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Les Pourtraits divers de Jean de Tournes: Edition critique et fac-similé du tirage de 1556 (Book Review)

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**Les Pourtraits divers de Jean de Tournes: Edition critique et fac-similé
du tirage de 1556.** Maud Lejeune.

Geneva: Droz, 2012. 430 pp. \$45.60. ISBN 978-2-600-01554-7.

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Pourtraits divers is an unusual book of illustrations, printed in octavo format in the Lyonnais workshop of Jean de Tournes. A first edition contains no text apart from the place of publication, printer, and date (Lyon: Jean de Tournes, 1556). A second edition (1557) also bears the title *Pourtraits divers*. The work in question is a collaborative project between printer Jean de Tournes and illustrator Bernard Salomon (aka Le Petit Bernard), both noted figures in the print culture of Renaissance Lyon. Maud Lejeune's study, a book version of the thesis written for her *maîtrise*, offers a facsimile of the 1556 edition, accompanied by a thoroughly researched introduction that situates the work within contemporary print culture in Lyon and considers several hypotheses about its potential readership and use.

Although Lejeune notes that little biographical information survives on either De Tournes or Salomon, she manages to offer a detailed and fascinating overview of each man's career based on their extant works and the scant archival evidence available. Jean de Tournes began as a *compositeur* in the workshop of Sébastien Gryphe in 1530s Lyon. By 1542, he had his own printing business, and the particular care he gave to typesetting, layout, and illustrations soon would earn him the titles of *mestre imprimeur* and *imprimeur du roy*. The list of *litterati* associated with De Tournes reads as a veritable who's-who of French Renaissance superstars (Scève, Des Périers, Lemaire de Belges, Marot, among others).

Bernard Salomon excelled in a variety of media, including paintings and theatrical backdrops for royal *Entrées*, fresco paintings (of which sadly, there is little remaining evidence), cartoon sketches for tapestries, manuscript illumination, and he also is believed to have written a theoretical work on perspective, now lost. Salomon was known best for his painstakingly detailed, elegantly executed, and aesthetically pleasing wood engravings. These graceful miniatures illustrated books of many genres, among them Scève's *Saulsaye*, Guillaume de la Perrière's *Théâtre des bons engins*, and André Thévet's *Cosmographie du Levant*, to name a few (cf. Peter Sharratt, *Bernard Salomon: Illustrateur Lyonnais* [Geneva: Droz, 2005]).

Lejeune's painstakingly detailed bibliographical description and analysis of *Pourtraits divers* is a treasure trove of information that will be of interest to students and scholars of book history and analytical bibliography, as well as specialists in literature and cultural studies seeking greater insight into the physical aspect of book culture. As *Pourtraits divers* is a booklet of woodcut illustrations, Lejeune naturally discusses those images at length. Over one-third of them are unique to this work—a series of theatrical scenes and urban landscapes, for example—followed by previously printed, successful illustrations from Scève's *Saulsaye* (1547), Petrarch's *Les Triomphes* (1545, 1547, 1550), Diego de San Pedro's *Le Petit traité d'Arnalte et Lucenda* (1547, 1555), to name a few. This dense section could have been made more accessible if presented as footnotes to the facsimile reproduction, as in a critical edition, allowing the reader to contemplate the images alongside Lejeune's commentary.

Lejeune moves on to a synthesis and appraisal of four hypotheses about the book's purpose and audience. According to Verdun L. Saulnier (*Maurice Scève, ca. 1500–1560* [Paris: Klincksieck, 1948]), *Pourtraits divers* is likely a marketing tool allowing potential buyers and borrowers to peruse the woodcuts available in the De Tournes workshop, a

convincing and plausible theory considering the commercial value and mobility of woodcut illustrations among printers and across genres. The contemporary cultural fascination with emblems and miniatures, bought and sold in sheets, albums, and assorted packages at fairs and in other communal urban areas, may also explain the function of *Pourtraits divers*. As Lejeune explains and Daniel Russell also notes (cf. *Emblematic Structures in Renaissance French Culture* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995]), woodcut illustrations often were pasted onto walls and furniture as decoration, souvenirs, and devotional objects.

A third hypothesis, suggested by R.-E. Cartier and Marius Audin (*Correspondance de R.-E. Cartier/Marius Audin, concernant la Bibliographie des éditions des De Tournes, 1925–1941* [S.l.: s.n., 1925]), proposes that the typographical format—one vignette per leaf with the verso left blank—points to another hugely popular cultural phenomenon, one that originated in German Protestant and university communities: the *album amicorum* (book of friends, or autograph book). Traveling students and scholars would carry blank books on their journeys, asking new acquaintances to leave their mark on its pages, an autograph, motto, quotation, or poem serving as a souvenir of that meeting. Lyon's constant influx of visiting scholars and royals made it an ideal location for cultivating this trend. Indeed, Lejeune notes that Jean de Tournes may well have been the first printer to conceive a book printed specifically for this purpose: his *Thesaurus amoricorum*, printed soon after his *Pourtraits divers*.

Lastly, *Pourtraits divers* may be a bank of commercially viable images, which artists and artisans could copy and imitate to hone their skills and to find inspiration for their own painting, sculpture, furniture, embroidery, engraving, or other artistic pursuit (cf. Véronique Meyer, “Gravure d’interprétation ou de reproduction?” *Travaux de l’Institut d’histoire de l’art de Lyon* [Lyon: Université Lyon, Institut d’histoire de l’art, 1989], 41–46). Lejeune gathers ample evidence of this activity in theory (printers’ prefaces, treatises on art, archival documents such as contracts) and in practice (surviving sketchbooks, *objets d’art*, other drawings and mock-ups, even small sketches drawn in the copy of *Pourtraits divers* found in the Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon).

Lejeune moves with ease through an astounding amount of historical and bibliographical information. And in conclusion, she points to the most confounding aspect of *Pourtraits divers*, proposing that its ambiguity in fact doubles as its purpose. Perhaps De Tournes’s silence as to any ostensible audience or purpose for this small book of assorted illustrations aligns quite well with how the book actually was used: in many different ways and by many types of readers.

