

any student or scholar of the French Renaissance, whatever their specific field, for it will necessarily prove essential for anyone reading or writing about any aspect of Ronsard or Renaissance poetry. (PHILLIP JOHN USHER, *New York University*)

Louisa Mackenzie. *The Poetry of Place: Lyric, Landscape, and Ideology in Renaissance France*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011. Pp. 304.

*The Poetry of Place* is a most excellent and welcome book, a splendid addition to the growing body of studies that focus on the myriad connections existing in early modern France between literature, cartography, cultural geography, and space more generally. Its intellectual affinities situate it alongside Timothy Hampton's *Literature and Nation* (2001), Tom Conley's *Self-Made Map* (1996) and *An Errant Eye* (2011), Marcus Keller's *Figurations of France* (2011), and the work of Frank Lestringant. The "vanishing point" of Mackenzie's richly researched and precise study is said to be, drawing on David Harvey, "the dissolution, in the last quarter of a century, of the 'spaces of hope' previously represented by lyric landscapes" (15), which is to say that Mackenzie demonstrates not just how poetry produces lyric landscapes but how these productions grow from, and express, various tensions (between peace and war, between safety and danger, between nation and region, etc.).

The first chapter ("Place and Poetry") offers a useful extension to the introduction, developing the history of, and reasons for, studying the "explicit dialogue" between poets and cartographers" (30), as well as providing key terminology to be taken up throughout. The second chapter ("The Poet and the Mapmaker") historicizes the "literature-cartography encounter" (42) by discussing Maurice Bouguereau and other key figures. The third chapter ("The Poet, the Nation, and the Region"), supplementing work by Marc Bizer and Hassan Melehy, studies scalar tensions in Joachim du Bellay's *Olive*, *Regrets*, and *Deffence*, especially the multiple ways in which the poet's native Anjou articulates Frenchness in opposition to Petrarch's Italy—via an "erotic cartography" (55) in the *Olive* and in more complex ways in the *Regrets*, which initially refuse space for place and which end by filling the "grand espace vide" with Catherine de France (82–83). The next chapter ("The Poet and the Painter") heads in other directions, focusing on the "thematic treatment of the visual arts in lyrics by Remy Belleau and Pontus de Tyard" (88), namely, the former's *La Bergerie* and the latter's *Douze fables de fleuves ou fontaines*. The two poems are brought into discussion to emphasize their shared distancing of the representation of landscape via *ekphrasis*, a practice in which Mackenzie sees a mannerist aesthetics at work, read as a moment of

representational and historico-political disintegration: "Poetry gives up any attempt to engage and define real landscape" (119). Chapter five ("The Poet and the Environment")—for this reader, the most original and most exciting chapter of all—offers readings of poems that engage with environmental history: Baïf's "La Ninfe Bievre" (about the river's pollution by chemicals used by the Gobelin family of dyers) and Ronsard's "Élégie XIII" (about the selling off and destruction of the Gâtine forest). Situating these poems in their literary-historical and political context, Mackenzie suggests that Baïf's poem "encodes the changes in the political landscape [. . .] using water pollution as a symbol of the greater social ills facing France" (123) and shows how Ronsard questions the status of the region, of the Catholic landowners, and of poetry itself (127). More than the allegorical propositions, the close readings offered here will renew interest in these poems. Chapter six ("The Poet and the Bower") is a diptych. Its first panel studies "the position of [the] aristocratic landowner" via readings of Jean Vauquelin de la Fresnaye. In his *Satyres*, paying much attention to biography, Mackenzie delineates key anxieties (about nobility, social status, and profession) that bear on the poet's relationship to his inherited land and name; in his *Foresteries*, a collection of poems set in Vauqueline's ancestral woods, Mackenzie finds a cluttering of "multiple claims that dissipate[s] its cohesion as local, ancestral land" (165). In these two collections, Vauquelin thus "dismantles attempts to claim poetic territory even as he writes them," creating "an oddly self-effacing landscape fraught with psychological and social drama" (172). The chapter's second panel takes up Jacques Peletier du Man's *La Savoye*, treated here as a "long poem" (147) and studied for its "irenical representation" (178) of the region, and as a (failed) attempt to "escape from history" during the wars of religion (178). Both panels thus underscore the poetry's struggle with/against history via its troubling depiction of French landscapes.

*The Poetry of Place* is a rich work of scholarship and interpretation. In the conclusion, Mackenzie reminds us that Renaissance poets maintain "that we must always imagine alternative worlds with an 'optimism of the intellect' even in the face of the worst depredation" and that, as such, these poets "have something to tell us about our own modernity" (183). After reading Mackenzie's study, the reader is indeed left with just such an impression, that is, of the important ways in which (without risking anachronism) the poetry of early modern France can speak directly to our own situations and concerns, especially when those concerns include the question of "spatial ecologies" (to take up the title of Verena Conley's recent book) or, more generally, of trying to make sense of our place in the world—and even of what and where the *world* is. Immediately a classic, this study will also likely stand the test of time. (PHILLIP JOHN USHER, *New York University*)

