Book Reviews

Peter H. Ramsey, ed. *The Price Revolution in Sixteenth-Century England*, "Debates in Economic History," General Editor, Peter Mathias. London: Methuen, 1971. Pp. xii, 182.

Peter Ramsey has made a judicious selection of the articles by Hammarström, Phelps Brown and Hopkins, Brenner, Gould, Challis, and Hamilton around which a good portion of the debate about Tudor economic and social change has revolved. The main arguments are here available in their original form to give the graduate student and the established scholar perspective on the issues. The pitfalls to easy generalization about devaluation and inflation, size of money supply, price levels (especially the distinction between whole-sale vs. retail prices), and the use of economic equations when dealing with the sixteenth century are solidly presented in this collection. Because Earl J. Hamilton's work is the target of several contributors, a representative article by the great student of Andalusian price movements is welcome. It helps the student understand why he has so long exercised persuasive authority. The contribution of Challis provides a succinct counterstatement to J.D. Gould's *The Great Debasement* (Oxford, 1971), the only work which goes beyond the scope of these selections. One possible gap in Ramsey's presentation is a discussion of the coinage, similar to P. Grierson, "The Monetary Pattern of Sixteenth-Century Coinage," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. XXI (1971), 25-44. This could have displaced some of the reiterated criticisms of Irving Fisher's equation $MV=PT$.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the volume is the second part of Ramsey's admirable introduction. With the hardheaded economic logic which informs his whole discussion, he accepts the fact that rising population, not increased money supply, caused the hardships associated with sixteenth-century English inflation—a conclusion which completely undermines the title of the book. The editor suggests how acceptance of population pressure as the economic variable of prime interest would lead to different assessments of other developments during the period than those which resulted from pre-occupation with changes in the money supply. Ramsey's call for a price index for different classes, not just building labourers, should also be fruitful of greater understanding of the processes of economic change in the sixteenth century.

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Rémy Belleau. *Les Amours et nouveaux échanges des pierres précieuses*. Ed. Maurice F. Verdier. Textes Littéraires Français, 197. Geneva: Droz, 1973. Pp. xlvii, 300.

With the current fascination being exerted by the occult, how timely is the publication of this new edition of Rémy Belleau's *Les Amours et nouveaux échanges des pierres précieuses*. This volume of poetry belongs within the *genre* of sixteenth-century scientific poetry. Belleau and the other members of the Pléiade believed that the poet was a prophet and seer to whom a secret Knowledge of the universe was imparted. Most of Belleau's 31 poems describe the nature, characteristics and magical properties of certain precious stones, while a small number (I, IV, V, VII, VIII, IX, XIV, XXII, XXIII, XXVI) conform more

strictly to the title and attribute the origin of the stone to a metamorphic occurrence. Maurice Verdier describes in one section of his introduction both the lapidary tradition which goes back to Theophrastes and Pliny and the specific sources of Rémy Belleau—Pliny, Marbodius and François La Rue. Attention should be drawn to the editor's somewhat modest statement about his important discovery of François La Rue's *De Gemmis* as a source of ten of Belleau's poems.

The introduction to this edition is a storehouse of information on the sources, composition, versification and structure of this poetic lapidary. In a section entitled "Art, Fiction et Réalité" M. Verdier ventures into an intriguing discussion of Belleau's philosophical approach to the world and of the function of mythology in his poetry. One essential aspect of these poems has, however, been neglected in the introductory study and that is Belleau's use of rhetoric. These poems in praise of precious stones obviously should be examined within the framework of epideictic or demonstrative rhetoric. The structure of each poem is determined by the use of the traditional rhetorical commonplaces. According to classical rhetoricians in an epideictic poem one should praise the origin, the physical attributes, the virtues and the utility of the object. In the poem entitled "Le Diamant," for example, Belleau alludes to its origin in the mines of India and Egypt and praises its physical characteristics, its virtues ("constante et forte," 1.157), and its marvellous power over demons, witches, nightmares, madmen and poison. In other words, Belleau in his use of commonplaces follows the precepts of rhetoric which were widely accepted in the sixteenth century. Not only should the use of commonplaces (*inventio*) be thoroughly investigated in these poems, but it would also be interesting to see whether the organization (*dispositio*) and style (*elocutio*) likewise correspond to the patterns of demonstrative rhetoric.

The text of M. Verdier's edition is extremely accurate and has only a few misprints (such as *Rondard* for *Ronsard* on p. xxix); the notes accompanying the poems are copious. Particularly valuable as a contribution to our knowledge of the French language of the sixteenth century is the lexicon of 750 terms at the end of the volume (pp. 267-98).

Until quite recently Rémy Belleau has been recognized chiefly for his *Bergerie*; his *Pierres précieuses* have been minimized, if not overlooked. In 1936 A.M. Schmidt remarked in *La Poésie scientifique en France au XVI^e siècle*: "Peut-on découvrir les motifs qui entraînerent ainsi Belleau à varier fâcheusement sa manière et à parler des pierres précieuses?" (p. 216). Fortunately literary tastes change and it seems that again, as in the sixteenth century, the modern reader is intrigued by astrology, witchcraft, and the magical properties of precious stones. Maurice Verdier's new critical edition of *Les Amours et nouveaux échanges des pierres précieuses* has been published at a propitious moment.

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A.S.P. Woodhouse. *The Heavenly Muse: A Preface to Milton*. Edited by Hugh MacCallum. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972. Pp. xii, 373. \$20.

One of the effects of reading *The Heavenly Muse* is to be reminded of the legendary student who felt ill-used by Shakespeare and Pope because they were so dependent on familiar thoughts and trite phrases. For some decades, Miltonic studies have profited most