Pierre-Victor Palma-Cayet. *L'Histoire Prodigieuse du Docteur Fauste*, publié avec introduction et notes par Yves Cazaux. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1982. Pp. 220. Fr.S. 40.

From the original edition of the *Faustbuch* [published (anonymously) by John Spies in Frankfurt, 1587] to modern times, the story of Dr. Faustus has played an important role in Western literature. This little book is rooted in historical reality, for there is some biographical basis for the story of Dr. Faustus' life, and it shows a specific ideological orientation, for it is generally considered to be a Lutheran pamphlet. It gave rise to one of the most influential of all literary myths. The story has fascinated writers because of its concern with such religious and philosophical problems as the desire for unlimited knowledge, the human relationship with the forces of good and evil, the human revolt against the limitations of life, the relationship between ethical principles and the pleasure principle.

The *Faustbuch* is the first known literary version of the legend, and the theme is itself most interesting. It is the Reformation's attempt to use the Faust story as an example of the horrible death that awaits skeptics and sinners. It is a didactic work directed against those who are tempted to *hubris*, who try to go beyond their human condition. Although it presents a few facts about Faust's life, it is largely fantastic. Faust is a scholar gone wrong, a proud intellectual who makes a pact with the devil and must pay for his earthly pleasures with his eternal damnation. He conjures up the devil Mephistophiles, who purchases his soul in return for twenty-four years of forbidden knowledge, devilish powers, and material rewards. Faust engages in discussion with the devil who reveals the truth about heaven and hell and gives a geocentric description of the cosmos. Various fantastic adventures of Faust are presented, including tricks reminiscent of Till Eulenspiegel, together with his remorseful lamentations, and his final horrifying death at the hands of the devil.

Spies' book was quickly translated into a number of languages including French. Yves Cazaux has given us a scholarly edition of the first French translation of the *Faustbuch* (1598). It was done by Pierre-Victor Cayet, "sieur de la Palme," often called Palma-Cayet, an interesting figure in his own right. Best known as historiographer of Henri IV, Palma-Cayet was converted to Protestantism in his youth and studied in Geneva and Germany. He entered the service of Jeanne d'Albret as tutor to her son, Henri de Havarre and served as a Protestant preacher in several French towns, but his return to the court in 1593-94 under the auspices of Catherine de Bourbon, sister to Henri, led to his reconversion to the Catholic faith in 1595. However, these dates are controversial. He was named historiographer to the king, appointed professor of oriental languages, and given a pension by the clergy. He was the object of violent attack by his former co-religionists and accused of debauchery and black magic. He was certainly interested in alchemy and fantastic stories, and this led him to translate the *Faustbuch*, which brought accusations of occultism.

M. Cazaux mentions a possible earlier edition of Palma-Cayet's translation which a German scholar, Carl Kiesewetter (*Faust in der Geschichte und Tradition*, 1893. Reprinted: Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung,

1963, p. 71) had posited, but Cazaux claims that this edition remains lost. This first edition would have been prepared while Cazaux was still a Protestant so that its Lutheran message could easily have been seconded by Cayet at that time. In 1598 the situation is more confused. The text follows the original *Faustbuch* fairly closely and so the Lutheran message remains. However, the Preface, addressed to the Count of Schomberg, must have been new, for it shows Palma-Cayet attacking the Protestant spirit or "libra-examen," exemplified by Faust, and ends with his pious hope that the German nation will return to the bosom of "nostre mere sainte Eglise Romaine, pour delaisser tant d'opinions monstreuses, qui y ont pullulé depuis cete miserable defection . . ." (p. 53). Thus Cayet attempts to turn the *Faustbuch* with its Lutheran message into an anti-Protestant work in which Faust himself represents the Protestant ideology, and in which it, like he, is condemned to eternal damnation. Small wonder that Cayet was so vehemently attacked!

This edition contains an introduction that includes remarks on the historical Faust and the creation of his legend, the original *Faustbuch* and its sources, the translator, Palma-Cayet and the edition he used, the facts of publication of his translation, the characteristics of the translation and its afterlife. Three Annexes follow, presenting documentary material concerning Faust (an anecdote by Jean Wier), Palma-Cayet (extracts of the *Journal* of Pierre de L'Estoile), and a listing of the editions of the Palma-Cayet's translation taken from the *Faust-Bibliographie*. The text itself contains a dedication by Palma-Cayet to the Count of Schomberg and the history of Jean Fauste divided into three parts, which are themselves divided into chapters, although the chapters are not numbered. Regrettably, there is no bibliography, glossary or listing of the chapter headings.

M. Cazaux fails to tell us what modifications he has made to the text so that we are at a loss as to whether to attribute the considerable number of typographical errors to the original French text or to the editor of this modern version. A comparison between the modern French translation by Joël Lefebvre (Lyon: Les Belles Lettres, 1970) and Palma-Cayet's version shows that Palma-Cayet did not know German very well and did not consider it necessary to be faithful to the text. Thus, there are many errors of sense, and Palma-Cayet's text is sometimes incomprehensible. M. Cazaux often uses Lefebvre's modern version to explain garbled or unintelligible passages in Cayet's text, but he should have done more of this, since incomprehensible passages remain. He also should have gone back to the original German text to verify the translation.

Despite the many errors, this version was for a long time the only French translation, and nineteen editions of it were published between 1598 and 1798 according to the *Faust-Bibliographie*. It is curious, then, that Cazaux does not find any influence of this translation on French literature, and, indeed, dismisses any possible influence of Palma-Cayet's translation. The question of such influence demands deeper study.

Such as it is, this text is an interesting stage in the development and propagation of the Faust legend throughout Europe. Because of its value as a Reformation and Renaissance document, and because of its rarity (the text has not been reprinted in its entirety since 1712), we must thank M. Cazaux for his contribution to Faust studies. Even the lacunae in M. Cazaux's book rouse the curiosity of the reader and lead one to search for further enlightenment.

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