
With this book Monsieur Telle has again made a significant contribution to the study of French humanism. Etienne Dolet's *De Imitatione Ciceronianus*, one of those known but all too frequently neglected humanist treatises, has not up to this point received the attention it merits. As analysed here it emerges as a contemporary document important not only for a greater understanding of Dolet himself, but also for the light it sheds on certain aspects of Erasmus, at least on how he was perceived by some contemporaries, and on the Ciceronian movement in general. Containing as it does Dolet's *De Imitatione Ciceronianus* in a facsimile reproduction of the original 1535 edition, a lengthy introduction, ample explanatory notes and appendices, and an exhaustive bibliography, the book is extremely useful as an aid to further research. From the standpoint of sheer information it is even at times overwhelming but none the less welcome for that. The spiritual climate of Toulouse around 1530, humanist alliances and rivalries, the furor and agitation following the publication of Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*, all are documented in great detail, albeit often in the cramped print of the footnotes. As a source of information the book is invaluable.

The lengthy introduction raises several interesting questions about the nature and scope of the debate rekindled by Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*. It is argued that far from being confined to literary questions the debate had clear philosophic and religious overtones. In a period in which questions of style and meaning frequently became intertwined, Erasmus is seen as often attracting charges of religious heresy on the grounds of his linguistic heterodoxy. He of course in his *Ciceronianus* retaliates against the disciples of Bembo or Sadolet, charging them with hiding a neo-paganism under a mantle of Ciceronianism. There is certainly much work to be done in this area before all the various ramifications of Ciceronianism can be understood. Dolet's treatise does, however, elucidate certain of its aspects and lends credence to those who would elaborate on the religious significance of the movement, the Ciceronians being seen to some extent as the upholders of religious orthodoxy and stylists in the manner of Erasmus as inadvertently subverting the Christian ideal. As did R. C. Christie—in his *Etienne Dolet, The Martyr of the Renaissance, 1508-1546*, London, 1899—Telle attributes some of the motivation for Dolet's treatise to such factors as the latter's youth, his impetuosity, a desire for renown, a wish to uphold Longueil's name, but also, and more significantly one feels, to a reaction against Erasmus' religious as well as stylistic liberality. Dolet, portrayed by Telle as an idealist in the Platonic sense, criticizes Erasmus the stylist for having failed to espouse the ideal of Ciceronianism and faults Erasmus the philosopher again for having failed to rise to an ideal, for having "institué une sorte d'école de découragement rationnel et logique et d'en avoir fait une philosophie" (p. 95). These failings are seen as originating in Erasmus' character and as exemplified in his style. It is this last point which is intriguing and Telle signals the need for an extensive, serious study of Erasmus' style and language.

In his treatise Dolet emerges as a man who consciously tries to separate for himself religious and ethical considerations from those of style. One is surprised to find in the third section of the *De Imitatione* that Dolet, when he talks of the qualities of an ideal orator, is careful to attribute them to professional competence and to set aside considerations of a moral nature. As Monsieur Telle points out, this separation of "le domaine des valeurs morales intrinsèques des qualités extrinsèques" (p. 56) is unexpected at this early
date. Dolet also has little patience with Erasmus’ brand of humanism: how presumptuous and foolish it is, he writes in section one of his treatise, to think that man’s exhortations can help us understand the word of God. Dolet’s humanism is seen not as anti-Christian but as exterior to the religious preoccupations of a Christian — “c’est déjà un scientisme philosophie: une philosophie sans théologie” (p. 63) — and herein is seen the key to his downfall.

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The year 1974 marked the five hundredth anniversary of the birth of Ludovico Ariosto, a date which inspired a number of publications, among them a new prose translation of the Orlando Furioso. In his note on the Orlando Furioso in English, Guido Waldman cites earlier translations of the poem and contends that no existing version is entirely satisfactory.

Waldman points out that twelve versions of the poem had appeared in France before Sir John Harington’s in 1591 but that this delay was not a serious one for the educated Englishman, who included a knowledge of Italian among his accomplishments. Harington’s version was republished in 1607, and again in 1634 with numerous changes, attesting to the popularity of Ariosto and of the translation in England. For sake of completeness, however, Waldman points out that twelve versions of the poem had appeared in France before Sir John Harington’s in 1591 but that this delay was not a serious one for the educated Englishman, who included a knowledge of Italian among his accomplishments. Harington’s version was republished in 1607, and again in 1634 with numerous changes, attesting to the popularity of Ariosto and of the translation in England. For sake of completeness, however, Waldman might perhaps have added in his short survey that in 1963 Rodolf Gottfried brought out for the Indiana University Press selections of the Harington translation, designed to serve as background reading for Spenser’s The Faerie Queene. For the same reason, Waldman might also have noted that in 1972 Robert McNulty published for the Oxford University Press a critical edition of the first complete English version of Ariosto’s epic, based on a comparison of two incomplete manuscripts in Harington’s own hand and the first three editions of Harington’s translation.

Despite his popularity, Harington was severely censured by William Stuart Rose, a later translator, who had been urged by Sir Walter Scott, an admirer of Ariosto’s, who read Italian, to produce his own version of the Orlando Furioso. Waldman then goes on to say that “Rose dismisses Harington’s version as inaccurate, mercilessly condensed, pedestrian where the original was poetic, dreary where the original was witty.” In partial defense of Harington, it should be remembered that he was simply following contemporary practice concerning translations, contracting or expanding the original at will or adding moral truisms of his own to please the reader. Not only does Waldman condemn the eighteenth-century translations by J. Hoole, the Huggins-Croker partnership and H. Bent but he also includes Rose’s version: “Where Harington presented the English reader with a pedestrian Orlando, Rose’s, if more accurate, was merely whimsical.”

According to Waldman, Ariosto’s octaves are untranslatable into English and those of Harington, Bent, and Rose do no justice to Ariosto, conveying neither the magic nor the delicate nuances of the original. This is Waldman’s apology for attempting a translation of Ariosto’s poetry into prose. Waldman’s is not the first English prose version as he appears to assume. Allan H. Gilbert’s prose translation has been available in English since 1954 when it was published in New York by S. F. Vanni. As for Waldman’s translation