

Pierre Jacquelot, L'Art de vivre longuement sous le nom de Médée. Édition critique par Magdalena Koźluk, Paris (Classiques Garnier) 2021, 550 p. (Bibliothèque du XVII^e siècle, 42), ISBN 978-2-406-11205-1, EUR 49,00.

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This is something of a departure for the series »Classiques Garnier«, otherwise devoted to the production of critical annotated editions of (mostly) literary works from the early modern period onwards. As its editor notes early on, Pierre Jacquelot's early 17th-century regimen book may be read as a literary work, though it was first and foremost a work of medicine, with an author who qualified as a doctor at the renowned medical university of Montpellier. The »Médée« is, however, well qualified to feature in a series of such renown, given its author's evocative yet accessible style and his recourse to a broad range of classical and Scriptural referents. Its inclusion also reflects growing appreciation for early modern scientific and medical endeavour as cultural enterprises as sophisticated and diverse as literature and philosophy.

The transcription of the original text, accompanied by its paratexts (dedicatory material, censors' reports, publishing permission) is prefaced by an extensive introduction, divided into several sections, and followed by several lengthy appendices, all presumably written by the editor, Magdalena Koźluk (though not clearly attributed to her). This ancillary material encompasses a biographical study of Pierre Jacquelot, reflections on his sources, and an analysis of his literary strategies *qua* author, as well as an exhaustive list of his citations with their sources, divided into Scripture, classical and modern poetry, and a table of the historical or literary figures named in the text. Finally, there is a glossary of early modern terms used by Jacquelot that might be obscure to modern readers. The most valuable parts of this introduction are the biography – which is based on archival research and identifies Jacquelot with some reliability for the first time – and the long discussion of how the genre of regimen books developed into the fairly conventional format used by Jacquelot, centring advice on the conduct of everyday life upon the management of the six non-naturals: air, food and drink, exercise and rest, sleeping and waking, secretions and excretions, and the passions. Koźluk describes a tradition in which medieval and Islamic authors like Hunain ibi Ishāq or the School of Salerno added new emphases to classical writings on regimen, the preventive part of medicine also known as dietetics or hygiene, both of which terms have taken on rather different meanings in modern times. The close comparison with the structure and content of analogous works from different periods is a useful one, showing how regimen books came to be



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aimed at affluent lay readerships interested in the extension of lifespan and the avoidance of disease in the early modern period.

There are two ways to engage with Jacquelot's text: firstly through his literary allusions and colourful imagery; secondly by placing him within the medical world of his time. Perhaps the most interesting insights come from putting these two approaches together, and reflecting on why a university-trained physician would write a book like this, offering health advice in the vernacular to lay readers. It is here that Koźluk's approach – otherwise to be commended for the meticulous care taken to investigate the subtleties of expression and the most obscure of textual allusions – leaves somewhat to be desired. Sometimes her analysis is finely honed: explaining why Medea, today associated with infanticide and poison, might have appeared a valuable figurehead for Jacquelot's enterprise, Koźluk rightly notes that early 17th-century authors emphasised Medea's medical skill and learning over her deadliness. For the general reader, her careful identification of Jacquelot's references will be invaluable. Whereas early 17th-century readers could be relied upon to grasp the significance of allusions to the Book of Genesis, the groves of Academe, Noah's Ark or the warrior Ajax, many readers today may not be so fortunate. This didactic role is very much in keeping with the goals of the series as a whole, as indeed it was the purpose of Jacquelot's book in 1632 to instruct his readership, by means of familiar images from emblem books, the Bible and the classics, on the best ways of staying healthy and the best reasons for doing so.

Yet from the standpoint of scholars in cultural or medical history, this coupling of literary criticism and social history, of references to Pliny the Elder with parish registers, leaves important questions unanswered. If Koźluk succeeds in placing Jacquelot in his longer intellectual tradition, she also leaves him curiously unanchored in the medical world of his own time. There are two ways in which this leads to problems. Firstly, where Jacquelot was concerned to classify medicine among the arts, Koźluk is equally concerned to correct this, seeking in his writing some evidence of the inductive reasoning she considers »suitable for the empirical sciences« (p. 156). Yet this is to misrepresent her subject's own claims, to the detriment of the volume as a whole. The conviction that »science« should be treated as distinct from the arts similarly leads Koźluk to differentiate »scientific« from »poetical« sources in the appendices, and to underplay the significance of literary styles as a means of writing medicine, in part perhaps owing to unfamiliarity with recent scholarly interest in medicine and literature. Still, this aspect deserved more serious treatment, not least given the success of a slightly earlier regimen book by François du Pont written entirely in verse¹. To ally medicine with other fine arts, like poetry, was to raise it above the purely

¹ *Francisci Porti Crespeiensis Valesii medicique Parisiensis Medica Decas, eiusdem authoris in singula librorum capita Commentarijs illustrate*, Paris 1613. It was translated into French in 1694.



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manual arts. A common ground of tasteful judgement, mores and politeness was shared by Jacquelot and his anticipated readership. This was all the more important in that the first three decades of the 17th century were crucial to establishing French faculty physicians above rival medical corporations, such as the apothecaries and barber-surgeons. It is no coincidence that Jean Jost, the publisher who made Jacquelot's book available to Parisian readers, would soon after print the works of Philibert Guybert, a physician bent on cutting out the apothecaries in favour of Paris faculty doctors².

If the use of poetical forms and classical asides alerts us to the author's strategies for advancing his discipline, even more important – yet also neglected – is what the book can tell us about how he sought to advance himself. Koźluk seems caught up in the anachronistic pursuit of authorial »originality« (e.g. p. 77–80, 173), but neglects the reasons why Charles Delorme might have been the book's dedicatee. As a member of the royal medical household, Delorme controlled access to the only organisation in Paris whose members were entitled to practise medicine without a medical degree from the university of Paris, the precise situation in which the young Jacquelot found himself³. Literary wit and style were indispensable tools for navigating the courtly clientele these physicians served. In these respects, Jacquelot's book, with its multiple homages to Delorme (a letter, a poem and an acrostic), bears a close resemblance to other medicoliterary attempts to leverage patronage. A desire to gain favour at court would also explain his frequent references to the superiority of the French nation over its rivals. Koźluk's analysis falls short in not treating Jacquelot's book as an intervention in the status quo, rather than just a text.

These wider analytical horizons are also missing in her neglect of the transformation of lifestyles in the first third of the 17th century thanks to urbanisation and the expansion of reading and politeness. These changes were apparent in works on the non-naturals, which covered most aspects of lifestyle, from building and clothing to cookery, bathing, exercise and healthcare. Promising approaches have been developed along these lines, but are not cited by Koźluk⁴.

² Philibert Guybert, *Tovtes les Œuvres charitables*, Paris 1633. Originally published as separate works, beginning in 1623 with »Le Medecin charitable«.

³ Laurence Brockliss, *The literary image of the médecins du roi in the literature of the Grand Siècle*, in: Vivian Nutton (ed.), *Medicine at the Courts of Europe, 1500–1837*, London, New York 1991 (Routledge Library Editions. History of Medicine, 10) p. 117–154; Laurence Brockliss, Colin Jones, *The Medical World of Early Modern France*, Oxford 1997.

⁴ E.g. Sandra Cavallo, Tessa Storey, *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy*, Oxford 2013.



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