
Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme



Belle, Marie-Alice, and Line Cottegnies, eds. *Robert Garnier in Elizabethan England: Mary Sidney Herbert's Antonius and Thomas Kyd's Cornelia*

Luke Arnason

Volume 41, Number 4, Fall 2018

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1061929ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1061929ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Arnason, L. (2018). Review of [Belle, Marie-Alice, and Line Cottegnies, eds. *Robert Garnier in Elizabethan England: Mary Sidney Herbert's Antonius and Thomas Kyd's Cornelia*]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 41(4), 206–208. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1061929ar>

All Rights Reserved © Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies / Société canadienne d'études de la Renaissance, Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society, Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium and Victoria University Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2019

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

Belle, Marie-Alice, and Line Cottegnies, eds.

Robert Garnier in Elizabethan England: Mary Sidney Herbert's Antonius and Thomas Kyd's Cornelia.

MHRA Tudor and Stuart Translations 16. London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2017. Pp. ix, 324. ISBN 978-1-78188-632-8 (hardcover) £35.

Like other instalments in the series, this volume containing critical editions of Mary Sidney Herbert's *Antonius* and Thomas Kyd's *Cornelia*—both adapted from tragedies by the French playwright Robert Garnier—plays the double role of teaching tool and critical edition for scholarly use.

As a work of scholarship, the extensive introduction arguably overshadows the plays themselves. This introduction begins by laying out the editorial history of the plays and stating the principles of this new edition, which are threefold. The first aim is to take into account the latest French- and English-language scholarship. The second is to systematically check the English text against its French counterpart, not to evaluate its faithfulness to the source but rather to “highlight the various ways in which each translator appropriated Garnier’s Neoclassical aesthetics, engaged with his moral and political interpretation of Roman history, reshaped his characters and gave them a distinctive, English voice” (9). The third aim is to provide up-to-date identification of Garnier’s classical sources, which are wider than is suggested by earlier editions. Having laid down the principles of their edition, the editors engage in a critical overview of the works and their context, in four parts.

Part 1 gives a brief account of Garnier’s life and his rise to prominence as a playwright before transitioning into a study of his work, focusing on the influence of Seneca and the appeal of Stoic philosophy in the context of the French wars of religion, to which Garnier’s plays are a reaction. Garnier’s interest in Seneca and in the Roman civil war is identified as the main connection between his work and the Elizabethan theatre world, leading to a closing discussion of the importance of the Senecan model for Elizabethan dramatists and their fear of civil war.

This discussion leads naturally into the second part, on Mary Sidney Herbert’s *Antonius*. After an overview of Sidney Herbert’s literary activity, the editors revisit the play’s status as “closet drama.” Considering the different contexts in which the play might have been read (literary circles, at court, etc.),

they invite the reader to take a broad view of what constitutes a performance. They then challenge the common claim that *Antonius* fits into a project of (overt) reform of the stage, drawing attention to the moral ambiguity of the representation of Cleopatra. This character study engages in a comparison of Garnier's and Sydney Herbert's poetic styles, underlining the many instances in which Sydney Herbert moderates the more visceral and violent language of Garnier. This in turn leads to a discussion of her approach to translation and her departures from Garnier's text, casting her as less literal-minded than is typically claimed. A study of the play's political dimension closes this section.

The third part, on Kyd's *Cornelia*, is similar in its approach. Opening with the publication history of the play, it then studies Kyd's approach to translation in a section entitled—curiously, perhaps—“Translation as Cultural Appropriation.” Here, the editors note that although Kyd's translations of Garnier are generally viewed as very faithful (insofar as there are very few omissions or direct modifications of plot), there are a number of changes that seem designed to make the play more appealing and accessible to an English audience, including the Christianization of certain images and ideas, and the incorporation of English cultural references into the *sententiae*. The next sections examine the role that the character of Cornelia plays in inspiring pathos and expressing the author's moral philosophy. This is followed by a study of the metrical and linguistic innovations that abound in Kyd's theatre, and *Cornelia* in particular, drawing attention to the text's many neologisms, as well as the wide variety of metrical structures used in the choruses. The presentation of the play concludes, like that of *Antonius*, with a study of its political and religious contexts.

The concluding section of the introduction surveys the print history and reception of *Antonius* and *Cornelia*, then briefly considers their influence on later drama, particularly on Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

The plays themselves are presented with modern spelling and an unobtrusive editorial style. There are occasional indications relative to versification, but commentary on vocabulary is otherwise relegated to the glossary and list of neologisms in the appendices. The footnotes are numerous but concise and quite indispensable: mostly they elucidate the frequent mythological and historical references, but sometimes they paraphrase difficult or ambiguous passages. A particular strength of this edition is that the notes are

independent for each play, even though many of the references are repeated. Thus, a reader of *Cornelia* is not referred back to *Antonius* in order to check a mythological reference used in both plays.

Altogether, this volume is an excellent critical edition: solidly researched, sensibly organized, and practical to use. It contains a comprehensive bibliography of the most up-to-date research in both French and English and draws upon this foundation abundantly in its critical commentary. It thereby provides readers with all the background necessary to understand and appreciate the plays, highlights the wide array of questions and studies they have already inspired, and provides an excellent starting point for anyone wishing to explore them in greater depth.

LUKE ARNASON

York University

Bertoglio, Chiara.

Reforming Music. Music in the Religious Reformations of the Sixteenth Century.

Berlin, Boston : De Gruyter, 2017. xxiii, 836 p. ISBN 978-3-11-051805-4 (relié) 103,99 US\$.

C'est une véritable somme sur la musique des réformes du XVI^e siècle que nous offre Chiara Bertoglio, qui s'est donné la tâche de remédier à l'absence d'une étude englobante sur ce thème. L'ouvrage qui compte un peu plus de 800 pages est organisé en douze très denses chapitres, répartis en trois démarches différentes donnant lieu à trois grandes sections implicites.

La première de ces sections, qui compte trois chapitres, consiste en trois études préliminaires nécessaires à ce qui va suivre. Le premier chapitre offre donc un survol du contexte historique. L'auteur y évoque des questions théologiques, culturelles, musicales, socio-politiques et ecclésiastiques, ce qui inclut des courtes descriptions de la vie scientifique, philosophique, littéraire et artistiques de la période. Le deuxième chapitre dans son ensemble examine les différentes façons de voir la musique — dans le contexte du christianisme — du point de vue humaniste et spirituel présentes au XVI^e siècle, non pas en prenant les diverses confessions chrétiennes comme repère, mais en distinguant les