

# ASDIWAL

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accurate recomposition of the traces of the bygone. Meylan, I believe, will further arouse philological curiosity as to the marginalia, bookbinding, potential medieval readerships, trajectory of circulation, and other detailed compilation features of the manuscripts with which he deals. And for literary critics, Meylan's research, which is solidly built upon the theory of discourse, should also trigger reflection upon the spontaneous and «pre-reflective» potentials of Old Norse narrative. Are discourses invariably constructing something with full-fledged narratorial consciousness,

intention, and mature self-reflexivity in Old Norse literature? Would there be room to read certain narratives as drenched in some foregoing literary traditions already saturated with certain cultural-conceptual metaphors, as well as entrenched narrative frameworks that are of import on both rhetorical and cognitive levels for our understanding of medieval Scandinavian commemoration of the past?

CHEN CUI

Université de Lausanne/Birkbeck College,  
University of London

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SARA PETRELLA, *Quand les dieux étaient des monstres. La « Mythologie » hybride de Natale Conti e Vincenzo Cartari*, preface by Hélène Cazes, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2023, 334 p., ISBN: 978-2-7535-8828-8.

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Jean Seznec famously studied the long-term iconographical traditions of mythological figures and deities of classical antiquity, their transformation and afterlife in art and literature through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. With his fundamental publication the French historian indeed contributed to an overall rediscovery and appreciation of mythographic treatises such as Lilio Gregorio Giraldi's *De deis gentium varia et multiplex historia*, Natale Conti's *Mythologiae sive explicationum fabularum libri decem*, and Vincenzo Cartari's *Le imagini con la spositione de i dei de gli antichi*, critically highlighting the importance and remarkable popularity of this literary genre. As the title of his influential study, *La Survivance des dieux antiques*, suggests, Seznec interpreted the works of early modern mythographers in a linear perspective, against the background of an uninterrupted transmission from antiquity. There is however a lot to be gained by freeing these books, their authors, publishers, and illustrators from the somewhat passive role assigned to them by Seznec and by studying them, individually and thoroughly, as the rich and complex sources they are.

The book under review, *Quand les dieux étaient des monstres*, an elegantly written study by Sara Petrella, does exactly that by presenting an in-depth, multilayered analysis that reassesses the importance of a volume published in Lyon in 1612 by Paul Frellon, the *Mythologie, c'est-à-dire Explication des fables contenant les genealogies des Dieux, les ceremonies de leurs sacrifices, leurs gestes, aventures, amours*. This publication is not the original work of an author or an illustrator, but a «composite» edition combining a French translation of Natale Conti's *Mythologiae* by Jean de Montlyard with illustrations from a Venetian edition of Vincenzo Cartari's *Imagini de i dei*. The volume edited by Frellon, derivative and hybrid as it may appear to be at first glance, is a noteworthy document. It was a book for all audiences and experienced a considerable reception in its time in the francophone world. Despite its historical relevance it has gone virtually unnoticed in scholarly literature. Sara Petrella's decision to focus on this one publication, subjecting it to close scrutiny in a micro-historical approach, allows for a study at the crossroad of various disciplines, precisely because the 1612

*Mythologie, c'est-à-dire Explication des fables* is the dynamic product of noteworthy processes of bricolage and the expression of a significant cultural transition.

The author traces the manifold economic and social connections between the two publishing centers of Geneva and Lyon, the latter famous for lavish publications, the former a city of lower costs in book production, and succeeds in reconstructing in great detail the religiopolitical attitude of the various players in this editorial venture, a Gallican irenism, which moved the publisher and bookseller Frellon and the illustrator Pierre Eskrich, as well as the translator-author of the the *Mythologie, c'est-à-dire Explication des fables*. This last, the Geneva-based Huguenot Jean de Montlyard, is carefully portrayed by Petrella and his biography reconstructed in detail, enabling the readers to seize the peculiarities and the motivation of his approach in this translation into French. Montlyard offered an overall rather free adaptation of Conti, which not least also aimed at modernization and updating the meticulously compiled and referenced ancient sources through comments, cuts, and additions to the text. Passages from Jean de Léry's account of Brazil, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Bresil* (1578) were introduced, as well as sections from Conrad Gessner's *Historia animalium* (1558), the ethnographic account to link a procession of bacchantes with the exotic of Caribbean Tupinamba, the naturalist studies to reinterpret bishop-fish and mermaid from allegorical figures to contemporary facts.

The iconographic dimension and the relationship between text and image are at the center of Sara Petrella's study. The origins of the pictorial corpus for the *Mythologie, c'est-à-dire Explication des fables* are traced back to the illustrations for a Venetian edition of Cartari published in 1571, attributed to Giuseppe Porta and Bolognino Zaltieri, and, more precisely, to the subsequent transposition of these plates by the mannerist hand of Pierre Eskrich for another edition of the *Imagini*, this one published in

Lyon in 1581. The author argues for a detailed and differentiated examination of the developments of the individual copperplate engravings and offers a contextual reassessment of illustrations in mythology. She discusses in detail the genesis, use, and function of the images, their changes from the Venetian to the Lyon edition of Cartari. In doing so, she illuminates formal as well as content-related implications of «copies» in the tension between imitation and interpretation, between reproduction and reduction. Pertinent comparisons between the different editions and their constant adaptations to new cultural contexts are discussed, highlighting, for instance, how Eskrich eliminated compositional aspects such as landscapes, newly presenting the figures against neutral backgrounds. Individual pictorial motifs such as the old woman with hanging breasts in her career from an allegorical to a polemical and eventually ethnographic pictorial subject, are examined in depth and illustrate iconological processes of transmission, adoption, and transformation, and not least the impact of a socioreligious environment in which an increasingly systematic censorship demanded specific pictorial modifications. For her careful reconstruction of the various aspects in the appropriation of the original engravings Petrella chooses to emphasize a particular selection of monstrous figures and hybrid beings. The discussion about the polysemy of illustrations, about the change of their functions, about the contamination of ancient motifs with modern ones – in the spirit of prodigy literature and travelogues about new frontier regions of the known world – leads to stimulating interpretations of such representations of old and new «monsters» by the author against the background of the religious wars and in a war of images.

The Lyon *Mythologie, c'est-à-dire Explication des fables* of 1612 plays the role of a crystallization point in terms of content and method in Sara Petrella's book. With *Quand les dieux étaient des monstres* she has written a seminal study on a book, on its materiality and

history from Venice to Lyon, via Geneva, and, concurrently, on mythography and questions of description and illustration, of reference, recomposing, and interpretation. Featuring a rich and carefully selected visual apparatus, it demonstrates how image inventions – for various reasons – make special careers and, to speak with Hans Belting, are particularly mobile and successful «nomads of the media» through time and in changing contexts. Petrella offers an anthropological discussion on dynamic factors and dimensions shaping ideas, imagination, and collective memory, making a valuable contribution to various fields of knowledge, from art history and image an-

thropology to the history of ideas and books as well as the history of printing and publishing. In closing, she discusses a new edition of the *Mythologie, c'est-à-dire Explication des fables* revised by Jean Boudin and published as a beautiful volume with new illustrations in Paris in 1627; an aesthetically more appealing version that was used and referenced well into the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, notably in Joseph-François Lafitau's *Mœurs des sauvages américains*. This outlook on the work's posterity opens the scope of the investigation for future studies.

PAOLA VON WYSS-GIACOSA  
Université de Zurich

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RADY ROLDÁN-FIGUEROA, *The Martyrs of Japan: Publication History and Catholic Missions in the Spanish World (Spain, New Spain, and the Philippines, 1597-1700)*, Leyde-Boston, Brill, 2021, 306 pages, ISBN: 978-90-04-43752-4.

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Rady Roldán-Figueroa propose une analyse de la production, de la distribution et de la consommation d'ouvrages racontant des épisodes de martyres survenus au Japon (*books of Japano-martyrology*) au cours des XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles. Publiés entre l'Europe, l'Amérique et les Philippines, ces ouvrages sont issus des différents ordres religieux actifs sur l'archipel nippon, à savoir les jésuites, les dominicains, les franciscains déchaussés et les augustins. Prendre en compte la palette des ordres religieux actifs au Japon démarque cette étude de celles qui se focalisent exclusivement sur la Compagnie de Jésus, dont l'influence et la documentation produite ont certes été les plus importantes (p. 257). L'étude se présente comme un travail méthodologique situé à la croisée de plusieurs approches. Elle combine une perspective quantitative des publications de type martyrologique (*publication history*) avec une histoire des missions catholiques en contexte hispanophone.

Dans un premier temps (chap. 1 à 5), Roldán-Figueroa analyse un corpus de sources

martyrologiques ou «quasi martyrologiques» (*near-martyrological*: la catégorie reste floue jusqu'à assez loin dans le livre [p. 63]). L'auteur commence par planter le décor (chap. 1), en revenant sur les différentes étapes de la présence catholique au Japon, d'abord celle de François Xavier et des jésuites portugais, dont le monopole missionnaire et commercial est mis à mal par l'arrivée des ordres mendiants espagnols à la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Ce changement coïncide avec une longue période de persécution des chrétiens par les autorités japonaises, dont les moments culminants sont les martyres de Nagasaki en 1597 puis l'expulsion des religieux étrangers par le shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu en 1614.

L'analyse quantitative des publications prend place aux chapitres 3 et 4. Elle embrasse tous les livres imprimés entre 1597 et 1700, rédigés par des membres d'ordres religieux et contenant le récit d'un martyr survenu au Japon. Le corpus de sources présente un large éventail de genres, incluant des pièces de théâtre, des sermons, des sonnets,