

development has not always been well defined. As the title suggests, Shoemaker's study is especially strong when it builds its historical analysis on an incisive examination of the rhetoric that, in a way, is what really constituted patronage. The close readings of the stylized language through which patronage relations were evoked and affirmed in poems, letters, and other forms, and through which the identities of protected writers such as Balzac, Boisrobert, and Du Ryer were, in turn, molded and validated, present some of the most evocative, compelling parts of the book. Above all, they effectively get to the essence of the phenomenon, which lies in the fact that patronage assumes its form right at the point where language and social practice interpenetrate. It is inasmuch as we understand this dynamic that we can appreciate how writers may have become autonomous by embracing rather than rejecting the aristocratic and royal protection of letters, and that we can then see, as Shoemaker forcefully argues, the importance of understanding patronage for understanding the modernization of authorship in the Old Regime.

Claire Goldstein. *Vaux and Versailles. The Appropriations, Erasures, and Accidents That Made Modern France*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. XII + 270 pp. + 24 illus. \$55.00. Review by DENIS D. GRÉLÉ, UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS.

At the time Louis XIV took power the expansionist wars, the growth of capitalism and the development of commercial ventures were fundamentally transforming France. It therefore became imperative for the sovereign to find new ways of uniting and governing a heterogeneous nation. In this light, Vaux and Versailles can be seen as aesthetic experiments in assembling a mosaic of groups of people into a strong, united nation that could recognize itself not only in a ruler, but also in a system of values and experiences. Claire Goldstein examines the intersection of a particular aesthetic with the awareness of belonging to French culture and ultimately the feeling of being a subject of the king of France through the descriptive literature of Versailles and Vaux in the mid-seventeenth century. However, Professor Goldstein differentiates Vaux, the most accomplished model of a

private residence, from Versailles, a less successful royal palace.

Professor Goldstein elucidates the transformations in the social order through the study of Fouquet's home and Louis XIV's palace. Her book explores the state's attempts to take control over the arts, and more specifically architecture, horticulture, pictorial arts, and literature in order to serve its own ends. She clearly explains how the royal power tried to supervise the rise of the bourgeoisie, in this case Fouquet, in order to take control of increasingly dominant forces. The author challenges the notion of simple evolution from a private residence that was Vaux to the establishment of a royal palace that was Versailles, focusing instead on the "relocation and redeployment aimed at erasure" (21).

Professor Goldstein revisits the theories and visions of Versailles from authors such as Jean-Marie Apostolidès and Louis Marin, to propose a new and refreshing view of royal culture and classicism not embodied in Louis XIV's legend but materially and literarily constructed in Versailles. Her major point is that Versailles is a masterpiece that tries unsuccessfully to obliterate its model at Vaux. She astutely concentrates on authors who wrote on both châteaux: Molière's play *Les Fâcheux* followed by Villedieu's *Le Favori* in an intermezzo. She also examines the history of tapestries that were created for Fouquet but were later rewoven in part to celebrate the king of France, in conjunction with a selection of texts from La Fontaine or, in her second intermezzo, two texts of Félibien, *Eléments* and *Saisons*. The literary promenade such as La Fontaine's *Songe de Vaux* and Scudéry's *Promenade de Versailles* are used to stress the comfort and innovation of Vaux, a place perceived as more humane and sometimes more civilized than the overly structured palace of Versailles with its formal, yet confusing landscape. This chapter concludes with a third intermezzo on later guidebooks that emphasized the cacophonous image of the royal gardens. The most innovative and interesting part of this book appears at the end when the author situates both châteaux within an economic perspective. While Vaux is perceived almost as the international headquarters of a large company—where freedom, economic liberalism, innovation, and trade are celebrated—Versailles, in its "cannibalization" of Vaux, constitutes the incarnation of state capitalism, supreme authority, and total political and economic

control. The last intermezzo focuses on the descriptions of orange trees, ironic metaphors of creation, but also products of an authority striving against the forces of nature.

The book clearly explains how the move from Vaux to Versailles had a profound impact not only on politics, but also on literary style, gardening, tapestry, and architecture. Professor Goldstein views the construction of Vaux, and later Versailles, as symbols of the emergence of a national style and “concomitant invention of new ways of speaking and seeing, even being” (5). One of the more interesting points that Professor Goldstein makes is how Vaux represented and promoted a certain way of life. For her, the entire estate of Fouquet symbolizes a modern and innovative France. Its aesthetics represents tolerance and peace. As it appears in the literature of the time, the residence promises a new, productive and liberal kingdom. On the other hand, Versailles is clearly presented here as the embodiment of the absolute state and the antithesis of the freedom exemplified in Vaux.

One could differ with Professor Goldstein’s view, particularly when she insists upon seeing Versailles as a total failure. More than a royal residence, Versailles was the seat of power and could be seen as a gigantic stage from which the king was able to govern and bring internal peace. Vaux was a private residence with aims that greatly differed from those of Versailles. Fouquet was trying to impress rich clients to compel them to lend money to the crown; Louis XIV wished to dazzle France in order to unite it and to shock Europe with symbols of his political power. Sometimes it seems that Professor Goldstein overstates her argument. A little more temperance in her vision of Versailles might have helped to accommodate some sensitivities and modulate the negative perceptions of a monument that remains the pride of many of the French. The reader understands very well that Versailles has its limitations and its flaws but she may go too far in calling it a failure. Sometimes, her vision opposes too starkly the economic and liberal genius of Nicolas Fouquet with the overbearing political and capitalistic power of Louis XIV. This being said, the clarity of her style and the rigor of her analysis largely compensate for her noticeable distaste for Versailles and her unwavering admiration for Vaux. Let it be noted that at no point does she fall

into the negative legacy of Félix Gaiffe or Michel de Grèce. Professor Goldstein's book is a must-have for the collections of both scholars and neophytes attracted by Versailles, and an excellent companion to Gérard Sabatier's monumental *Versailles ou la figure du roi* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999).

Nina Ekstein. *Corneille's Irony*. Charlottesville: Rookwood Press, 2007. 210 pp. \$49.95. Review by SUZANNE TOCZYSKI, SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY.

Positing herself as an “interpreter of [Pierre] Corneille's ironies” (8), Nina Ekstein offers in her recent monograph an extremely thorough and cogent study of one aspect of the dramatist's work that had previously received little to no systematic attention by scholars. From her brief overview of irony and its various components to a series of close readings of several plays from Corneille's repertoire, Ekstein offers a clearly written and in-depth analysis of the pervasive—yet never dominating—place of irony in Corneille's theater and critical writings. Moreover, the very nature of irony itself, containing as it does a fundamental ambiguity, results in a multifaceted and often open-ended reading that, rather than providing all the answers, provokes Ekstein's reader to ask still more questions—a very satisfying challenge for any *dix-septième*.

Ekstein has divided her study into two parts. In Part I, “Evident Irony,” while she acknowledges that “there exist numerous taxonomies of irony” (4), Ekstein nonetheless manages to lay out very clearly several basic elements necessary to any ironic reading of a piece of literature, including doubling, ambiguity, and an “edge,” as well as an intending subject or ironist, an interpreter, and signals of irony. From here, Ekstein goes on to examine irony that has a “manifest and substantial presence” (13) in Corneille's work, with explicit attention to dramatic irony (both stage-centered and authorial), verbal irony, and situational irony (including reversals of fortune, irony of fate, and oracles). In Part II, “Signals of Possible Irony,” Ekstein explores cases of “reduplication and excess where there should be similarity” (76) as well as “gaps where there should be continuity”