Book Reviews Comptes rendus

Langage et vérité. Études offertes à Jean-Claude Margolin par ses collègues, ses collaborateurs, ses élèves et ses amis, sous la direction de Jean Céard. Genève, Droz, 1993. Pp. 308.

In 1968, when Jean-Claude Margolin's essay on *Érasme et la vérité* was published for the first time, the author did probably not anticipate what a central role the questions he addressed would play in academic debates during the last quarter of the twentieth century. Erasmus was for ever aware of the endless potential of the written expression to capture, modify, enhance, exaggerate, colour or falsify the truth of the matter to be stated. Truthfulness to him was always challenging and sometimes dangerous, both for the author and the audience. This *festschrift* presented to Jean-Claude Margolin in the year of his seventieth birthday aptly reflects the multiple efforts made in recent decades to understand the complexities of the relationship between *res* and *repraesentatio* by students of philosophy, rhetoric, linguistics, literary criticism, history, art history and jurisprudence. It is true that not all of the 27 contributors, all but one of them writing in French, have chosen to address this central theme; if they had, the book would inadequately reflect the multitude of stimuli that are owed the scholar it wishes to honour. Like Margolin himself has done so often, some of his friends and disciples present topics in the fields of bibliography, biography and general Renaissance culture. The central theme, however, is given sufficient prominence for the book to be used as a resource in the study of that topic.

The most remarkable part of this volume surely is the introductory bibliography of Margolin's own publications, comprised of no less than 304 entries. It would be much longer still, if book reviews had been included. This stunning contribution to Renaissance studies, marked by unfailing lucidity and elegance of style, was achieved by a scholar who never shunned administrative positions and coordinating work in international academic organizations. Philosophy was the field he represented and taught for 30 years at France's *Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance* in Tours. The range of his philosophical studies, however, was by no means restricted to

a single period. The problems encountered in his work on the Renaissance led him logically to thinkers of subsequent ages, such as Leibniz and even his own teacher, Gaston Bachelard. Moreover, his intellectual curiosity rendered Margolin particularly qualified to study Renaissance scholars that were active in a variety of fields, such as Charles de Bovelles and Girolamo Cardano. He also wrote on travel in the Renaissance and the history of eyeglasses, to mention only a very few topics. First and last, however, Margolin has always been, and will continue to be, an Erasmus scholar. His profound understanding and appreciation of Erasmus may well be based on a certain natural affinity. It has found expression in monographs, topical essays as well as editions and translations of Erasmus' writings. His recent volume *Érasme, précepteur de l'Europe* is ample proof that his devotion to Erasmus and Erasmianism has not diminished and that we may expect many more insights in the years to come.

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Michael Bath. *Speaking Pictures: English Emblem Books and Renaissance Culture*. London & New York: Longman, 1994.

Elizabeth See Watson. *Achille Bocchi and the Emblem Book as Symbolic Form*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

These two vastly different books contribute greatly to sharpen our awareness of European emblem literature and its Renaissance and modern theories. They add nothing factually new to the canon of the emblem and of Renaissance culture, but they go far in developing our sensitivity to the implications of emblem history. Bath's *Speaking Pictures* attempts to awaken us to a semiotic and hence a contemporary appreciation of the English emblem by placing it in the cultural context of Renaissance signs. Consequently, his book throws a wide net out over a considerable number of authors, artistic traditions and publications in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These include the emblem, the impresa and the devise (which of these was which, and how, was a burning issue) and also, among others, the terminology of *topoi*, *energeia* and *loci communes* of traditional and Ramist logic, the enseignas of tournaments and of personal and royal state heraldry, Counter-Reformation Catholic and Reformed Protestant techniques of meditation, certain concepts of current philosophico-mystical systems like the Book of Creatures and Egyptian hieroglyphics, and translations of Italian books of emblem theory like Giovio's *Dialogo* of 1555. Watson's *Achille Bocchi* has the much narrower and more controlled function of introducing the man, his emblematic work and his theory of symbols to modern readers who have ignored his place in the stream of European and, by implication, of English literature. Watson's