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Jean-Claude Julhe. *Pratiques latines de la dédicace: Permanence et mutations, de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*

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The development of a unitary treatise on Latin literary dedications is a very long and complex undertaking, especially for the boundless number of sources and the heterogeneous perspectives on the matter. *Pratiques latine de la dédicace* sets a new milestone on this subject, presenting a broad anthological selection of writings from different international authors. It attempts to reconstruct how dedicatory inscriptions developed throughout the centuries, illustrating concrete literary examples for a clearer comprehension of their use in history.

The selection of essays (twenty-three in all) is arranged by theme and disposed chronologically in two macro areas: the first, going from the fifth century BCE to the fifth century CE; the second, from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. The first macro area is divided into three parts. One deals with Archaic Greek and Hellenistic poetry, where examples of dedicatory literature — from authors such as Theognis, Callimachus, Posidippus, Theocritus — are examined to understand those topic elements of Greek thought that passed on to Latin literature. A second, larger part, on classical Rome, discusses various genres of prose (oratory, historiography, science, architecture, philosophy, epistolography), illustrating cases from Cicero, Livy, Pliny, Vitruvius, and Seneca; and poetry (elegies, lyrics, epigrams) from the Augustan and the Flavian age, with examples from Horace, Statius, and Martial. A third part on late antiquity examines dedications of pagan encyclopedic treatises — with mention given to authors such as Boethius, Macrobius, Censorinus, and Martianus Capella — and the early Christian dedicatory literature (Sidonius Apollinaris).

The second macro area analyzes late medieval dedications in the commentaries of ancient classical authors (the case of Nicola Trevet). Starting from the fifteenth century, aspects of the renewed humanistic culture were introduced in dedicatory literature, such as friendship (considering, for example, Giovanni Pontano or Marsilio Ficino) and the

ideal and material restoration of classical tradition (usually when popes were the addressees of antiquarian treatises).

The collection ends with dedications found in printed editions of law books, medical books, and math books, and in translations from ancient Greek to Latin. It considers also how dedicatory inscriptions, after the breakthrough of print, became a tool whereby authors formulated their own thought in front of their public (also on religious matters for confessional disputes). This might have been a consequence of the influence of prefatory elements, which usually implied an explanation of the method used in the text. In this light, a subdivision could also be made between dedications prepared for manuscript tradition and those prepared for printed circulation.

*Pratiques latines de la dédicace* explores the semantic evolution of the words signifying *dedicatio* in Greek and Latin from a diachronic viewpoint, demonstrating that their etymological origin is connected to a religious vocabulary: the word, in fact, derives directly from the consecration rituals and seems to confer sacredness to the literary work. This study recognizes with tangible evidence that writing genres entered into the sphere of literature also through the dedications that appeared to become a symbolic offering. The rhetoric of the dedications is well analyzed: from the style applied, many matters concerning the profile of the author, the addressee, and the readers can be understood, giving new light to the political and cultural background of each period.

This contribution encourages academic researchers to find new paths on the issue, enriching further the already extensive material collected. The study of medieval dedications in the *Patrologia Latina* and Latin dedications in other medieval literary works even in the vernacular (such as Dante's *Letter to Cangrande*, to whom he dedicates his *Paradise*) could be a valuable contribution to fill the gap of the medieval period herewith only outlined.

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