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Marie-Christine Pioffet, ed., in collaboration with Chenoa Marshall and Stéphanie Girard. Anonymous. *Le Nouveau Panurge avec sa navigation en l'Isle Imaginaire*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2017. 364 pp. Chronology, glossary, bibliography, and index. €13.00 (pb). ISBN: 978-2-406-06131-1.

Review by Bruce Hayes, University of Kansas.

Marie-Christine Pioffet, with help from Chenoa Marshall and Stéphanie Girard, has produced a critical edition of an anonymous religious polemical pamphlet few have heard of, *Le Nouveau Panurge avec sa navigation en l'Isle Imaginaire*. It is interesting that at the beginning of the seventeenth century, authors were still appropriating Rabelais's work as a strategy for selling copies of their work. Undoubtedly a book still remains to be written on the afterlives of Rabelais, especially within the context of religious polemics, where his name and reputation evolve and become increasingly synonymous with godlessness and blasphemy, not to mention bad style, especially as we move into the seventeenth century. Pioffet rightly notes that all that is taken from Rabelais in this work is antithetical to the original tales of Gargantua and Pantagruel, with the notable exception of the presence of scatological and scabrous language scattered throughout. As she aptly describes it, "*Le Nouveau Panurge* est donc un palimpseste à l'envers et se dessine comme un anti-*Pantagruel*" (p. 39). The ways in which this pamphlet both appropriates and contradicts Rabelais's work is nowhere more obvious than the portrayal of this work's protagonist Panurge. While in Rabelais's Pantagrueline chronicles, Panurge serves as proof of Pantagruel's unconditional love because Panurge's portrayal is almost entirely negative (he is a coward, a sophist, selfish, and self-absorbed, yet almost always entertaining and occasionally insightful), here he is older and wiser, a paragon of judiciousness. Unsurprisingly, this "new" Panurge is also rather boring.

It is appropriate that Pioffet begins her introduction by citing Jacques Boulenger, who mordantly observed over a century ago of *Le Nouveau Panurge*, "C'est un pamphlet catholique qui mériterait...d'être protestant."<sup>[1]</sup> This points to a long-established bias against French Catholic polemical writings, with their Protestant counterparts frequently characterized by scholars as far more interesting, and therefore more effective. Luc Racaut first challenged this position in *Hatred in Print*, and most recently, George Hoffmann has questioned the efficacy of Protestant polemics in France.<sup>[2]</sup> Thus, the production of a critical edition of a Catholic pamphlet is itself remarkable, and certainly important. To take two examples of successful sixteenth-century Catholic pamphleteers, Artus Désiré and Jean Boucher, the former has no critical edition of any of his works, and the only edition of Boucher's corpus is his *Vie et faits notables de Henry de Valois* (1589).<sup>[3]</sup> Having a new critical edition of a Catholic polemical pamphlet is consequently a welcome contribution to the field.

So what exactly is the pamphlet about? It describes Panurge's fantastical journey, first to cross-Atlantic exotic destinations that continued to fascinate Europeans, then to the discovery of the "Isle Imaginaire," an all-male colony where the men have learned both how to live without women and to rejuvenate themselves. Both of these involve operations that leave one feeling queasy. (Panurge undergoes the rejuvenation procedure, which begins by putting the person to sleep and then cutting up his body into pieces; this is why he is the "new" Panurge.) A monk's paradise perhaps, this supposed *locus amoenus*, like

pretty much every place visited during Panurge's journey, leaves a lot to be desired. One of the anonymous author's (or authors') greatest deficiencies is that while Panurge's descent into Hell forms the heart of the work, it is hard to distinguish between Hell and the putatively paradisiacal places he visits, including the Champs Élysées.

In a move that harkens back to the tempest episode in Rabelais's *Quart Livre*, Panurge is saved from a sinking ship by a dolphin, which recalls his pleading with the Almighty in the *Quart Livre* to send him a dolphin to bring him to land (chapter 21). Panurge spends 10 years on the dolphin's back before arriving at the Isle Imaginaire. From there he is led by his guide Erminevade through the Sibyl's hole (a reference to the *Tiers Livre*) and into the seven cities of Hell, echoing Dante's infernal voyage with Virgil. Here he encounters a host of heretics and reprobates. Most notable are Luther and Calvin, who are portrayed as cannibals, an interesting reappropriation by a Catholic polemicist of an accusation frequently made by Protestants against Catholics as a way of mocking the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Also found in Hell, for good measure, is a university and Protestant schools. Eventually he is led to the Champs Élysées and then returns to his friends. (The choice of Thaumaste as Panurge's closest friend is quite odd, as is the footnote that defines him as "l'admirable"; anyone who has read the debate between Panurge and Thaumaste in *Pantagruel* could reasonably reach a rather different conclusion about Thaumaste.)

Pioffet helpfully situates this work in its geographical and historical context. Although the pamphlet is anonymous, contains no publication date, and a purported place of publication, Pioffet provides convincing answers to most of these questions. As for authorship, she disputes previous suggestions of attribution. She observes that it is clearly the work of a Jesuit (or Jesuits) and that it contains linguistic and geographic markers that point to both the Languedoc and Dauphiné regions. Her conclusion is that this pamphlet, like other similar works such as the *Satyre Ménipée* (1594), was most likely a collaborative effort. She suggests that the work was first published in Tournon and adroitly places the work in the larger context of events at that time. Through a process of elimination, she shows that the work was most likely composed in the summer of 1614, with a publication date of 1615, or even as early as the end of 1614. Focusing on the Languedoc region, where Protestants maintained their biggest stronghold in France, she describes how Jesuits purposely moved into cities such as Nîmes in order to directly challenge their Protestant adversaries, in an attempt to bring heretics back into the fold. This was a particularly tense time for the Jesuits, as antipathy towards them in France increased after the assassination of Henri IV in 1610.

As for the pamphlet itself, in addition to a certain stylistic flatness, another problem is the challenge encountered frequently with satire: satire is defined by its object(s) of attack, making it an extremely topical genre. The difficulty here is that, besides a few exceptions such as Luther and Calvin, the objects of the work's satire are going to be unknown to just about anyone reading this edition. Although footnotes help identify various people, they are by and large unknown and lost in the intervening four centuries. Along with footnotes, the introduction succeeds in explaining the various conflicts in the region, but none of the people referenced in the pamphlet are likely to be known by anyone other than a handful of highly specialized scholars. This is a common issue for provincial works, and this is a thoroughly provincial pamphlet, despite its efforts to garner interest by appropriating characters, stories, and language from Rabelais.

There are two drawbacks to this edition, and they are both relatively minor. First, the edition is footnoted a bit too copiously. To give one example, chapter two is 13 pages long and contains 100 footnotes. It is not just the quantity of footnotes that can be distracting, perhaps inevitable when there are a total of 1,194 footnotes, but also their uneven quality and utility. For example, when the edition's text reads "par aventure," there is a footnote indicating that the original was "paradvanture." At another point, "entreprinse" is glossed with the following explanation: "Ancienne graphie d'entreprise." "Penitence, jeune, et Caresme" receives the unnecessary clarification that "jeune" is "jeûne." Some of the words that are asterisked and found in the glossary are equally superfluous; anyone likely to read this pamphlet is

not going to need to know that “prins” and “comprins” are the Middle French versions of “pris” and “compris.” It also seems unnecessary to have a footnote indicating that the word “Panurge” has been moved from the middle of the page to the side. Additionally, in the footnotes and bibliography, Pioffet is overly reliant on works from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some of this is unavoidable, as the topics treated in the pamphlet are often quite obscure. But to give an example, why does Pioffet use an 1866 translation of Lucian, and not a better, more recent translation? Elsewhere, an explanation about Théodore de Bèze cites a work from 1856.

This leads to a second criticism: Pioffet rightly acknowledges the intertextual importance of both the *Satyre Ménippée* and Rabelais, yet despite an overabundance of footnotes, there is precious little on the scholarship of either. Most notable are the gaps relating to Rabelais. Given that the tales of Gargantua and Pantagruel are the most important intertext of this polemical pamphlet, this is unfortunate. As the narrator notes in the preface to the reader, “Avec les Rabelistes je sçay rabeliser,” (p. 70, A 71<sup>o</sup> in the original) and this work is filled with references to Rabelais. There are a couple ways these lacunae manifest themselves in the edition. First, there are examples of language that is clearly referring to Rabelais’s work, but not acknowledged as such. Thus, while both “avoir puce à l’oreille” and “comment a nom des femmes” receive explanatory footnotes, neither references Rabelais. In the case of the “l’anneau de Carvel,” Rabelais is mentioned, but the misogynistic, sexual sense of the original is not explained. Eudemon (*Gargantua* 15) is incorrectly listed as Gargantua’s tutor, and the pamphlet’s strange, contradictory description of “le mignon Picrochole” receives no comment. Scholarship on Rabelais is quite limited both in both the footnotes and bibliography. Other than Frank Lestringant’s scholarship and Mireille Huchon’s edition of Rabelais’s complete works, there is little else.[4] A footnote about Rabelais’s interest in genealogies references Anne Lake Prescott’s *Imagining Rabelais in Renaissance England*, yet Edwin Duval’s seminal work on this topic is ignored.[5] A reference to Rabelais’s religious beliefs references Lazare Sainéan’s 1930 *L’influence et la réputation de Rabelais*, yet overlooks Lucien Febvre’s important *Le Problème de l’incroyance au XVI siècle*, not to mention the extensive work on this topic by M. A. Screech, among other far more recent critics.[6]

I fully acknowledge that I am quibbling here; Pioffet is not a Rabelais specialist and should not be expected to be as well-versed in Rabelais criticism as scholars who work on the author. Notwithstanding the caveats outlined above, this edition is a useful contribution that brings to light a satirical religious pamphlet that contributes further to interest in this topic and provides modern readers with an easily accessible work that brings together fantastical journeys and religious polemics.

## NOTES

[1] Jacques Boulenger, “À propos de M<sup>e</sup> Guillaume: *Le Nouveau Panurge*,” *Revue des livres anciens: documents d’histoire littéraire, de bibliographie & de bibliophilie*, 1 (1914): 452.

[2] Luc Racaut, *Hatred in Print. Catholic Propaganda and Protestant Identity during the French Wars of Religion* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002). George Hoffmann, *Reforming French Culture. Satire, Spiritual Alienation, & Connection to Strangers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[3] Regarding the lack of critical interest in Artus Désiré’s polemical works, see Denis Cruzet’s *Les Guerriers de Dieu* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 1990), vol. 1, p. 191. The one slight exception is Jacques Pineaux’s facsimile copy of Désiré’s *Le contrepoison des cinquante deux chansons de Clement Marot* (Geneva: Droz, 1977). For Jean Boucher, see Keith Cameron’s excellent critical edition of the *Vie et faits notables de Henry de Valois* (Paris: Champion, 2003). Additionally, see the special issue of *Œuvres et Critiques* 38 (2013) I co-edited with Paul Scott, “Jean Boucher (1548–1646<sup>?</sup>): Prêtre, prédicateur, polémiste.”

[4] François Rabelais, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Mireille Huchon (Paris: Gallimard, 1994).

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[5] Anne Lake Prescott, *Imagining Rabelais in Renaissance England* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998); Edwin M. Duval, *The Design of Rabelais's Pantagruel* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991).

[6] Lazare Sainéan, *L'influence et la réputation de Rabelais* (Paris: J. Gamber, 1930); Lucien Febvre, *Le Problème de l'incroyance au XVI siècle. La religion de Rabelais* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1947); M. A. Screech, *The Rabelaisian Marriage: Aspects of Rabelais's Religion, Ethics and Comic Philosophy* (London: Edward Arnold, 1958), *L'évangélisme de Rabelais: aspects de la satire religieuse au XVI siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1959), and *Rabelais* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1979).

Bruce Hayes  
University of Kansas  
[bhayes@ku.edu](mailto:bhayes@ku.edu)

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