

more critical of authoritarian patterns and behaviors. The first text, published in 1685, concerns Claude-Charles Guyonnet de Vertron's *Parallèle de Louis le Grand avec les princes qui ont été surnommés grands*. The author, who identifies himself on the title page as a historiographer of the king, talks about great sovereigns of the past, Louis being the greatest. He is so great, in fact, that it would be inconceivable to imagine a future king as superior as he. Vertron underscores Louis's greatness as existing only in the present. He stops short of acknowledging the predetermined role of his royal successor as outlined in the *Mémoires*. The fairy tale example that follows is decidedly more engaging simply due to the fantastical, cleverly subversive nature of the genre. After delving into the complexities and analysis of Jean de Préchac's tale, "Sans Parangon," first published in 1698, the reader may better understand why Bjørnstad chose it to conclude his book, since it acts as a summation of his previous discussions and serves as a vehicle for conveying reality through the intervention of the supernatural. Even as he celebrates the glory of his Louis-inspired fictional king, Préchac challenges the sovereignty of the fairies. The king is able to achieve greatness without their magic. There is no happy ending in this fairy tale, only a contest to continue waging war against them. In this instance, fairies, not human beings, are the casualties in the king's dream of absolutism. Louis's glory surpasses even the supernatural.

Boris Donn , *Moli re*. Paris: Les  ditions du Cerf 2022. 184 pp.  15.00. Review by DENIS D. GR L , THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS.

Another book on Moli re? Don't we know by now everything that needs to be known about Jean Baptiste Poquelin? But do we know Moli re the man? This is the question that Boris Donn  attempts to answer in this short book in the collection *Qui es-tu?* In order to do so, Donn  applies the traditional chronological framework to structure the life of Moli re around the three phases of his life: the first part (entitled "L' cole des hommes") retraces his youth with the experience of the Illustre th  tre and his long journey throughout France; the second part ("Le Comique honn te homme") looks at his march to glory when he comes back to Paris and becomes the author of

*Tartuffe* and *Dom Juan*; and then the last part (“Le Moi imaginaire”) examines the maturity and the death of the great man.

Donné’s objective is to discover Molière, the man behind the legend, using the few historical documents that exist. His method rests, like that of many who have studied Molière, on the study of archival material. He looks at the documents but notes that they are unfortunately few and already well known. The second group of sources studied are the various books written by people who knew Molière directly or heard from people who had known him. The problem with this lot is that many texts are unreliable at best (Grimarest’s *Vie de Molière*), questionable (*La fameuse Comédienne*, an anonymous pamphlet directed against Armande Béjart), or even malicious (Chalussay’s *Elomire hypocondre*). Faced with those difficulties, Donné tries a different approach: Still taking into account the context, the historical documents—especially in the first part of the book—as well as the dubious information gathered on Molière, Donné investigates what Molière himself left us: his plays. The essential objective is, as Donné puts it, “comprendre Molière de l’intérieur, en dévoilant ou en imaginant ce qui, dans sa vie, explique qu’il ait créé cet ensemble unique de comédie” (18) [to understand Molière from the inside, revealing or imagining what in his life explains how he was able to create this unique set of plays]. Whereas Laurent Tirard imagined in his movie *Molière* (2007) how the playwright came up with his ideas about his characters, Donné reconstructs in this book what Molière the man could have been based on the characters in his plays. Futile, some will say, unreliable if not deceptive, will state others, Donné makes the bet that it is not pointless or deceptive, and that it is worth looking into all those familiar plays to find “la présence humaine de l’auteur” (20) [the human presence of the author].

In order to do so, Donné puts everything that could be relevant about Molière the man flat out on the page, weaving, through this short narrative, seventeenth-century history as well as the different stories and the few probable biographical elements that can be gleaned in his many plays. So as to make sure that the reader is not misled, the use of italics to indicate some controversial elements helps greatly in differentiating ascertained facts from possible fantasy. This gives

Donné the opportunity to delve into some of the myths surrounding the life of Molière such as the dubious friendship that the playwright would have had with the Prince de Conti or, more controversially, the improbable incest with Armande Béjart. As we advance throughout the book, the personality of Molière is slowly developed. The reader is guided, as Don Cléofas by Asmodée, through much of the life of the author and actor. The goal is to try to lift the mask in order to glimpse a character trait, an experience, a fear that Molière would have left in the characters he was depicting. Ultimately, Donné shows how Molière, the man who fought to denounce hypocrisy and the false pretenses, became Molière, the man who renounced fighting the hopeless battle against human nature.

If Donné tends to reconstruct and sometimes imagine (too much?) what Molière could have been, his argument is nonetheless compelling, and the research is sound. Despite the absence of notes and the very short bibliography—probably due to editorial imperatives—it is obvious that Donné knows his Molière very well. If, at times, he lets himself be guided by a certain feeling he entertains about his subject matter and even if his book does not bring anything new on Molière the author, this new perspective on Molière the man is worth reading. Easily accessible to anyone speaking French and interested in Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, his life, and his personality, this very lively book is a pleasure to read.

Pedro De Valencia. Vincent Parello, ed. and trans. *Le traité sur les Morisques d'Espagne*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2021. 271 pp. €32.00. Review by MARÍA HERNÁNDEZ, ROWAN UNIVERSITY.

*Le Traité sur les Morisques d'Espagne* includes a new Spanish edition of Pedro de Valencia's text, *Acerca de los moriscos de España*, and an annotated, first-ever French translation by Vincent Parello. Born in 1555, Pedro de Valencia, often compared today to Erasmus (1466–1536), was a humanist, prolific writer, philosopher, translator, Spanish historian, and chronicler of King Philip III of Spain. *Acerca de los Moriscos de España* was authored around 1605 and circulated as a manuscript only in a limited erudite circle throughout the seventeenth century.