

but wish for more: more historical detail, more development, more analysis at every step of the way, particular with reference to de Sales' most developed writing, the *Treatise on the Love of God*. One hopes there is more to come.

According to the Centre for French History and Culture of the University of St. Andrews, an electronic copy of *The Reform of Zeal* may be downloaded from the Centre's web site free of charge at <http://cffhc.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/publications/>, and a paperback copy is available free of cost by emailing the Centre at cffhc@st-andrews.ac.uk.

Georges Forestier. *Molière*. Paris: Gallimard, 2018. 544 pp. + 32 illus. €24.00. Review by STEPHEN H. FLECK, EMERITUS, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY LONG BEACH.

This major new biography of Molière, the first in France since Roger Duchêne's of 1998, is a most welcome publication. Aiming to get beyond the limitations of previous biographies, too directly influenced by Grimarest's *La Vie de M. de Molière*—whether positively or negatively—Forestier brings a genuinely novel approach to the task.

The author is in a unique position to do so, for several reasons. First, in addition to a career-long record of excellent scholarship on his subject, including the single best introduction to the works (*Molière en toutes lettres*, 1990), he is co-editor in chief, with Claude Bourqui, of the recent Pléiade edition of Molière's works (2010). This massive undertaking integrates exhaustively the available scholarship of the forty years since Georges Couton's Pléiade of 1971; it also innovates by bringing to bear the efforts of a multidisciplinary team of scholars including musicologists and dance specialists.

Second, noting the twin dangers of either a dry, text-centered approach or one indulging in novelistic supposition, Forestier proposes to proceed from a "table rase" by integrating (1) the best-established historical data with (2) the works themselves seen both individually, but also (3) in interrelation with each other, a "genetic" approach. All this is intended to serve the goal of producing a "récit biographique vraisemblable," a work that respects all objectively known data while seeking to illuminate the not-directly-knowable personal and creative

areas with inferences clearly grounded in what is historically incontrovertible.

The resulting text reads extremely well, is overall highly persuasive in its arguments, and successfully fulfills the author's goal of laying to rest much of the accretion of myth dating notably from Grimarest's publication of 1703. Among the longstanding beliefs convincingly confronted are that Anne d'Autriche and the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrament engineered the ban on *Tartuffe*; that *Dom Juan* was withdrawn for political reasons; that Molière wrote with slow, painstaking laboriousness; or that Molière was in frequent ill health, leading to his decline and death.

Each of Forestier's myth-busting arguments has precedents, unsurprisingly, but his presentation is exceptionally adroit. This reviewer found only extremely rare points on which to take exception. Among these are that Alceste's loudly-proclaimed "sincérité sans faille" is not truly such, since he yields first momentarily to Oronte—"Je ne dis pas cela"—and then ends Oronte's lawsuit with a reconciling *embrassade* surely of the deepest bad faith, as Forestier himself almost acknowledges (328); and that, while no direct proof of the break with Lully may exist (461), the balance of evidence leaves no doubt that a break was the cumulative result of various, well-documented actions, though not necessarily all by Lully's fault, as C.E.J. Caldicott has argued.

The readings of individual works benefit greatly from a deep, multi-perspectival contextualization that draws constantly on integration of traditional historical data; theater history seen from traditional to contemporary standpoints; legal, political, personal and material forces with which Molière had constantly to contend; and the personal and artistic qualities of troupe members. These and other relevant aspects are presented seamlessly.

In sum, we are fortunate to have the result of a career's worth of exceptional scholarship, the fruit of both individual and team efforts, infused with an exceptional sense of historical flow in artistic, political, and social currents, carrying its erudition elegantly and unobtrusively, and further enriched by direct involvement with theatrical productions at the Sorbonne. This work, unrivaled in its scope, richness and accessibility, should find its way to each of our libraries; many will wish to own it (at 24 Euros!); it is difficult to imagine its usefulness

being overshadowed in our lifetime. It is thus fitting that the last words belong to the author's epilogue. Molière was:

un acteur hors norme qui avait transformé le jeu comique, un auteur révolutionnaire qui avait bouleversé la dramaturgie comique, un homme d'esprit qui avait su séduire le public exigeant de la Cour et des salons parisiens, et un entrepreneur de théâtre avisé qui avait transfiguré le spectacle le plus aimé de Louis XIV, le ballet de cour où se mêlaient musique, danse et théâtre, en un genre nouveau, la comédie-ballet, acclamé par l'ensemble de son public parisien (485).

Theresa Varney Kennedy. *Women's Deliberation: The Heroine in Early Modern French Women's Theater (1650–1750)*. London and New York: Routledge, 2018. xii + 202 pp. \$109.95. Review by ERIC TURCAT, OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY.

Despite its thinly veiled allusion to second-wave feminism, *Women's Deliberation* offers little by way of women's liberation. Early modern heroines of French women's theater, as Theresa Varney Kennedy argues, are indeed a purely synthetic product. In the best of cases, the synthesis derives from "a 'trialectical' exchange among irrational, dutiful and bold and brazen female[s]" (6). The irrational heroines (Chapter 1) are basically Racinian harpies whose aggression transcends, if nothing else, the Aristotelian stereotype of the passive female. The dutiful heroines (Chapter 2), in line with Cornelian heroism, become leaders so exemplary that even their male counterparts could hardly compete in their subservience to the patriarchal state. As for the bold and brazen heroines (Chapter 3), they epitomize the free spirit of the *salonnières*, women so steeped in courtly romance that their gender-bending initiatives can only underscore the overarching privilege of their aristocratic *filles à papa* status.

In the worst of cases, the synthesis derives not from a "trialectic" but from a mere dialectic, as the irrational heroines fuse into the bold and the brazen, thereby mutating into creatures of pure emotion. In this particular case, deliberative heroines (Chapter 4) synthesize not just a dialectic but, worse yet, a mere binary opposition, and one of the