argues that the fideism found throughout portions of *Theophrastus redivivus* "n'est que la prolongation de cette écriture codée dont Patin s'était servi dans ses cahiers de notes pour trasmettre son message radical à ses fils, à ses élèves (Noël Falconet

surtout) et à une poingée d'amis" (99). Anchored in scholarly practices inherited from the sixteenth-century humanism by which an author's originality emerges through the choice of copious citations, as well as the textual fragments excerpted and skillfully woven together (13), Patin (with considerable inspiration from Naude and Gassendi) amassed an encyclopedic summa of various arguments against favoring atheism (or critiquing theism). Though *Theophrastus redivivus* contains perfunctory assertions of orthodoxy designed to insulate against censorship, it nevertheless powerfully elucidates its thesis in coded language that Mori believes to have been readily decipherable by likeminded philosophers and érudits who might have seen the clandestine manuscript (97, 99). While at times, this argument that seventeenth-century thinkers were privately heterodox but only publicly and disingenuously orthodox can at times be exaggerated, Mori makes his case for Guy Patin's atheism on the basis of monumental and skillful archival research, and further notes that no less than Pierre Bayle articulated some of the very strategies of dissimulation employed by seventeenth-century philosophers, and in so doing, directly underscores Patin as an example of a secrete libertine or even atheist (112).

But the nature of Patin's radicalism and heterodoxy is a complex one, for among the most interesting chapters of Mori's work is its fourth chapter in which he details how fundamentally "anti-modern" or one might say for the time, conservative, Guy Patin was. A devoté of Aristotle, Patin rejected many findings and methods of the new natural philosophy including the circulation of blood, Copernican Heliocentrism. In philosophy, as evinced by the ensemble of his known writings and by the text of *Theophrastus redivivus*. Guy Patin's more radical thought or even atheism emerged from his extensive reverence for the ancients (Aristotle, Epicureanism, Cicero) as often filtered through Pomponazzi, Cardano, Vanini, and Campanella. Guy finds no direct influence of Cartesianism in any of its varieties (see for the diversity of Cartesianisms in France in Tad M. Schmaltz, *Early Modern Cartesianisms* [Oxford, 2017]), and with the exception of manuscripts from Gassendi, passing references to Hobbes, and a rather more extensive engagement with *Praeadamitae* by Isaac LaPeyrère detailed in chapter 6 (185–205), no meaningful engagement with moderns (nor even with Spinoza). Guy Patin was, moreover,

very much in the camp of the ancients in the quarrel of the ancients and moderns (115–146). That (for want a of a more appropriate term) a proto-Radical Enlightenment atheism derived, in the case of Patin's contribution to the *Theophrastus redivivus*, entirely from its author's reverence for the ancients without reference any radical Cartesianism, Newtonianism, Socinianism, or Spinozism is a potent and indispensable reminder of the diverse origins of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century free thought, and the fact that a writer's radicalism in one area could and did coexist with far less innovative perspectives in other areas (see, for example, contributions by Margaret Jacob, Harvey Chisick, Beth Lord, Falk Wunderlich, and Winfred Schröder in Steffen Ducheyne (ed.), *Reassessing the Radical Enlightenment* [2017], and by Rienk Vermij, Susana Seguin, and Jeffrey D. Burson in Pagannini, Jacob, Laursen (eds.), *Clandestine Philosophy: New Studies on Subversive Manuscripts in Early Modern Europe,* 1620–1823 [2020]). Mori's fourth chapter also paradoxically affirms Alan C. Kors' recent argument that "orthodoxy began heterodoxy from its own substance," ironically because all manner of materialistic, naturalistic, and outright atheist arguments abound in the pages of the Greco-Roman ancients with which educated European scholars were intimately familiar (see *Epicureans and Atheists* [Cambridge, 2015], 3, also *Naturalism and Unbelief in France,* 1650–1729 [Cambridge, 2015]) Kors' arguments are an important but far from contradictory counterpoint to the present volume under review, attesting as they do that Epicureanism and other creative borrowings from the ancients constituted important building blooks of free thought in both religious and philosophical matters. Clandestine and subversive manuscripts, such as *Theophrastus redivivus*, may not have been solely responsible for philosophical innovations in early modern Europe on the eve of the Enlightenment. But Mori's work on a vital clandestine manuscript treatise is an extensive exposé of an important mechanism by which orthodoxy gave birth to what would later be its more public expression by the late eighteenth century—through the "laboratories of modernity" (Vincenzo Ferrone, *The Enlightenment*, trans. Elisabetta Tarantino [Princeton, 2015], x–xi) which quietly emerged in secret from the pages of clandestine texts and their circulation. More radical implications of the ancients abound in the pages of works such as

the *Theophrastus redivivus*, as Patin and his circle of even more silent (if more famous) collaborators synthesized and reproduced them, and ultimately in death, he lost control of their secrecy and limited dissemination. Sometimes, clandestine texts combined the insights of the ancients, moderns, and luminaries from beyond Europe (Ann Thomson, "La Mettrie et la littérature clandestine," *Le Matérialisme du XVIIIe siècle et la littérature* clandestine, ed. Olivier Bloch [Paris: Vrin, 1982], 240); sometimes, their innovations derived, as they did for Guy Patin, entirely from late humanist reflection on the philosophy and the religious praxis of the Greeks and Romans.

But, as noted earlier, Patin did not work alone, and Gianluca Mori's Conclusion presents an intriguing, and to my mind, well-researched hypothesis concerning the genesis of the *Theophrastus redivivus* and its title. In a letter from Patin to André Falconet from 27 August 1648, Mori posits that in coded language, Patin referred to a meeting in which he, Naudé, and Gassendi began work on a "*summa* de l'athéisme qui en traite les aspects historiques, philosophiques, politiques, moraux et son rappart à la science de la nature de l'homme, avec un grand étalage d'érudition ancienne" (263, 265–68). This s*umma* would ultimately culminate in the *Theophrastus redivivus.* While Mori concedes that Gassendi's atheism is not fully conclusive, he notes that Guy Patin's correspondence indicates that he was convinced that the professions of Catholic orthodoxy by the famous Epicurean atomist were not to be taken seriously (267). Nevertheless, it was likely Naudé who initiated the project as a way of committing to writing a secret manuscript capable of preserving and elaborating arguments for atheism among heterodox free-thinking authors. Naudé concocted the plan after attaining several unpublished manuscripts from Capanella and relocating to Paris during which, after 1627, his zeal for obtaining obscure and prohibited manuscripts was "deviant obsessionelle" (269). Naudé, in turn, spoke with Gassendi, exhorting the latter to further pursue his research on Epicurus around 1630. By 1636, Naudé proposed to Gassendi the composition of a manuscript to be circulated among a circle of like-minded writers—one that would allow them both to secretly elaborate and circulate their heterodox notions without fideistic scruples (270-2). At the same time, Naudé began a correspondence with Guy Patin, in which he sent to him various "*libelli*… que Patin

tient pour des oeuvres cheries des Muses" (273). After a dozen years in Italy, Naudé came back to Paris with several other manuscripts and memoirs from Pomponazzi, Campanella, Cardano, and Machiavelli, *inter alia*. Soon, Naudé would introduce Patin to Gassendi, and the three would begin to compile and synthesize the material during various secret meetings along the lines of the one spoken of in the letter of 1648. But, altogether too soon following his departure for Sweden, Gabriel Naudé died in 1653. Patin continued to work closely with Gassendi as the latter prepared his complete works, but by 1655, Patin alone remained alive to complete the clandestine treaties using the hundreds of pages of citations left in his friends' notebooks, and the documentary materials left by his friends. Following an intense decade of work, Patin at last completed the manuscript begun by the three collaborators nearly two decades before, and conceived by Naudé in the 1630s. It was Guy Patin, Mori theorizes, who dreamed up the title, *Theophrastus redivivus* ("Theophrastus Revived") under the joint inspiration of an alchemical work of the same title published in Germany and a revival of the cynicism of Diogenes' by Comenius in 1660 (274–76).

What Gianluca Mori has achieved with his *Athéisme et dissimulation au XVIIe siècle* is a remarkable achievement that will continue to inspire spirited debate on important historical issues such as the nature and significance of clandestine and heterodox manuscript circulation, the genesis of the Enlightenment (and its more radical manifestions), the importance of public dissimulation versus private free-thinking among seventeenth-century *libertins érudits*, and the endurance of scholarly and textual practices associated with late humanism until the seventeenth-century and beyond—a topic intriguingly and copiously revived by Dmitri Levitin's extensive prolific and extensive works, including most notably *Ancient Wisdom in the Age of New Science: historires of Philosophy in England, c.* 1640–1700 (Cambridge, 2015). While some might plausibly take issue with Professor Mori's perhaps overly polemical insistence that there was a pervasive countercurrent of secret seventeenth-century atheists masquerading beneath a thin veneer of nominal orthodoxy, Mori's most recent study of the genesis of *Theophrastus redivivus*, like many of his earlier works, mounts a formidable challenge (or at least cautionary counterpoint) to a variety

of scholars who have been more inclined to take seriously the public professions of orthodoxy by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century philosophers and *libertins érudits* while deemphasizing counterevidence for countercurrents of atheism and heterodoxy lurking just beneath the surface. Whether such secret atheism was a massive iceberg beneath the surface of seventeenth-century thought will continue to be a matter of spirited debate for some time. Gianluca Mori's study will assuredly reignite such important considerations (277–78).

Rori Bloom. *Making the Marvelous: Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, Henriette-Julie de Murat, and the Literary Representation of the Decorative Arts.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022. 250 pp. $65.00. Review by Peggy Schaller Elliott, Georgia College & State University, Emerita.

Rori Bloom's new publication on the writings of Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy and Henriette-Julie de Murat places the physical aspects of their fairy tales—items such as castles' decor, accessories, food, and art—on par with the action of the tale. Setting aside the traditional dissection of narratives most often used to critique this literary genre, Bloom moves furniture and fashion front and center in her analysis, portraying d'Aulnoy and Murat not only as "chroniclers of material culture but also as explorers of æsthetic issues including the relationship between art and power, word and image, the technical and the magical" (1). Bloom's text brings to light the transformation of tales from the *ancien* in which bucolic scenes emphasized their "folksy" aspect to the *moderne,* uncovering images of exquisitely wrought opulence adorning "an ornately furnished room or a gorgeously clothed body" (3). What these two women writers create, Bloom argues, is a new way of evaluating beauty, ornamentation, and the marvelous that appreciates them as man-made constructions rather than creations of nature or—even less believably—of magic. And in returning the creative focus to the skilled craftsmanship of French artists, Bloom stresses that both d'Aulnoy and Murat express their patriotism, guilefully criticize the king's aura of powerful omnipotence, and subtly make the case for their own skilled production, "a call for acknowledgement of the