



## Rouget, François. Ronsard et la fabrique des Poèmes

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towards whom the original study was clearly aimed, but for advanced students alike.

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**Rouget, François.**

***Ronsard et la fabrique des Poèmes.***

Cahiers d'Humanisme et Renaissance 166. Geneva: Droz, 2020. Pp. 362. ISBN 978-2-600-06059-2 (paperback) 45 CHF.

This volume is one of a series of monographs that François Rouget has written on Pierre de Ronsard—and joins his many important works on the study and editing of the French poet. Rouget's *Ronsard et la fabrique des Poèmes* appears in a distinguished series of Librairie Droz, known for its publication of scholarly and critical editions and texts. Rouget adds significantly to the substantial books on Ronsard by Benedikte Andersson, Elizabeth Armstrong, Pierre Champion, Fernand Desonay, Danièle Duport, Doranne Fenoaltea, Philip Ford, André Gendre, Alex Gordon, Paul Laumonier, Bruce Leslie, Daniel Ménager, Pierre de Nolhac, Christine Pigné, Olivier Pot, Anne-Pascale Pouey-Mounou, Albert Py, Malcolm Quainton, Marcel Raymond, Margaret de Schweinitz, Isidore Silver, Michel Simonin, Dudley Wilson, and others, all of whom and more Rouget considers while making his own distinct contribution. Rouget is in good company in the past century of Ronsard scholars, and builds on this scholarship effectively. This recent book is a study worthy of the close attention of scholars—not simply of Ronsard but of Renaissance poetry, French poetry, comparative literature, Renaissance studies, humanism, culture, and the history of the book.

Rouget opens his book by stating that the reputation of this poetry was not always good: “Les *Poèmes*, que Pierre de Ronsard rassemble dans le tome III de la première [édition] collective de ses *Œuvres* (1560), n’ont pas toujours eu bonne presse” (9). According to Rouget, some of the first readers had been dazzled, blinded, stunned (“éblouis”) by, among other things, the abundance or profusion (“foisonnement”) of these poems, their thematic diversity, and an

unceasingly renewed prosody (10). For Rouget, Ronsard pushed this variety to the extreme, which was an obstacle to its acknowledgement (“reconnaissance”) (10). Ronsard brings order to this variety to resolve the paradox of an aesthetic of perfect movement (“la mouvance parfaite”), the *concordia discors* or *discordia concors* as Quainton and Pouey-Mounou note (12). Ronsard’s poetics is a plenitude of contraries, and here he creates a mosaic of forms and subjects in a new space that envisions an original world (12–13). Through rhetoric and enunciation, as Rouget argues, Ronsard modifies the ethos, the poet who redraws the contours of his persona (13). Rouget uses a felicitous phrase when speaking about “l’image d’un poète en rupture,” of a Ronsard in rupture. In Rouget’s view (to translate), the continual displacements that the *Poèmes* undergo are characteristics of the conception that Ronsard has of poetry: the experience of an aesthetic order that governs the disorder of the world (13–14).

The book contains many insights into this side of Ronsard’s poetics. For instance, Rouget avers that Ronsard—and here I translate or paraphrase, as elsewhere—conceives in his *Poèmes*, a vast natural space staged on three levels, three degrees of the division of the landscape that recover the high, middle, and low Virgilian styles (63). Ronsard sometimes mixes the three within a single poem and creates, paradoxically, an illusion of a creation in movement (“d’une création en mouvement”) (63). Rouget observes the creativity of Ronsard, who resorts to a double diffusion of poems in separate collections and within the *Œuvres* in order to measure the distance between the two (81). Historians who studied the career of Ronsard have long noted that he sought to liberate himself from the corset of the odes and of the sonnets (83). For Rouget, *Bocage* and *Meslanges* explore lyricism, hybridization, and generic tension and are part of an act of the birth of the poems. Moreover, Rouget discusses fortune, virtue, and the movement from the grave tone marking the death of Jean Brinon in *Meslanges* to a poet looking for the fold or response (“repli”) of nature, the place of a soothing (“apaisante”) solitude, the writing of the two collections balancing between joy and sadness (“tristesse”) without falling suddenly from one to the other (129, 131). In 1561, amid internal conflict in France and external pressures, Ronsard chose withdrawal (177). Using new means, Rouget claims, Ronsard strove to attain the natural—becoming the centre of a poetry that converges nature and humanity, heaven and earth, wildness (“sauvage”) and culture, his temperament a renewed inspiration (179). Rouget often uses metaphors to describe Ronsard at work as a poet: how he shapes collections

and his *Works*, for instance, saying that the renovation of the edifice of *Œuvres* presents a new physiognomy, where we observe the work of the mason anxious to achieve the right balance and the harmonious relation of structures (225). In 1569, Ronsard's hybrid writing ("l'écriture hybride") of poems feeds on the imagery that the *concordia discors* induces (227). In this interpretation, Rouget continues with his metaphorical and imagistic language, speaking of Ronsard: "Dans le miroitement de leurs images et la dilatation de leurs formes rythmiques, les *Poèmes* offrent une belle méditation sur le passage du temps, des êtres et des choses" (302). This imagery is of mirroring, shimmering, reflecting: a meditation in sight and sound on time, beings, and things. Rouget's book begins and ends with images, returning to the aesthetics of variety and to the poetics of the collection (328).

Although critical editions and articles focus on *Poèmes*, Rouget's volume stresses the whole of *Poèmes* as the place of begetting, of poetic creation, where Ronsard reaches for plenitude through analogies and opposites. Rouget examines separate collections from the *Bocage* of the *Odes* to the *Sixiesme et Septiesme livres des Poèmes* (1569), then explores their evolution within the collective editions. Rouget analyzes this new space of theme and poetic forms, an orchestration of difference. Ronsard continually reorganized the *Poèmes*, the poetics of his poetry, ordering aesthetically a disorderly world. Ronsard has a staying power for poets and those given to poetry, and Rouget's book helps us to understand Ronsard and to read him again and again.

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**Sowerby, Tracey A., and Joanna Craigwood, eds.**

***Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World.***

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. xv, 283 + 9 ill. ISBN 978-0-19-883569-1 (hardcover) \$90.

Tracey A. Sowerby and Joanna Craigwood have brought together an accomplished and beautifully produced interdisciplinary collection that examines early modern literary-diplomatic relations. The contributions involve analysis