

Medean figure and seventeenth-century plays. The latter are shaping “meditation[s] on the notion of catastrophe,” and Cherbuliez shows that “our rehearsal of violence in tragedy is not just our interpretation of the past, but our relationship to the future” (176).

The Medean observation of our relationship with violence leads to consideration of literature beyond territoriality in the epilogue, “The Cosmopolitics of Literature.” The premodern Medean principle of violence “both ushers in the law as it founds the nation-state and yet indicates what can never be assimilated.” Reminding us of the basic humanism of the often-derided cosmopolitans, Cherbuliez recalls that they are “persons whose allegiance is to the worldwide community of human beings” (200). She questions the nature of this community and of the allegiance. For her, the answer lies with Medea, the “true cosmopolitan.” She explains that “what makes her a cosmopolitan is precisely what makes her unassimilable in Greece: her conviction that the stuff of this world can do things others think it cannot: that is, her foreign knowledge, which we might call supernatural” (200). Cherbuliez’s book is an enthralling discussion of violence and an essential read for our times. Both Medea and her book “help us face the structures of violence ungirdling our lives” (206).

Nathalie Rivère de Carles, *Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès*
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Le Labérynthe. Mireille Huchon.

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The practice of imitation that governs most of Renaissance production is the background of *Le Labérynthe*. Mireille Huchon focuses on Louise Labé’s entrance into literature and into *l’écriture féminine* as it connected to the network of poets that orbited around her 1555 collection *Œuvres de Louise Labé Lyonnaise*, which included the “Escriz de divers Poëtes, à la louenge de Louïze Labé Lionnoize.” Huchon reconstructs the circle of poets active at the time of Labé’s publication. By closely reading the twenty-five poems of “Escriz de divers Poëtes,” and by comparing them to works by the same or by different writers, Huchon seeks to establish their authorship and interconnections. The book’s first chapter discusses at length the genesis of the different versions of Labé’s name used in her publications and portrayals, including Loyse Labé, Louïze Labé, and Loise Labbé. Therefore, establishing Labé’s identity, questioning her authorship, and distinguishing Labé as the poet and as the historical figure become *Le Labérynthe*’s main preoccupation. Poetry, Huchon argues, is fiction; the object of desire is also fluid, and so at times it becomes unclear why it matters to the author’s argument if these poems are about same-sex or opposite-sex desire.

The book's eight chapters show these complexities, in addition to those that have plagued *l'écriture féminine* since its first appearance. In the first chapters, Huchon closely follows the texts' history and their meaning based on imitation, emulation, and experimentation. The author also explores Jean de Tournes's role, the Lyon printer who played a central role in this network. His main pursuit, Huchon states, was to edit and publish new and sensational material, with Labé's *Œuvres* acting as the ultimate example of this pursuit. The chapters that follow delve more closely into the poems that form the "Escriz de divers Poëtes" and into their creators, including Magny, Du Moulin, Scève, Fontaine, Tyard, Baïf, and Des Autels. Here, Huchon's analysis painstakingly constructs parallels with their other work in order to offer hypotheses on how the collection came together and how it relates to Labé's poems. Most noteworthy, perhaps, are the chapters that discuss gaiety, *folâtries*, and sexual ambiguities, including gender change and the appropriation of the female voice. Huchon argues that some of these texts are inspired by the male muse and challenge the readers to question gender- and sex-based assumptions.

Throughout these pages, Antoine Du Verdier's *La Bibliothèque* is deployed to provide biographical information about the writers, including Labé. The last chapter, which opens with a discussion on Labé's famous epistle to Clémence de Bourges, "A. M. C. D. L.," also draws comparisons with other contemporary work while continuing to flirt with the same gender ambiguities that rule the "Escriz de divers Poëtes." *Le Labérynthé* concludes with the reproduction of the 1555 edition facsimile of "Escriz de divers Poëtes."

Throughout her close reading, however, Huchon avoids engaging with modern scholarship and seldom considers recent studies that would significantly enrich her arguments and analyses. Furthermore, it would have been fruitful to engage with gender and queer studies in order to explore the ramifications of the female ventriloquized voice in more depth. In fact, theoretical frameworks are, for the most part, absent. If this maze of poetry, as Huchon convincingly argues, is governed by imitation, then expanding the language and analysis to include other theoretical frameworks would have allowed the author to engage in a productive dialogue with other scholars. Moreover, when discussing individual poets, the author does not mention any studies that have been published in recent years, and that have significantly contributed to our understanding of these poets' work and cultural circumstances. Indeed, while Huchon refers to her own 2006 book *Louise Labé, une créature de papier*, of which the present monograph is a continuation, if not its second part, thereby mirroring Labé's *Œuvres* and the "Escriz," rarely does she refer to secondary sources. Even more rarely does she include divergent points of view, which would have undoubtedly complemented some of these assertions.

Le Labérynthé's exploration of Labé's network of poets broadens our knowledge of these texts and their role within Lyon's cultural and artistic sphere. Many of the comparisons and arguments deepen our understanding of how Labé and her poets crafted a

web whose persuasive intertextuality offers new and exciting scholarly pursuits and lines of inquiry.

Gabriella Scarlatta, *University of Michigan-Dearborn*
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Les Configurations de l'imaginaire pascalien. Elena Ciocoiu.

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The starting point and organizing principle of this stimulating study on Blaise Pascal are to use reading strategies that have tended to be applied to literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries but not to writing of the seventeenth century. The “imaginary” of Elena Ciocoiu’s title does not include any consideration of Lacan’s Imaginary Order but rather is drawn from the musings of a number of French philosophers and literary critics, notably Gaston Bachelard, Jean Burgos, Gilbert Durand, Jean-Pierre Richard, Jean-Jacques Wunenburger, and the Pascal scholar Philippe Sellier. Eschewing discussion of Pascal’s famous discourse on imagination, Ciocoiu focuses instead on what she terms “the product of the imagination” (21), viewing “l’imaginaire pascalien” (a term that, alongside “rêverie,” is used throughout the book) as a dynamic system of images that not only have a descriptive role but also a heuristic one in both the *Pensées* and other texts by Pascal.

Given Ciocoiu’s stated intention in the introduction to offer a new reading of Pascal, certain elements are not immediately promising. For a start, the structure of the book may strike some readers as surprisingly traditional, reflecting the “Wretchedness of man without God / Happiness of man with God” diptych that the nineteenth-century editor Léon Brunschvicg imposed upon his edition of the *Pensées*. She divides her work into three main sections: part 1 devoted to “L’Homme devant le monde” (Man facing the world), part 2 to “L’Homme devant soi-même” (“Man facing himself”), and part 3 to “L’Homme devant Dieu” (“Man facing God”). Also, the conclusion revisits questions of categorization that have haunted analysis of seventeenth-century French literature and art for perhaps too long, leading to the assertion that “l’imaginaire pascalien porte la marque d’une tension dialectique entre le classique et le baroque” (“Pascal’s imaginary bears the mark of a dialectical tension between classical and Baroque,” 269). Moreover, although she makes wide use of secondary literature, no book or article on Pascal that she cites is more modern than 2008, which can be explained by the fact that the book seems to have started life as a thesis submitted in 2008, but with over a decade elapsing between the appearances of thesis and book, an updated bibliography at least would have been desirable.

However, where Ciocoiu truly excels is in the perceptive and illuminating close readings that she gives of passages, both familiar and more obscure, from Pascal’s oeuvre.