

## Washington University in St. Louis Washington University Open Scholarship

---

All Theses and Dissertations (ETDs)

---

1-1-2011

# Joachim Du Bellay's Occasional Poetry: The Poetics of Female Patronage

Elizabeth Landers

*Washington University in St. Louis*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/etd>

---

### Recommended Citation

Landers, Elizabeth, "Joachim Du Bellay's Occasional Poetry: The Poetics of Female Patronage" (2011). *All Theses and Dissertations (ETDs)*. 604.

<https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/etd/604>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Washington University Open Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Theses and Dissertations (ETDs) by an authorized administrator of Washington University Open Scholarship. For more information, please contact [digital@wumail.wustl.edu](mailto:digital@wumail.wustl.edu).

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Department of Romance Languages and Literatures

Dissertation Examination Committee:

Colette Winn, Chair

Robert Henke

Joseph Loewenstein

Stamos Metzidakis

Michael Sherberg

Harriet Stone

JOACHIM DU BELLAY'S OCCASIONAL POETRY: THE POETICS OF

FEMALE PATRONAGE

by

Elizabeth Landers

A dissertation presented to the  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
of Washington University in  
partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2011

Saint Louis, Missouri

copyright by

Elizabeth Landers

2011

## Acknowledgments

This project on Du Bellay's occasional poetry would never have been completed without the help of many people. First and foremost I would like to thank Colette Winn for her unwavering support and encouragement. I have benefitted beyond measure not only from the model she sets as a teacher and scholar, but also from her ability to create community and draw fellow *seiziemistes* together around her *docte table*.

I also want to thank my dissertation committee for their time and invaluable assistance. Harriet Stone and Stamos Metzidakis in particular have provided me with generous feedback and advice, not only on the current project but many times over the past years.

Colleagues at the University of Missouri-St. Louis have contributed to this project in numerous ways: I am deeply grateful to Tanika Bush and Terry Thiel for making it possible for me to take a development leave during the 2009-2010 academic year. Susan Brownell, Pam Ashmore, and Beth Eckelkamp have all provided valuable support, as did my colleagues in the French section. Conversations with Susan Yoder-Kreger and Birgit Noll sustained me over many long semesters.

Finally, my family and friends have nourished this work from the beginning. Most of all, Wolfram has been my *coulonne seure*, to whom I owe everything.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

ii

Introduction

1

Chapter One

Bouquets: Du Bellay's Poems to Marguerite de France 1549-1553

19

Chapter Two

A Temple for Marguerite: Du Bellay's Poems after Rome

99

Chapter Three

Songs: Du Bellay's Poems to Diane de Poitiers

212

Conclusion

288

Bibliography

292

## Introduction

### Revaluing Du Bellay's Occasional Poetry

This study seeks to demonstrate that female patrons at the Valois court-- particularly Marguerite de France, and, to a lesser extent Diane de Poitiers--had a defining influence on both the career and the aesthetic choices of the sixteenth-century French poet Joachim Du Bellay. Many years ago Henri Chamard, an important early voice in twentieth-century Du Bellay studies, wrote that Du Bellay was uncomfortable as a court poet and that the majority of his occasional poetry for members of the royal family and their circle was of poor quality and painful to read.<sup>1</sup> Chamard's judgment seems to have oriented Du Bellay studies for decades to follow. Although Du Bellay certainly wrote with frequency against "les poètes courtisans," I believe that his collected works as a whole, and particularly his occasional poems, reveal a poet who, if not completely comfortable in court circles, nonetheless forged close ties to particular women at court. These women provided moral and intellectual patronage as much as they granted financial support, and their literary interests and individual *personae* gradually influenced both the form and content of his poetry.

As for Chamard's judgment of the quality of these poems, I note that his opinion was not shared by Du Bellay's contemporaries. The first edition of Du Bellay's collected works, assembled nearly ten years after his death by two of his friends, Guillaume Aubert de Poitiers and Jean Morel d'Embrun, included occasional

---

<sup>1</sup> Chamard's early twentieth-century edition remains the most complete to date, although a team of editors under the direction of Olivier Millet is currently working on a new edition of which only two volumes have been published. In his biography of Du Bellay, published in 1900, Chamard says that he will spend little time discussing Du Bellay's first collection written for the Valois court, the *Recueil de Poésie*: "On ne m'en voudra pas de glisser à la hâte sur cette partie de l'ouvrage. Elle n'ajoute rien à la gloire de l'auteur. Rien ne montre aussi clairement que ces odes laborieuses comme il était peu fait pour ce genre de poésie. Le malheureux se met l'esprit à la torture pour savoir qu'inventer et que dire. [...] Tout au plus pourrait-on mettre à part l'ode à Madame Marguerite, où les sentiments de l'humble poète revêtent une horreur religieuse qui n'est pas sans émotion" (225-26).

and praise poems to *les grands*.<sup>2</sup> The inclusion of occasional poems in this edition seems to indicate that Du Bellay's contemporaries considered them to be of equal importance and value to the collections that are more frequently read today. Twenty-first-century-readers undoubtedly struggle to find beauty or interest in occasional poems so far removed from their historical context, and find taxing the necessity of researching place names and proper names that no longer resonate. Sixteenth-century readers, however, must have found pleasure and meaning in reading verse that explicitly referred to members of extended and brilliant social networks.<sup>3</sup> D'Aubert and Morel are unlikely to have collected and reprinted these pieces nine years after Du Bellay's death if they were not seen to be valuable.

Scholars have rarely brought critical attention to Du Bellay's occasional poems. His most commonly studied works are his manifesto *La Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise* (1549, 1550), his early sonnet sequence titled *L'Olive* (1549), and the even more famous sonnet sequences that he wrote later in Rome: *Les Antiquitez de Rome* (1558) and *Les Regrets* (1558). David Hartley is one of the few scholars who has worked on Du Bellay's occasional poetry, but he has confined his studies to what he calls Du Bellay's "political poetry," defined as his "longer French poems on matters of state, domestic and international" (1 *Circumstantial Verse of Joachim Du Bellay*). The ten long poems that Hartley edits in his critical edition of Du Bellay's "circumstantial" verse are all addressed to the king or other male members of European royal families, and ignore the many poems that address royal women.

---

<sup>2</sup> Chamard's own edition is based on this original one, but he organized the collection by genre (sonnets, odes, *discours*, etc.) rather than keeping the original seemingly scattered order of the 1569 edition.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted, however, that the oblique references to some courtiers in Du Bellay's *Regrets* were inscrutable even to contemporary readers: see Chamard's citation of François Olivier's letter to Jean Morel, in the introduction to volume II of his edition of Du Bellay (x-xi).

## **Past focus on Male Mentors, the King, and Ronsard**

This selective critical focus on pieces written to male leaders and war heroes is not unusual: histories of the Pléiade tend to focus on the members of this all-male group, with only passing reference to women--brief mention of wives, love interests who inspired poems, or female patrons quickly documented as sources of financial support (Weber, Chamard, Saulnier). Opening his study of the influence of classical rhetoric on Du Bellay's poetry, Robert Griffin summarizes nicely the male world of the Collège de Coqueret where several of the Pléiade poets studied together. He describes a cohort of ambitious young men who were taught by erudite older men like Jean Dorat. They focused their studies on classical texts by such authors as Homer, Vergil, Cicero, and Quintilian (7-11). They also read Italian works by authors such as Petrarch and linguists like Speroni, and engaged with French logicians and linguists such as Pierre de la Ramée and Thomas Sebillet. The resulting impression is that the intellectual world of the Pléiade is grounded in patrifilial relationships: male teachers and mentors shaped their male students via models provided by male writers of antiquity, the Italian renaissance, or early French humanism.

This impression of a uniquely masculine intellectual community would appear to be inaccurate. My study shows that the network of humanists within the walls of the Collège de Coqueret, while decidedly male, sought sustained relationships with women at the Valois court, and not only for financial benefit. Women such as Marguerite de France organized dinners that brought writers and thinkers together; they assembled libraries, initiated literary and philosophical discussions, offered young poets judgments and advice informed by the solid humanistic education they had received and often taken more seriously than their male siblings. Du Bellay's

literary production is likely to have been quite different if he had not connected to this royal, female sphere early in his career. I document the resulting impact on his writing in the three chapters that follow.

Claudie Martin-Ulrich identifies another scholarly trend that has tended to privilege the knowledge of masculine aspects of court society in sixteenth-century France: she documents the growth of studies of the figure of the prince, beginning in the mid 1970's and continuing to the present (7-8). Among other publications, Daniel Ménager's 1979 study of Ronsard's political discourses *Ronsard, le Roi, le Poète, et les Hommes* is the most notable example of this tendency. Ronsard held the title "poète du Roi" beginning in 1554 (3) and Ménager is particularly interested in the "place exceptionnelle que [l'oeuvre de Ronsard] accorde à la figure du roi; le Roi en général, et non tel ou tel roi, plus ou moins aimé de Ronsard" (6).<sup>4</sup> Ménager establishes that despite Ronsard's differing relationships with successive Valois kings (he was particularly close to Charles IX, less so to others), the figure of the king embodies an eternal and unchanging ideal in his *discours*.<sup>5</sup>

That the king plays a central role in Ronsard's work does not necessarily mean that the monarch has the same valence in Du Bellay's work, even if in the wake of Ménager's study many scholars have focused on Du Bellay's writing for the king.<sup>6</sup> Any assertion of difference, however, counters the frequent tendency among critics

---

<sup>4</sup> Other studies that focus on the figure of the king are Anne-Marie Lecoq's 1987 *François Ier imaginaire*, Nicolas Le Roux's 2000 *La faveur du roi*, and two volumes edited by Isabelle Cogitore and Francis Goyet: *Devenir roi: essays sur la littérature adressé au prince* (2001) and *L'éloge du prince* (2003).

<sup>5</sup> Ronsard quickly earned regal epithets on his own merits: Du Bellay called him the "prince des odes," and others conferred the title "prince des poètes," which has been frequently applied ever since. The third volume of Michel Dassonville's five-volume study of Ronsard is titled *Ronsard: Prince des poètes ou poète des princes* (1976).

<sup>6</sup> See multiple studies by David Hartley, chapter five of Timothy Hampton's *Literature and Nation*, Philippe Desan's article "De la poésie de circonstance à la satire," and work by Cynthia Skenazi.

either to discuss the Pléiade poets as a unified body with shared aims and ideals, or to single out Ronsard's *oeuvre* as emblematic of that of the whole cohort. Du Bellay has long been perceived to be a second poet to Ronsard, and given their close association within the Pléiade circle, their works are inevitably read in light of each other, and not always to Du Bellay's advantage.<sup>7</sup> Ronsard's long and prolific writing life, combined with a keen sense of marketing and careful control of his image, have meant that his legacy has dominated the reception of the Pléiade poets, particularly since the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> One aim of my work is to bring to light important differences between Ronsard and Du Bellay, particularly with respect to their relationship to women at court. To date, these differences have gone unnoticed due to past focus on the figure of the king and the critical assumption that Du Bellay envied Ronsard's relationship with the monarch and sought to replicate it.

If one were to consult Keith Cameron's 1988 concordance of Du Bellay's poetic works, however, one might in fact be led to think that the figure of the king occupies an exceptionally central place in Du Bellay's *oeuvre*--just as *Ménager* shows that it does for Ronsard. By Cameron's count, the word *roy* appears 216 times and the word *prince* appears 139 times, in contrast to *royne* (26 examples) and *princesse* (25 examples). The picture changes somewhat, however, if one compares Cameron's counts of proper names: *Henri* appears 33 times (with variations in spelling), whereas *Marguerite* appears 37 times. While the idea of the king may well represent an eternal value for Du Bellay, as it does for Ronsard, I contend that Du Bellay in fact had little confidence that Henri II represented the ideals held by renaissance humanists, and that

---

<sup>7</sup> As one example, in her introduction to David Hartley's edition of Du Bellay's circumstantial poetry, Alison Saunders acknowledges that "Du Bellay's poetry has long suffered from being seen in the shadow of his much longer lived and consequently more prolific contemporary and friend, Ronsard" (xiv).

<sup>8</sup> See François Rouget's work on Ronsard's control of his image and successive editions of his works.

for Du Bellay, Henri's sister Marguerite and her circle guaranteed the cultural and moral direction of France.<sup>9</sup> Only by reading through the entire body of Du Bellay's work--as I do in this study--with careful attention to the way that rarely-read occasional poems correspond to other more commonly-read pieces, does the central role of Marguerite and Diane de Poitiers become evident.

### **Recent Work on Royal Women and Female Patronage**

My study complements recent work that has examined the importance of royal women as patrons in Valois France. Claudie Martin-Ulrich attempted to correct the surfeit of attention paid to the figure of the king in her *Persona de la princesse au XVIe siècle* (2004). She also co-edited a 2004 collection titled *Jeanne d'Albret et sa cour*, which includes articles on the relationship the queen had with poets and artists. A 2007 collection edited by Kathleen Wilson Chevalier, *Patronnes et mécènes en France à la Renaissance*, contains no study of Marguerite de France, but does contain an article about Diane de Poitiers's commissions for sculpture and art. Perhaps the most complete case study of royal female patronage is Barbara Stephenson's *Power and Patronage of Marguerite de Navarre* (2004).

No such in-depth examination of Marguerite de France's patronage exists.<sup>10</sup>

Previous scholars have explored her particular relationship to Du Bellay, but only in fragmentary ways. Most studies focus on the first two editions of *L'olive* and their

---

<sup>9</sup> Du Bellay's misgivings about Henri II have been noted by others. In the introduction to his edition of *La Deffence*, Jean-Charles Monferran writes "Toutefois, l'ensemble du projet nécessite l'appui d'un "roi philosophe" que François 1er semble être plus à même de représenter que son successeur, apparemment moins enclin aux arts que son illustre père. [...] Aussi Du Bellay semble-t-il dans la *Deffence* témoigner à la fois d'une inquiétude à l'égard du nouveau Roi qui lui fait, par contraste, développer la vision nostalgique d'un âge d'or du règne précédent, et d'une volonté évidente de refouler cette inquiétude en réitérant ses espérances en la personne de Henri. [...] le premier livre de la *Deffence* ne contient pas, au contraire du second, de critique de l'univers curial, ni, fait troublant, d'allusion au nouveau monarque. Il constitue en revanche une apologie de François 1<sup>er</sup> (42).

<sup>10</sup> The few biographies that exist do make general mention of Marguerite's support for poets and intellectuals (Peyre, Stephens).

connection to the princess (see chapter one of this thesis), or to a greater extent on the poems dedicated to Marguerite at the end of the *Regrets* (see chapter two of this thesis). There has been no attempt, however, to examine systematically Marguerite's presence in Du Bellay's entire *oeuvre*. This is the work that I have done in this project. What it shows, in the end, is that as much as Marguerite represented an ideal to Du Bellay (perhaps analogous to that of the king in Ronsard's poetic vision), she also was an extensive, durable, and specific intellectual influence whose presence shaped the content of Du Bellay's sonnets, his choice of poetic forms, and the rhythm of his writing and publishing. His poems to Diane de Poitiers, on the other hand, offer an illustrative contrast to those written to Marguerite. They exemplify the carefully pitched occasional aesthetics he deploys when writing to women at court.

### **Genre and Social Networks**

Du Bellay writes more poems for Marguerite than he writes to her brother the king, and he does so in a cornucopic variety of genres. In order to capture and celebrate the broad, connecting role that the princess figure plays in French society, linking "toutes les parties éloignées de la société: la terre et le ciel, le peuple et le prince, les poètes et le pouvoir" (Martin-Ulrich 384), Du Bellay uses a wide variety of forms. For Marguerite he produces book dedications, sonnets, odes of various forms and titles, a mock epic, *chants*, epigrams, and an epithalamium. In contrast to this assortment of literary kinds, when Du Bellay writes for Diane de Poitiers he most frequently composes odes and *chansons* (see chapter three of this thesis), and when he writes to Jeanne d'Albret he chooses the sonnet form.<sup>11</sup> Different *destinataires* receive

---

<sup>11</sup>The eighteen sonnets exchanged between Du Bellay and Jeanne d'Albret, Reine de Navarre, can be found in Volume II of Chamard's edition (219-232). I do not treat these pieces in the current study.

verse in genres that seem chosen specifically for them.<sup>12</sup> I argue that Du Bellay's finely differentiated use of genres is evidence of the way that his social relationships with women inspire and shape his poetics.

Previous critics have not explained Du Bellay's varied use of genre over the course of his career as a reflection of his individual social relationships, however. V.-L. Saulnier, Thomas Greene, Marc Bizer and Terence Cave all discuss genre in Du Bellay and Ronsard in ways that I will either refute or extend. Biographers like Saulnier tend to attribute Du Bellay's choice of genre to the aesthetic preferences of Du Bellay's literary comrades: Peletier du Mans recommended in 1546 that Du Bellay write odes and sonnets, which he did. Although Du Bellay published collections of both forms before Ronsard did, Ronsard subsequently was credited with introducing the ode form to France, which left the championing of the sonnet form to Du Bellay's credit. Ultimately, however, Saulnier concludes that Du Bellay did not in fact follow Peletier and Ronsard: analysis of his career shows him to be an innovator who, while influenced by his peers and predecessors, was able to write more quickly and publish new forms more decisively than his French counterparts:

Non content de donner à la France le premier recueil d'odes et le premier recueil de sonnets amoureux, il avait fondé tout un répertoire de genres; l'hymne religieux, le sonnet philosophique, le sonnet satirique, le sonnet de confidence, le grand discours politique, la satire classique en discours: satire de moeurs dans les *Jeux rustiques*, satire littéraire dans le "Poète courtisan." Des plus simples aux plus altiers, des plus personnels aux plus généraux, il avait chanté tous les sujets, et fondé chez nous au moins la poésie des ruines et la poésie de l'ennui (Saulnier, biography, 160-61).

---

<sup>12</sup> Along this line, Marc Bizer notices that Du Bellay uses different subgenres of the sonnet when writing to different *destinataires* in the *Regrets*: "Or le changement de destinataire aux premier et troisième sonnets provoque une importante transformation de *genre*. Dans le troisième, Du Bellay passe d'un destinataire-protecteur à un destinataire qui est vraisemblablement son ami ; ainsi la nature du sonnet passe d'une parodie de dépêche diplomatique à une lettre familière satirique. Cette modification de destinataire semble donc entraîner un changement de genre, mais aussi de fonction" (*Les lettres romaines*, 94).

Saulnier does not speculate, however, on the sources of Du Bellay's innovative energy and his ability to push new forms into use ahead of other poets in his circle. I submit that we should examine Du Bellay's social relationships, particularly with women at court, in order to locate the sources of this energy.

In contrast to what I will argue, Thomas M. Greene ("Regrets Only") relates Du Bellay's experimentation with mode and genre to his "psychic fragility" (18). The result, according to Greene, is an "inconsistency of self-presentation which led François Rigolot to refer to the 'esprit poétique en miettes' of *Les Regrets*" (6). The *Regrets* represents for Greene a "first-person record, plausibly uneven, unsparingly detailed, of a resisted human defeat" (18). It represents an odyssey that fails to achieve "nourishing self-replenishment"--the self is dispersed, and in the last sonnet reduced to "rien." Greene situates this particular configuration of the self historically in "post-feudal" society:

By accepting relatively menial employment in a city where naked power, intrigue, money, and sex count for more than tradition and birth, the poet of *Les Regrets* sees himself as having been *déclassé*, and this of course is the underlying cause of his supposed nostalgia for his native roots. When he writes in his most famous sonnet that he wants to see "le clos de ma pauvre maison" (31) this *clos* is a feudal enclosure to which he can never return. This nostalgia is temporal rather than geographical, so that this work reveals itself as belonging to that rather large class of sixteenth-century poems which could be described as "post-feudal." The real drama of exile is the displacement of an individual born into a late medieval society, still guided by aristocratic assumptions and loyalties, exposed to the dislocations of a sterile modern city" (3).<sup>13</sup>

Greene here focuses on Du Bellay's repeated complaints in the *Regrets* about the secretarial work he does for his relative, Cardinal Jean Du Bellay, from 1553-1557 in Rome. He was responsible for the Cardinal's accounts, and spent time chasing debtors

---

<sup>13</sup> In contrast to Greene's attribution of Du Bellay's nostalgia to the problems of the nobility in post-feudal society, Timothy Hampton defines Du Bellay's nostalgia as geographic (*Literature and Nation*).

and fending off creditors in exchange for a salary and other benefits. This work certainly was not apt to create an illustrious name for the young poet, and Greene rightly underscores the psychic effects that such bourgeois duties would have on a poet flushed with humanistic ideals, born to an aristocratic family. I submit that the poetry born out of this experience does not, however, represent a “human defeat” for Du Bellay.

Marc Bizer, also writing about the *Regrets*, has a different reading of Du Bellay’s psychology than Greene has--one that is closer to my own, but again limited to this one collection written in Rome. According to Bizer:

ce moi qui s’oblige à écrire à tant de destinataires divers, qui jongle avec les références privées et publiques, court le risque de se fragmenter, de s’éparpiller, de se disperser. À force de s’adresser à tant de monde, il peut finir par ne plus savoir qui il est. Or [...] c’est dans les relations épistolaires avec ses plus proches amis, mais aussi avec son rival Ronsard, que l’on verra se manifester chez Du Bellay, non seulement une identité individuelle cohérente, mais aussi celle de membre d’un groupe partageant des perspectives communes sur la poésie. (*Lettres romaines* 113)

Bizer defines Du Bellay as a poet who relies on his social circle for meaning and coherence. During his four years in Rome, Du Bellay used his distant social network at the Valois court to generate a new poetic corpus in the form of epistolary sonnets.

Comparing Du Bellay and Ronsard, Bizer observes:

Chez Du Bellay, le mouvement est d’abord centrifuge, de ses poèmes vers ses destinataires, puis, au-delà, vers un public plus large, avant de revenir à soi; en revanche chez Ronsard, l’élan est d’emblée centripète, visant à attirer l’attention du public sur son prochain exploit poétique. Ce mouvement centripète chez Ronsard fait que ses poèmes adressés à autrui sont moins influencés par leurs destinataires que chez Du Bellay et qu’ils ont par conséquent un caractère épistolaire moins marqué; en outre, il y a peu de poèmes adressés à des personnages vivants. Alors que la forme épistolaire est la même chez les deux poètes, les effets du genre sont différents: les sonnets de Ronsard sont des poèmes amoureux écrits par une *persona* relativement stable, à une maîtresse à la fois, alors que Du Bellay compose des épîtres élégiaques, satiriques et encomiastiques où le moi poétique cherche subtilement à se définir

en s'adressant à une multiplicité de correspondants. (*Lettres romaines* 168-69).

This centrifugal movement towards others suggests that Du Bellay remains a poet more concerned with lived social reality than Ronsard.<sup>14</sup> As a result, when writing encomiastic and occasional verse, he is more deliberate in his choice of form for each of his *destinataires* because more interested in the personal dynamics of social networks and the reception of his poetry within this framework.<sup>15</sup>

Terence Cave's assessment of Ronsard supports Bizer's affirmation that human relationships are a generative source for Du Bellay's poetry but not for his friend:

[...] the *Amours* insistently assert the productivity of their author in counterpoint to the frustrations of the lover. The text proliferates gratuitously, producing nothing but flowers of rhetoric and dreams of consummation. Likewise, the themes of patronage conjure up frescoes of god-like monarchs and nobles, at whose feast the poet sings and whose victories he celebrates, assuring himself as well as them a place in history. But their lack of generosity rapidly emerges as a counter-theme, notably in a series of court poems, to the Cardinal of Lorraine and others, published between 1556 and 1565. The poet, financially as well as erotically unrequited, is left with the fragments of his own devalued mythologies.

Such figures suggest the problems of a writer deprived of an adequate reader: since the poems masquerade as messages addressed to a woman or a patron, the failure of the circuit to complete itself causes tensions and disruptions in the medium of communication. (*Cornucopian* 229)

I believe that my thesis shows this to be one of the central differences between Du Bellay and Ronsard. Unlike the latter, Du Bellay is not deprived of an adequate reader, as Cave suggests Ronsard to be. Bizer has already shown that Du Bellay

---

<sup>14</sup> Reinforcing the notion that Du Bellay is a poet turned towards others, Marc Bizer specifies that many features of Du Bellay's writing fulfill what Roman Jakobson identified as the conative function: "L'orientation vers le destinataire" (*Les Lettres romaines*, note 6 p.238).

<sup>15</sup> In the *Deffence* Du Bellay shows sensitivity to circumstances and the occasion of poetry as well: "Il fault s'accommoder à la saison, et au lieu" (Monferran edition *Deffence* 164). Along related lines, when Martin-Ulrich writes about "la question fondamentale de l'adéquation entre l'éloge et la personne louée" (271), she says "Cette question semble avoir nettement plus intéressé Du Bellay que son contemporain Ronsard, dont la carrière peut-être trop réussie auprès des princes, plus que des princesses spécifiquement, a peu invité à considérer cette question" (271).

writes epistolary sonnets to other poets, and that some like Magny respond in veritable correspondence. Most significantly, Du Bellay found in Marguerite de France a reader who was equal to his needs.<sup>16</sup> When writing of her he repeatedly acknowledges the “faveur” that she has extended him and her approval of his poetry-- it is not an unrequited relationship. He clearly experiences the circuit of their interaction to be a satisfying exchange, and he suffers when their connection is interrupted during his years in Rome, and then again later when she marries and moves to the Piedmont.<sup>17</sup> The following chapters document that Du Bellay’s relationship to Marguerite was stable for ten full years (longer than any other of his friendships or patronage relationships) and served to anchor Du Bellay’s poetic production in ways that his other literary friendships did not.

### **Intertextuality, Originality, and the Poet’s Public Function**

In his conclusion, Terence Cave stresses the “visible intertextuality” of sixteenth-century writers, and Ronsard’s tendency to “revert insistently to past texts, both by explicit reference and by implicit allusion, and constitute [his] own identity by a perpetual confrontation with alien writing” (325). Du Bellay, too, writes in the sway of the ancients and other, particularly Italian, models. But in my opinion, critics

---

<sup>16</sup> Many thanks to Stamos Metzidakis for bringing to my attention Walter J. Ong’s 1975 essay “The Writer’s Audience is Always a Fiction,” in which Ong analyzes the different relationship between the writer and audience in the oral literary tradition (defined by the physical presence of the audience), and between writer and reader in written communication (defined by the distance between the two, the necessity of the writer to imagine or fictionalize the figure of the reader, and the writer’s increased possibilities for indirection). Since many, if not most, of Du Bellay’s poems to Marguerite appear to be written to her in private, during separations and before any public airing occurred, it is helpful to keep in mind that Du Bellay constructed poems for an imagined princess, and very probably imagined that other eyes (or ears) in royal circles would eventually have access to the poems as well.

<sup>17</sup> The question inevitably arises of whether there was any amorous link between Du Bellay and Marguerite. The historical record contains no correspondence or contemporary narratives to suggest anything other than chaste fondness (or chastely sublimated love) between the poet and royal lady. Although Du Bellay’s poems to Marguerite draw on traditions in which the poet adopts the stance of a lover, Du Bellay does not refer to himself as such and he never eroticizes Marguerite or mentions her body. This contrasts with other poets like Jean Lemaire de Belges, who when writing to his protector Marguerite d’Autriche in *Les Epitres de l’Amant Vert*, implicitly refers to himself as her lover and makes erotic allusions to her nude body. See Lawrence Kritzman’s article “The Rhetoric of Dissimulation in ‘La Première Epistre de l’Amant Vert’.”

have focused on Du Bellay's intertextual sources without acknowledging fully the value that Marguerite (and members of the Valois court in general) has as a vernacular, French subject that complements the call Du Bellay issued in the *Deffence* to write in the French vernacular.<sup>18</sup> Social relationships at court provided a personal, fresh, and completely original source of inspiration for the sixteenth-century poet who did not want to retread topics that were used by his literary predecessors. While sixteenth-century poets may have been comfortable with imitation and allusion to a degree that later authors may not be, they nonetheless display "explicit self-awareness" and make claims related to their own originality (Cave 330). Ronsard repeatedly boasts of being the first to introduce the ode form in French literature, which Du Bellay acknowledges at the same time that he insists on having been the first to introduce the sonnet sequence to France. This concern with getting credit for being first is one index of the desire of these poets to be seen as individuals who make unique contributions to French literature.

Choosing to write about contemporary French topics is not only a way for Du Bellay to distinguish himself from classical and Italian precursors. As Monferran and others have shown, Du Bellay aspired to a civic role in French society analogous to that of the orator in Rome:

La *Deffence* sert ainsi à prôner une figure sociale du poète, ce dernier dessinant avec le Prince les contours d'une nouvelle République. [...] Du Bellay installe le poète au cœur même des affaires de la République [...] le texte de Du Bellay contribue à redéfinir la mission citoyenne de poète-philosophe (dont l'épopée nationale constitue évidemment l'objectif le plus haut) et à renforcer l'autorité de la capitale.  
(Monferran, *Deffence*, 40-42)

---

<sup>18</sup> See for example Isidor Silver's articles "Pindaric Parallelism in Du Bellay: A Proof of His Independent Imitation of Pindar" *The French Review*, Vol.14, No. 6 (May, 1941), 461-472; "Did Du Bellay Know Pindar" *PMLA*, Vol.56, No. 4 (Dec., 1941), 1007-1019. More recently, see Eric MacPhail's 2008 article in *Viator* about Du Bellay's Virgilian intertext, and Marc Bizer's 2002 article in *Romance Notes* about the influence of Italian poet Claudiano on one of Du Bellay's most famous sonnets.

In order to claim his place in the political configuration of Valois France, the poet needed to write poetry that was seen to be relevant to the current order. In a moment of emerging nationalism and centralization of power, signaling and celebrating the best that France had to offer was the poet's patriotic duty. Du Bellay first affirmed this in chapter 12 of the second book of the *Deffence*, titled "Exhortation aux François d'écrire en leur Langue: avec le Louanges de la France." Du Bellay here praises the natural beauty of the French landscape and wonders why the French persist in valuing foreign models such as the Italians more than their own indigenous culture. Although he does not refer to *les grands* of French society in this chapter, Du Bellay's later writing makes clear that Marguerite herself is one of the native treasures of France that should be celebrated in verse.

### **Rhetorical Considerations: Finding a Topic, Choosing a Style**

Lastly, one must turn to the influence that classical rhetoric had on Du Bellay's writing practice. Robert Griffin in particular has established Du Bellay's debt to Cicero and Quintilian. The *Deffence* signals two aspects of classical rhetoric that Du Bellay finds to be particularly important:

Et premier, c'est une chose accordée entre tous les meilleurs Auteurs de Rethorique, qu'il y a cinq parties de bien dire, l'Invention, l'Eloquution, la Disposition, la Mémoire, et la Pronuntiation. Or [...] je me contenteray de parler des deux premieres, sçavoir de l'Invention et de l'Eloquution. (Monferran, *Deffence*, 85-86)

Du Bellay then proceeds to explain what he means by "invention" and "eloquution." Griffin explains the sixteenth-century conception of "invention" by comparing it to ideas of creativity in later periods:

Whereas the modern poet in the symbolist tradition seems more interested in qualities that are nuanced for his own contemplation, the Renaissance sonneteer strives more for relationships and definitions that are open for public scrutiny. He speaks from his own intelligence

to another intelligence on matters of persistent human significance, so his discourse—which is the poem—is reasonable in its inception, pursuit and resolution. Invention, being the writer’s personal discovery and judgment of preexisting, external reality, avoids equally the solipsist’s pure fantasy and the scientific philosopher’s dry recital of facts. (168)

Griffin here describes the problem of creativity in the sixteenth-century not in Romantic terms of producing new and original works born in poetic furor, but rather created via the discovery and interpretation of realities external to the poet. This is congruent with Bizer’s identification of the generative force that Du Bellay’s social network possessed (see page 10): the poet’s observation of the Valois court provided abundant material “on matters of persistent human significance.” The court exemplified both human strengths and weaknesses: its greatest virtues lay in figures like Marguerite and her circle, whose excellence demanded encomia. These exemplary figures co-existed with hypocrites, sycophants, ambitious strivers and charlatans—all detailed in satiric sections of the *Regrets* and poems like *Le poete courtisan*. Marguerite and other members of court thus represented a valid source of *content* for Du Bellay’s poetry: they were both the inspiration for and the substance of his poetic discourse.

As he wrote in the *Deffence* above, Du Bellay was not only preoccupied by the question of “invention,” or finding his topic, but also that of “eloquution” or style:

Eloquution (dy je) par la quelle principalement un Orateur est jugé plus excellent, et un Genre de dire meilleur, que l’autre : comme celle dont est apellée la mesme Eloquence : et dont la vertu gist aux mots propres, usitez, et non aliénes du commun usage de parler : aux Methaphores, Alegories, comparaisons, Similitudes, Energies, et tant d’autres figures, et ornemens, sans les quelz tout oraison, et Poème sont nudz, manques, et debiles. (Monferran, *Deffence*, 87)

The term “Ornemens,” used here, is frequently invoked by Du Bellay throughout his *oeuvre*. For Griffin, “Ornaments [...] were the substance of style.”<sup>19</sup> Griffin goes on to say that Quintilian “interchanges *ornaments* with the terms *flowers* and *colors* (VIII, iii) and the Pléiade makes the same equation” (47). Du Bellay in fact often refers to Marguerite as the ornament and flower of his verses “C’est de mes vers l’ornement” (“Les Deux Marguerites” v.73); she is also “de notre siècle & la perle, & la fleur” (*Regrets*, s. 180). As Martin-Ulrich points out, such ornamentation is not superficial:

la princesse donne de la valeur, du prix et de l’éclat aux vers dans lesquels elle apparaît. Elle n’en est rien moins que le noyau rayonnant, elle en fait l’attrait et l’intérêt. La décoration en outre n’est pas passive. L’ornementation ne constitue pas un geste gratuit, dénué de toute signification et dévalorisant pour son objet, bien au contraire. Comme le dit la rhétorique classique, le propre de l’éloge est [...] d’orner. (219)

Marguerite (and later, Diane de Poitiers) add value and interest to Du Bellay’s poetry. They are an integral part of his literary production, providing both the substance and the style of his poetry, its “invention” and its “eloquution.”

The critical generative role that the princess or other patrons play in the production of poetry may seem to impose a crushing debt upon the poet, but Martin-Ulrich thinks not:

Le mécénat fait paradoxalement apparaître une égalité possible entre le poète et la princesse. Cette égalité provient de la reconnaissance de jugement dont la princesse fait preuve à l’égard du poète. Du coup, loin d’écraser le poète, la princesse peut servir de rempart protecteur contre les dangers du monde extérieur, qui ne partage pas le même jugement. (282)

Martin-Ulrich insists here, as Greene did earlier (see page 9), on Du Bellay’s nostalgia for feudal assumptions of nobility, on his aristocratic desire for recognition

---

<sup>19</sup> Explaining the stylistic function of the princess in sixteenth-century poetry, Martin-Ulrich writes “La simple nomination de princesses de France dans les vers d’un poète transforme immédiatement ces vers en les affectant d’un label stylistique élevé” (218).

of a kind that was independent of mercantile exchange and the bourgeois focus on accumulation of wealth. Thus, Martin-Ulrich stresses that patronage represents a reciprocal relationship of shared affinities:

Le mécénat n'est pas vu comme le lieu d'un échange économique de service. Il devient au contraire le lieu d'une union d'un rassemblement dépendant étroitement des sentiments qui animent chacune des parties. C'est pourquoi il fonctionne selon le principe d'une affinité réciproque qui suppose une entente intellectuelle partagée et non des intérêts purement lucratifs. Le soutien de la toute-puissance royale dont les érudits bénéficient alors est le résultat d'une adoration réelle, d'un amour commun et d'affinités intellectuelles. (294)

We must therefore understand Du Bellay's relationships to his female patrons in their full significance. As the following chapters explore, they were not solely sources of income: they provided literary and intellectual support and encouragement. Beyond this important personal relationship, they also impacted Du Bellay's aesthetic choices, the content and style of his poetry. Chapter one will show how Du Bellay's initial meeting with Marguerite not only changed his orientation from male to female patronage, but also shaped the content and focus of his early poetry in the years before he left for Rome in 1553. Chapter two will analyze the continuing impact that Marguerite had on the collections he published after his return from Rome in 1557. Finally, chapter three will show how Du Bellay's poems to Diane de Poitiers differ from those written to Marguerite and illustrate his carefully differentiated production for individual female patrons.

### **Conclusion**

In his discussion of Ronsard's "Ode à Michel de L'Hospital," Terence Cave writes:

The juxtaposition of model-poet (Pindar) and patron in the opening strophe is no accidental alignment. Both are prestigious figures, who threaten the poet as well as offering him sustenance; his poem exists in any uneasy relationship to both simultaneously. 'Patron', after all, also

means 'model' [...]. The 'weaving' motif which is present from the beginning of the ode is recalled towards the end in a passage where the Fates are seen 'weaving' L'Hospital himself (strophe 20). The patron, like the ode itself, is a text (even a textile). (Note 12, 231)

Here, both a contemporary French bureaucrat and a classical author serve as models, as source and substance for Ronsard's poem, much as Marguerite does for Du Bellay throughout his entire *oeuvre*, and as Diane de Poitiers does to a lesser extent at the end of his career. If this is the case, Marguerite and Diane de Poitiers must now be considered as critical influences on Du Bellay, just as other models such as Pindar or Petrarch, or his contemporary Ronsard. They also merit the same attention that male patrons such as the king and Cardinal Jean du Bellay have received. More than sponsors or underwriters, they are texts and tropes, forms and voices, key contributors to Du Bellay's poetics.

## **Bouquets : Du Bellay's Poems to Marguerite de France 1549-1553**

### **Introduction**

Meeting Marguerite de France in 1549--shortly after he began publishing--opened Du Bellay's eyes to the possibility of female patronage and encouraged him to expand his imagined audience beyond family and friends to write for distinguished members of court. While competing with Ronsard for Marguerite's patronage, Du Bellay pushed the sonnet form in new directions that prefigure the sonnet collections that he would write in Rome. It is unclear whether Marguerite had any direct influence on Du Bellay's shift from Petrarchan and neoclassical themes to Christian ones during this period: it may have been Du Bellay's own protean muse, or it may have been Marguerite's penchant for variety that drove him to offer her multicolored and various bouquets, calculated, perhaps, to surprise and catch her fancy before other poets--Ronsard--had a chance to do the same. Whatever the source of these developments, the restlessness of Du Bellay's muse between 1549 and 1553 is consistently matched by his steadfast devotion to "la fleur des MARGUERITES."<sup>20</sup>

### **Marguerite de France and Patronage**

Marguerite de France, sister to Henri II, was born in 1523 and died in 1574. She assumed the title *Duchesse de Berry* in 1549, after the death of her illustrious aunt, Marguerite de Valois-Angoulême, also known as Marguerite de Navarre, who had held the title before her. Ten years after assuming this first title, Marguerite married Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, in 1559 and became *Duchesse de Savoie*.

---

<sup>20</sup> See page 25 of this chapter for François Rouget's description of Marguerite's diverse taste in poetry.

Marguerite is often confused with two of her female relatives, also named Marguerite: her aunt Marguerite de Navarre (mentioned above), sister of François Ier, and her niece, Marguerite de Valois, daughter of Henri II and wife of Henri IV. These two Marguerites were published authors, but Marguerite de France was not.<sup>21</sup> She received an excellent education, however, organized by Marguerite de Navarre after the early death of her mother, Claude de France. Catherine de Medici shared this education: she was close in age to Marguerite and the two sisters-in-law became close while living and studying together at the French court (Stephens 74). Their education included needlework, horsemanship, dancing, swimming, music, and instruction in Latin, Italian, and Greek (Stephens 37). Margolin notes that Marguerite also knew Spanish (161). She was reported to enjoy reading the works of Plutarch, Aristotle, Cicero, Virgil, and Horace in the original. A 1550 entry in her account book documents purchases of several books, including multiple editions of Cicero from different publishing houses, editions of Aristotote's *Ethics* in both Latin and Greek, annotations of Giordamus, Erasmus, Poliziano, and finally several volumes of Horace (Margolin, note 7 bis, 177).<sup>22</sup>

Marguerite's early education developed a lifelong love of learning, and a reputation as an erudite and generous patron in many different disciplines:

Le mécénat de la deuxième Marguerite, la duchesse de Berry, étend sa protection et sa manne à tous les domaines de l'esprit, poésie classique, science, histoire, philosophie; on ne compte plus les auteurs et les traducteurs qui lui font hommage de leur labeur. Hilarion de Coste, après les témoignages de Brantôme, a pu fixer la légende de l'érudite princesse : *Ils ne pouvoient pas mieux adresser leurs livres à une*

---

<sup>21</sup> Marguerite's lack of publication may explain her relatively unknown status in comparison to her aunt and niece. In his 1902 biography, Peyre tries to situate his work on Marguerite's life and explains that her life has largely been overlooked by historians and scholars: "Nous n'avons donc pas une réhabilitation à faire, un procès à réviser; il s'agit moins d'un mérite contesté que d'un mérite oublié ou méconnu" (2-3). See note on page 209 for further discussion of Marguerite's limited production in writing.

<sup>22</sup> I would like to thank Joe Loewenstein for identifying that Margolin cites these names from a 1904 publication by H. Patry in which "Giordamus" is a typo, possibly for "Giordano Bruno" (See Patry page 10, note 1).

*Princesse qui a eu tous les jours de sa vie une passion extreme de faire du bien aux sçavants.* (Berriot-Salvadore 271)

When Marguerite resided in Bourges, as Duchesse de Berry, Stephens reports that she surrounded herself with learned company:

[She] gathered round her literary friends in such numbers that [the castle] became the “nursery of Helicon”, the “hostel of the Muses.” Here the Duchess founded a literary salon; here she established what the poets called “her school of knowledge and of virtue,” Around her learned board (“sa docte table”) assembled poets of the Pléiade, “beguiling with their verses the tedium of the repast,” and professors of the university disputing hotly on all manner of subjects with a freedom tolerated nowhere else in France. Presiding alike over recitation and dispute, at the head of the board sat the gentle Duchess, “the queen and arbitress of conversation.” (135)

This description of Marguerite’s entourage and daily life is corroborated by her chancellor, Michel de l’Hospital, who wrote that the Duchess was:

fidèle à ses amitiés; fermant l’oreille aux dénonciations; préférant une franchise polie et spirituelle (*libertas urbana*) à une obséquiosité servile; facilement abordable ; aimable sans flatterie, sérieuse sans dureté (*Et comis, non blanda; gravis, non dura, fuisti*); compatissante à tous: patiente avec ses serviteurs; refuge des malheureux ; protectrice des pauvres paysans; appui toujours prêt pour les gens de bien. Avec cela un grand air; une vie large et facile; une table vraiment royale avec nombreuse compagnie de gens distingués accompagnant le repas, tant qu’il dure, de conversations variées. Au milieu, la princesse siège comme l’arbitre du bien et du beau. Elle écoute patiemment les vers qu’on lui lit, les mauvais comme les bons, et saisit toutes les occasions de recommander au roi, alors occupé à de grandes guerres, les amis des muses. (Peyre 22)

Marguerite may even have been too tolerant an audience: l’Hospital “urged her to show more discrimination in her patronage” (Stephens 115), and Jodelle “complained that in her temple “hoarse crows” were permitted to take rank with the “rarest swans” (Stephens 115).

Marguerite’s emblem was a serpent wound around an olive branch, with the motto “Wisdom, guardian of all things (*Rerum custos sapientiae*)” (Stephens 111).

Indeed, Marguerite was so often seen as the guardian of writers and thinkers that she

became closely identified with the immortal Pallas Athena (Minerva), Greek goddess of peace and wisdom. Other members of the royal family were also associated with members of the pantheon: Henri II was consistently portrayed as Jupiter or Apollo, Catherine de Medici was Juno. But of Marguerite's association with Pallas Athena, Bourciez writes:

aucune identification n'a été plus complète, poursuivie avec autant de zèle, aucun culte n'a été si religieusement observé, sans doute parce que les prêtres y trouvaient leur profit. Marguerite n'est pas seulement la Minerve "pleine du suc de sagesse," c'est aussi la guerrière, la Pallas Athène des Grecs, celle qui, pour secourir son peuple, brandit à l'occasion sa lance frémissante. Et quel est ce peuple nouveau, sinon les poètes, les savants, les artistes? (191)

Biographers assert that the two men to benefit the most from Marguerite's patronage were Michel de l'Hospital and Ronsard (Peyre 9, Stephens 114).<sup>23</sup> In each case Marguerite was a stalwart supporter and made dramatic interventions on their behalf. She gave L'Hospital a series of powerful positions in her household, and later recommended him to Catherine de Medici, for whom he worked as chancellor of France from 1560 until being dismissed in 1568. He then withdrew to his country house at Vignay, but he was not forgotten by Marguerite, then living in Savoie. When he was threatened during the period of the St. Bartholomew's massacre, Marguerite intervened to save his life (Stephens 280). As l'Hospital's administrative career benefitted from Marguerite's protection, he became a patron of *literati* himself (Stephens 120), and the Pléiade poets, including Du Bellay, addressed many poems to him.

As for Ronsard, Stephens writes:

He had every reason to bless the day when President Bouju introduced him to Margaret, who obtained for him a handsome pension from Henry II as well as abbey and other benefices. Even after her marriage

---

<sup>23</sup> Given the relationship I trace between Du Bellay and Marguerite in the present study, I am not sure that I agree with Peyre and Stephens.

and departure from France she did not forget her friend. In 1560 she wrote to Catherine de Medici, asking for some benefice for Ronsard in order that he may “continue the labours, which, until now, he has undertaken for the profit and honour of France” (114).

In addition to these favors, numerous biographers and literary historians have referred to Marguerite’s most dramatic intervention on behalf of Ronsard: a famous incident at court, which probably occurred in the spring of 1550, possibly 1551. Ronsard’s *Odes* had appeared in early 1550, and had been mocked by an older generation of poets. When Mellin de Saint-Gelais openly criticized Ronsard’s work in front of the king, Marguerite and l’Hospital came to his public defense and solidified his standing with the monarch.<sup>24</sup> Ronsard subsequently wrote his famous Pindaric ode “Ode à Michel de l’Hospital” in thanks, along with numerous individual pieces and collections dedicated to Marguerite.

Marguerite lent her protection to foreign poets as well. In one documented act of patronage, Marguerite commissioned an allegorical poem in Latin--the *Civitas Veri*--from the Italian poet Bartolomeo Delbene, a member of her household, in 1565 (Joukovsky, “Une Commande,” 466). She also obtained the abbey of Belleville, in the Lyon diocese, for Delbene (Peyre 15), and for his son Alfonse Delbene, she obtained the *abbé de Hautecombe* (Stegmann 200).

The cases mentioned above document known acts of patronage performed by Marguerite de Berry. Despite the fact that none involves Du Bellay, authors are quick to point out that she had a special relationship with him, which Winifred Stephens describes in a section titled “The Romance of Joachim Du Bellay” (126). According to Stephens, Jean de Morel, Seigneur de Grigny, arranged Du Bellay’s introduction to

---

<sup>24</sup> Mellin de Saint-Gelais has frequently been credited with introducing the sonnet form in France, although he wrote very few of them. (see Marcel Françon’s article “Notes sur l’Histoire du Sonnet en France”). François Rigolot’s 1984 article “Qu’est-ce qu’un sonnet” argues against Françon and asserts that Clément Marot was in fact the first to introduce the sonnet form to France.

Marguerite in June 1549. She says that it happened “when the Princess with the King and Queen had come to the Palace of Les Tournelles [in Paris] for Henry’s triumphal entry into his capital and for Catherine’s coronation at Saint-Denis” (127), and that this was a turning point in Du Bellay’s career. Marguerite supposedly asked that Du Bellay dedicate his next volume to her, which he did when his *Recueil de Poésie* was published that autumn.

Stephens says that after his return from Rome, Du Bellay’s health and deafness prevented him from seeing much of Marguerite (133). She married and followed her new husband to Savoie in 1559; Du Bellay died only a few months after she left France. In this way, Du Bellay’s writing career coincides almost exactly with the period that Marguerite spent living in France as the Duchesse de Berry (1549-1559).

### **Marguerite’s Literary Preferences**

Although Du Bellay had an especially keen fondness for Marguerite and there is evidence that he was a favorite of hers, she protected a long list of artists and intellectuals over the course of her life. We have seen a few of the classical authors whom she read (p.19), as well as reports of her willingness to entertain poets of all qualities at her court (p.20). But if given a choice, what were her tastes in contemporary literature? François Rouget has published on a recently discovered manuscript at Harvard’s Houghton Library that he believes belonged to Marguerite or to her doctor, Louis de Rochefort.<sup>25</sup> The manuscript is written in many different hands and contains sixty-two pieces, some attributed to known authors and others with no attribution. The album seems to have been compiled between 1560 and Marguerite’s

---

<sup>25</sup> François Rouget, “Marguerite de Berry et sa Cour en Savoie d’après un album de vers manuscrits,” *Revue d’histoire littéraire de la France* 106.1 (2006) : 3-16.

death in 1574, although at least one poem by Clément Marot and two by Du Bellay predate this period. As for the contents, Rouget says:

[...] ces poèmes offrent une variété de sujets (amour, politique, religion), de tons (lyrique, satirique...) et de formes (sonnet, ode, stances) qui correspond bien à l'esthétique de la *varietas*, recherchée autant par chacun des participants au recueil manuscrit que par le compilateur. (7)

Although much about this album and its contents remains a mystery, Rouget concludes:

Ce qui est sûr, c'est que la présence des écrivains identifiés et le contenu de leurs pièces reflètent bien les goûts de Marguerite. Le mélange de sérieux et de fantaisie qui les anime, la coprésence de pièces de tendances religieuses antagonistes mais unies par l'esprit satirique, la diversité des formes poétiques de courants et de périodes historiques s'étendant sur près d'un demi-siècle, tout cela renvoie à la personnalité complexe et riche d'une princesse royale "d'inspiration érasmienne" (J.-C. Margolin) que fut Marguerite de Savoie. (14)

Given these broad tastes and her appreciation for variety, what forms did Du Bellay choose when writing to Marguerite?

### **Du Bellay and Marguerite 1549-1553**

Du Bellay wrote more poems to or about Marguerite than to any other important figure of the time. He wrote at least 35 pieces to Marguerite in as many as 10 different genres: to her brother Henri II he wrote approximately 22 pieces in 10 genres. This comparison alone testifies to the central role that Marguerite played in Du Bellay's *oeuvre*. His writing to her spanned his entire career as well, from the first year that he published to the last.

The largest number of poems to Marguerite were sonnets, of which there are 20 if one does not count the entire collection of *L'Olive*, for which many scholars believe Marguerite--the French equivalent of Petrarch's Laura--to be the inspiration, and the 1559 *Amours*, which some scholars also believe were written with Marguerite

in mind. The first edition of *L'Olive* contained fifty sonnets, the second added sixty-five new ones for a total sequence of one hundred fifteen sonnets, and the 1559 *Amours* contained 29 sonnets, all published posthumously in 1568. If these are included in Du Bellay's writings to Marguerite, he would have written her over one hundred and fifty sonnets.

Besides sonnets, Du Bellay wrote dedications (3), odes (4), epigrams (2) and latin elegies (3) to Marguerite, as well as one each of the following forms: *villanelle*, *epithalame*, *epitaphe*, *inscription*. Du Bellay also refers to Marguerite in numerous poems that he addresses to fellow writers and powerful members of court, which makes a definitive count of Marguerite's appearances in his *oeuvre* difficult to estimate. What is clear is that Marguerite is an important inspiration for Du Bellay's poetry from 1549-1559 and that she is a constant addressee as the poet tests different genres and models in the process of finding his own voice.

### **Early 1549: *La Deffence, L'Olive, Vers Lyriques***<sup>26</sup>

Some scholars believe that Marguerite was Du Bellay's imagined dedicatee from the very beginning of his career, and while there are persuasive arguments on this issue, it remains unclear. Du Bellay's ten-year publishing career began with three texts that appeared together in early 1549: *La Deffence et Illustration de La Langue Françoise*, *l'Olive* (followed by *l'Antérotique*), and the *Vers Lyriques*.<sup>27</sup> These represent three different written genres: the *Deffence* was a manifesto which

---

<sup>26</sup> All citations from the *Olive* and *Vers Lyriques* are taken from Du Bellay: Œuvres poétiques, eds. Daniel Aris and Françoise Joukovsky, vol. 1 (Paris : Éditions Classiques Garnier, 2009).

<sup>27</sup> Du Bellay's first known written poem was probably his *Epitaphe de Clement Marot*, first published in the 1549 *Vers Lyriques* but possibly written at the time of Marot's death in 1544. Du Bellay's first known published poem was a *dizain* to the city of Mans, included in Jacques Peletier du Mans' 1547 collection *Les Oeuvres Poétiques* (François 93-94). Regarding the unity of the texts published in March 1549, Jean-Charles Monferran says that " Michel Magnien, 2007, a définitivement démontré que *la Deffence* date bien de 1549 et qu'en dépit de la présence de deux pages de titres différentes, *la Deffence* et *l'Olive*, assortie de *l'Antérotique* et des *Vers lyriques*, constituent un seul et unique ouvrage" (*Deffence* 416).

explained the goals and ideals of the young Pléiade poets; *l'Olive* experimented with the sonnet form and was the first sonnet sequence written in French; the *Vers Lyriques* experimented with odes that were largely Horatian in inspiration (xxxv).

An examination of the paratextual apparatus from 1549 suggests that Du Bellay had a limited sense of powerful people to whom he might dedicate his work and from whom he might seek protection: the *Deffence* was dedicated to his influential relative, Cardinal Jean Du Bellay, who was a known patron of literature and who had published Latin poems himself in an edition with Latin Odes by Salmon Macrin in 1546. He thus represented a rather safe or familiar choice as a dedicatee, as both a family member and a known lover of literature. *L'Olive* carried no specific dedication: it was preceded by a simple announcement “Il dedie son livre à sa Dame” (277), followed by a *huitain* to this anonymous lady. The identity of the lady has been much discussed: an old theory claimed that she was a woman named Viole from Anjou, another proposed Olive de Sévigné, a cousin of the poet's, and more recently many authors believe it may have been Marguerite herself (Béné 225-46, Peyre 16, Stephens 128). A second edition of *L'Olive* published one year later in October 1550 was indeed dedicated to Marguerite, but the question remains about whether she was the implicit dedicatee of the first edition in spring 1549.

Charles Béné makes a persuasive case that it was. He points out that Marguerite's emblem was an olive branch, and that the title of the collection is *L'Olive*, or the olive tree, rather than *Olive*, the woman's name (226). He also alludes to a latin poem by Jean Dorat that precedes the collection and which seems to refer to Marguerite as the goddess Pallas, suggesting that the goddess/Marguerite has a secret preference for the poet: “Les vers de Dorat [...] mettent sur le même pied le Laurier

(de Pétrarque) et l'Olive (de Du Bellay): mais, ajoute [Dorat], si Apollon aime son poète, Pallas, c'est-à-dire Marguerite, n'en aime pas moins le sien" (230).<sup>28</sup>

In addition to Dorat's apparent reference to Marguerite, Béné finds compounding evidence when analyzing the 1549 *huitain* to the anonymous lady and the "Au Lecteur" preface that follows. In the *huitain*, Du Bellay adopts a humble attitude asserting that the lady's "grandeur" far exceeds any merit that his verses may have. Béné points out that Du Bellay frequently refers to Marguerite's *grandeur*, which would have been an inappropriate reference to the other, less powerful women who have been considered as possible dedicatees (Viole, Olive de Sévigny). This *huitain* is followed by a brief note to the reader ("Au Lecteur"), in which Du Bellay justifies the publication of his verses:

et me suffisoit qu'ilz fussent agreables à celle qui m'a donné la hardiesse de m'essayer en ce genre d'ecrire, à mon avis encore aussi peu usité entre les François, comme elle est excellente sur toutes, voyre quasi une Deesse entre les femmes. (278)

The reference to the lady's encouragement "celle qui m'a donné la hardiesse de m'essayer" is similar to what Du Bellay and Ronsard say about Marguerite elsewhere in their writing: poets repeatedly credit her with encouraging them to write and publish. The reference to the innovative nature of the poetry "ce genre d'ecrire, à mon avis encore aussi peu usité entre les François" and the fact that the lady encouraged it suggests that she was literary and educated, and the final encomium "elle est excellente sur toutes, voyre quasi une Deesse entre les femmes" seems to refer to a noble lady of high standing.

Du Bellay goes on to say that the anonymous lady gave him permission to publish: "je me suis hasté d'en faire un petit recueil, et tumultuairement le jecter en

---

<sup>28</sup> Dorat's Latin verses are the following: "Phoebus amat Laurum : glaucam sua Pallas Olivam/Ille suum vatem, nec minus ista suum" (Béné 230).

lumiere, avecques la permission de celle qui est et sera seule mon Laurier, ma Muse et mon Apolon” (278). Béné sees the term “permission” as further proof that the lady in question was highly placed and literate, aware of contemporary poets and their writing.

After these arguments, Béné concludes:

On saisit dès lors assez bien la démarche de Du Bellay. Dans un premier temps, c’est dans l’intimité du Collège de Coqueret que, sous l’impulsion et les conseils d’un Dorat ou d’un Ronsard, mais avec les encouragements de Marguerite, Du Bellay compose et édite son premier canzoniere. Le choix du genre, le titre du recueil, le poème liminaire et surtout la préface suggèrent le nom de l’inspiratrice, mais la timidité du poète, le haut rang de la dame expliquent une réserve, que les termes d’*Olive* ou de *Pallas* éclairent pour les seuls initiés. (231-32)

Béné then suggests that it was only after Du Bellay met Marguerite in person in the summer of 1549 that he had the confidence to openly dedicate his work to her.

Béné does not refer, however, to the end of the preface, in which Du Bellay says that he seeks no popular acclaim: he claims that his desired readers included only the writers Saint-Gelais, Heroët, Ronsard, Carles, Scève, Bouju, Salel, Martin, “and a few others” of the same caliber: “A ceulx là s’adressent mes petiz ouvraiges” (278). While the collection is dedicated to an anonymous lady--perhaps Marguerite--Du Bellay here declares that other poets are his target audience for the published sequence of fifty sonnets. They seem the most apt audience for the collection, as it has the feel of an academic exercise in which Du Bellay imitates and translates a variety of Italian sources in order to test his own powers along with the flexibility of the French language.<sup>29</sup> It is possible that a literate reader like Marguerite would

---

<sup>29</sup> Alduy says that the 1549 *Olive* imitated Ariosto and Giolito’s anthology of Petrarchan imitators, whereas the 1550 *Olive* was inspired more by Petrarch’s *Canzoniere* itself (*L’Arbre* 53).

appreciate this learned work, but fellow poets would understand even better the stakes and accomplishments of this ground-breaking exercise.<sup>30</sup>

The question remains about whether the content of any of the fifty original sonnets seems particularly apt for Marguerite. In my opinion, sonnet four is the only one of this group that seems to refer in any extended, possible way to Marguerite. The first lines mention Pallas and the olive branch, both associated with Marguerite:

L'heureuse branche à Pallas consacrée  
Branche de paix, porte le nom de celle  
Qui le sens m'oste, et soubz grand' beauté cele  
La cruauté, qui à Mars tant agréé. (1-4)

While the first two lines could logically be seen to refer to Marguerite, the second two seem to represent the typically beautiful but cruel petrarchan lady, rather than any particular living woman. Later, the tercets seem once again fitting for Marguerite:

Que du hault ciel il t'ait été donné,  
Je ne suis point de le croire etonné,  
Veu qu'en esprit tu es la souveraine :

Et que tes yeux, à ceulx qui te contemplant,  
Cœur, corps, esprit, sens, ame, et vouloir emblent  
Par leur douceur angelique et seraine. (9-14)

The first tercet in particular, with its emphasis on the lady's esprit seems apt for the Duchesse de Berry, much celebrated for her mind and learning. The reference in the second tercet to the lady's sweet serenity also echoes contemporary descriptions of Marguerite's personality. Nothing points conclusively, however, to Marguerite as object of this sonnet, and the majority of other sonnets are imitations or translations of Petrarch and his Italian imitators, with little room or concern for individualizing

---

<sup>30</sup> François Rigolot's analysis of the *Olive* programmatically rejects any reference to a lived reality outside the poem. He writes "Le poète a beau prétendre célébrer le nom de Marguerite avec une 'douce fureur', ce n'est pas 'Marguerite' qui l'intéresse mais 'Olive'. Entre les deux signifiants il y a le fossé qui sépare l'obligation de l'inspiration" (132). I disagree with Rigolot and believe that the references to Marguerite, Ronsard, and Scève in the second edition are of capital importance to Du Bellay (see my discussion of the second edition which begins on page 52).

details. Some sonnets contain a few references that theoretically could point to Marguerite, but these ultimately seem too slight upon which to base any assertions. For example, several sonnets (10, 18, 54) refer to the lady as Madame, a designation that most Pléiade poets used for Marguerite. In sonnets 16, 19, and 51 Du Bellay refers to the lady as “ma Déesse”, and we have already seen how often Marguerite is associated with the goddess Minerva and Pallas Athena. In sonnet 16 the lady is “ma souveraine,” in sonnet 39 “ma seule princesse.” Marguerite was indeed a princess, and sonnets 39 and 40 contain feudal metaphors that are more in line with French monarchical relations than with the conventions of Petrarchan love. No known sources have been identified for these two poems, so they may well have been original to Du Bellay, possibly inspired by Marguerite.<sup>31</sup> Beyond the general frame of these poems, however, in which the poet pledges fidelity to his princess, his liege lady, there is nothing more specific that would seem to refer to Marguerite.

In conclusion, many scholars believe that the 1549 edition of *L'Olive* was written with Marguerite in mind, and among them Charles Béné builds the most persuasive case. There is little in the sonnets themselves or the paratext, however, to confirm this attribution. Nevertheless, if it were true it would mean that Du Bellay associated Marguerite with the sonnet form beginning with his first collection of published sonnets.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Sonnet 39: Plus ferme foy ne fut onques jurée / A nouveau prince, ô ma princesse! / Que mon amour, qui vous sera sans cesse / Contre le temps et la mort assurée. // De fosse creuse, ou de tour bien murée / N'a point besoing de ma foy la forteresse / Dont je vous fy' dame, roine, et maïstresse, / Pour ce qu'ell'est d'éternelle durée. // Thesor ne peult sur elle estre vainqueur, / Un si vil prix n'aquiert un gentil cœur: / Non point faveur, ou grandeur de lignage, // Qui eblouïst les yeulx du populaire, / Non la beauté qui un leger courage / Peult emouvoir, tant que vous, me peult plaire. (36).

<sup>32</sup> Marguerite is clearly identified with sonnet form in the second edition of the *Olive*, published one year later in 1550.

The 1549 *Vers Lyriques* is a collection of odes, published with the *Deffence* and *l'Olive*. It contains no dedication at all, but is preceded by a brief note to readers ("Au Lecteur") in which Du Bellay announces that he has not always taken care to alternate masculine and feminine rhymes in the thirteen odes that follow. The alternation of rhymes was a key aspect of Ronsard's definition of the ode form, so this admission by Du Bellay indicates a certain independence from Ronsard's precept. His allusion to form in the preface seems like a technical admission for fellow poets, those that were listed in the "Au Lecteur" to *l'Olive* and who would have been familiar with various theories and definitions of the ode in 1549.

The thirteen odes in the *Vers Lyriques* are predominantly about pleasure, love, and poetry; none mentions Marguerite, and in fact none of them addresses a woman. The first ode is addressed to Du Bellay's native Anjou and the Loire river; later odes are addressed to male friends and neighbors whom Du Bellay knew from Anjou, Poitiers, and the Collège de Coqueret. In this sense, it is an intimate collection that reveals the limits of Du Bellay's social world in early 1549. The only *grand* whom he addresses directly during this period is his own relative, Jean du Bellay, in the preface to the *Deffence*. Neither *l'Olive* nor the *Vers Lyriques* are dedicated to named patrons. Thus, in early 1549 Du Bellay only names a close circle of male family members, friends, neighbors, and fellow poets in his published work. This situation will change six months later.

### **Late 1549: Recueil de Poésie**<sup>33</sup>

Biographers note the defining nature of Du Bellay's June, 1549 meeting with Marguerite (Chamard 222, Saulnier 54). Their interpretation of this event is based mostly on what Du Bellay himself writes in the preface to the *Recueil de Poésie*, a

---

<sup>33</sup> Citations from the *Recueil de poésie* are taken from *Du Bellay: Œuvres poétiques*, eds. Daniel Aris and Françoise Joukovsky, vol. 1 (Paris : Éditions Classiques Garnier, 2009).

collection of odes dedicated to Marguerite and written to please the *grands* at the French court. This is the first collection published after the triple appearance of the *Deffence*, *l'Olive*, and *Vers Lyriques* earlier in the year. The preface is titled *A tresillustre Princesse Madame Marguerite Seur Unique du Roy*; it is the second collection that Du Bellay overtly dedicates to a specific person. The first instance was the *Deffence*, dedicated to *Monseigneur Le Reverendissime Cardinal Du Bellay*. The prefaces to *l'Olive* and the *Vers Lyriques* were simply titled *Au Lecteur*, and *l'Olive* was dedicated to Du Bellay's anonymous *dame*.

In the preface to the *Recueil*, Du Bellay opens by saying that before meeting Marguerite, he had been so disappointed by the poor reception of his early 1549 collections that he had resolved to give up writing.<sup>34</sup> He blames the poor reception of his work on the undervaluation of literature in contemporary French society, and on a generation of unsophisticated writers:

Je ne scay si l'infelicité de nostre siècle en est cause, ayant l'ambition, l'avarice, et l'ocieuse volupté, pestes des bons esprits, chassé d'entre nous ce tant honneste desir de l'immortalité : ou la trop grande et indocte multitude des escrivains, qui de jour en jour s'eleve en France, au grand deshonneur et abatardissement de nostre langue. (121)

Du Bellay's disappointment faded, however, after meeting Marguerite in Paris at the time of her brother's royal entry into the city. The poet declares himself so encouraged that he returned to writing, motivated by the desire to please Marguerite with additional poems:

... lors que dernièrement estant le Roy à Paris, après avoir pris la hardiesse de me presenter devant vostre excellence, il vous pleut de vostre benigne grace me recevoir avec tel visaige, que je congneu mes petiz labeurs vous avoir esté agréables. Cela, Madame, a depuis si vivement incité mon courage, que mettant en arriere ma premiere deliberation, je me suis remis aux choses que j'ay pensé vous pouvoir

---

<sup>34</sup> Alduy explains that two older poets were chosen to manage Henry II's June 1549 entry into Paris; Du Bellay may have hoped for a larger role in the event after his March publications. This did not happen, which may explain his disappointment (*L'Arbre* 34).

donner quelque plaisir : sans que maladie ou autre empeschement ait peu retirer mon esprit de ceste non jamais assez louée entreprise, jadis tant favorizée de ce grand Roy François vostre père, et maintenant du treschretien Roy, et de vous, comme seuls et vrais heritiers de sa vertu. (122)

Du Bellay clearly wants to transcend the current period “l’infelicité de nostre siècle” and reconnect with the reign of François Ier which was so favorable to humanists and artists. Marguerite and her brother are described as the sole true inheritors of her father’s cultural values, suggesting that the royal family is the one appreciative audience on which serious poets can count. Indeed, either Marguerite or her brother will figure in nearly all of the odes in this collection, even if the title of the ode indicates that it is addressed to a different member of the court.

It seems that in the months after meeting Marguerite Du Bellay quickly wrote the new collection of odes and showed them to her in manuscript form. She approved them and asked that he publish them using her name:

Vous ayant onques ces derniers jours fait present de ce petit livre, non seulement vous l’avez eu agreable (comme est vostre bonté coustumiere de recevoir toutes choses, qui d’humble vouloir sont presentées à vostre grandeur) mais encor’ vous a pleu me commander de le mettre en lumiere, et sous vostre nom. (122)

The title of the collection as it is written in the *Privilege du Roy* insists on Marguerite’s role in its publication: “Il est permis par lettres du Roy [...] à Jaquette Turpin, de faire imprimer et mettre en vente un petit livre en rime François, intitulé *Recueil de Poesie, presenté à tresillustre princesse Madame Marguerite, sœur unique du Roy, mis en lumiere par commandement de madicte Dame*” (119). Du Bellay clearly feels that invoking Marguerite and her approval of his poetry will smooth the reception of this new work, and Marguerite’s support buoys his spirits:

... je me sen si fort et bien armé contre toutes les difficultez qui de jour en jour se treuvent ez haultes enterprises, que je pouray combattre l’envie, et la mort, et celuy temps mesmes qui abat les grands Palaiz, et superbes Pyramides. (122)

After this expression of inflated confidence, Du Bellay closes the preface by announcing that he will not trifle to respond to any of his critics at this time, because Marguerite's approval--and thanks to her that of the king and the queen--are the only endorsements that he needs:

mes escriz ont desja esté si heureux de rencontrer la faveur de vostre jugement, et par vostre moyen celuy du Roy et de la Roynes, auxquels ayant satisfaict, tant s'en fault que je me soucie du mescontentement d'autruy, que j'estimeray de là avoir receu toute la gloire, et le fruit de mes labours. (122)

In contrast to the preface to *l'Olive*, where Du Bellay claimed that his desired audience were other poets "un S. Gelay, un Heroet, un de Ronsart, un Carles, un Sceve, un Bouju, un Salel, un Martin," this collection clearly targets Marguerite and Henry II, and to a lesser extent Catherine de Medici and other powerful members of the court circle. Marguerite herself may have suggested this shift in audience to Du Bellay, or his time in Paris may have quickly taught him to reach beyond his regional contacts and poet friends.<sup>35</sup> The audience for the new collection also becomes the topic of the poems: Du Bellay abandons the Horatian themes of love and drinking that had dominated the *Vers Lyriques* and replaces them with praise of the *grands*. One theme remains constant, however: writing and the defense of poetry.

The liminal ode of the collection is titled "A sa Lyre," in which Du Bellay, a renaissance Orpheus, addresses his own poems, speaks of enchanting the royals with his verses, and defends his aspiration to please this most elite of all audiences. He is confident of Marguerite's appreciation:

Va donques maintenant, ma Lyre,  
Ma Princesse te veult ouir.  
Il fault sa table docte elire :  
Là quelque amy voudra bien lire

---

<sup>35</sup> Lombart and Roger-Vasselín (*L'Olive et La Deffence* 34) explain Du Bellay's shift to write encomia of *les grands* as simply the next stage of the program he sketched out in the *Deffence*, which saw an official role for the poet as a support to power and the monarchy.

Tes chansons, pour la resjouir (1-5)

Like Michel de l'Hospital, Du Bellay evokes Marguerite's "docte table," and the fact that some friend will read his poems aloud for Marguerite's enjoyment.<sup>36</sup> This suggests the context for the reception of these odes: they would be read aloud in front of a mixed company of dinner guests.<sup>37</sup>

In the following stanza, Du Bellay alludes to the simple, Horatian nature of his earlier odes (in the *Vers Lyriques*) as well as their restricted and humble audience. Starting with this new collection, he hopes to elevate the tone of his work in order to write poems appropriate for the king and the queen:

Ta voix encores basse et tendre  
Apren à hausser dès ici,  
Et fay tes chordes si bien tendre,  
Que mon grand Roy te puisse entendre,  
Et sa royale epouze aussi. (6-10)

The use of the word "voix" underscores the oral delivery of the poem, and "apren" captures the learning process that Du Bellay experiences in 1549, a critical year in which he makes an energetic entry into publication, experiments with both the sonnet form and the ode, and quickly learns the rudiments of pleasing the powerful. The last stanza defends this rapid elevation of his ambition, saying that anything dedicated to the gods gains in value, and by analogy his poetry can only improve by addressing it to the monarch and his family:

Il ne fault que l'envieux die

---

<sup>36</sup> Henri Chamard believes this reader to be the poet Jacques Bouju. He belonged to Marguerite's household, became *Maître des requêtes* to Catherine de Medici in 1556, and then *Président du Parlement de Bretagne* in 1558. Most of Bouju's poetic work seems to have been lost. (Aris and Joukovsky 1: 328, 330). Laumonier writes "Quant à Jacques Bouju c'était un des rares poètes de la Cour à s'être déclaré pour les novateurs, se faisant auprès de la sœur du roi l'interprète de leurs sentiments, le défenseur de leurs idées, et cela plus d'un an avant l'intervention de Michel de l'Hospital. D'après Ronsard, il aurait même réduit au silence par ses propres vers les misérables rimeurs de l'ancienne école" (64).

<sup>37</sup> Another clue to the reading practices of the *grands* appears in ode number seven of this collection to Cardinal Du Bellay, in which the poet addresses his relative "Prelat, te plaise temps elire/Pour mes vers ecouter ou lire" (77-78). The Cardinal apparently was known to both read in private and have verses read aloud to him, perhaps also at table.

Que trop hault tu as entrepris :  
Ce qui te fait ainsi hardie,  
C'est que les choses qu'on dedie  
Au temple, sont de plus grand pris. (11-15)

Henry II is placed at the head of the collection, as the first two pieces are dedicated to him. These long occasional pieces are not numbered, which sets them apart from the seventeen numbered odes that follow them. The first of the two is in honor of Henry's official entry into Paris, titled "Prophonématique au Roy Treschrestien Henry II." Marguerite does not figure in this piece. The second one, titled "Chant Triomphal sur le Voyage de Boulogne M.D. XLIX. Au Moys d'Aoust," inflates Henry's attempt to reclaim the city of Boulogne from the English by branding it a victory. After describing and praising the king's performance, Du Bellay turns to the women in Henry's life in the last lines of the poem. He first mentions Catherine and Marguerite, alluding to their anxiety for Henry's well-being while he is at camp, and urging them to dry their tears now that the king is safely returned:

O quantfois Royne et royale Seur,  
Vous avez craint, qu'en quelque lieu mal seur,  
Ou trop avant aux assaulx et alarmes  
[le roi] ne tentast la fortune des armes!  
Maintenant donq' ...  
... d'un beau riz seichez ces yeulx humides. (137-40, 143-44)

After this, Du Bellay turns to the role of the poet in immortalizing the feats and virtues of the *grands*, referencing Ronsard as the first French poet to write odes in both the Horatian and Pindaric vein:

Ronsard premier osa bien attenter  
De faire Horace en France rechanter,  
Et le Thebain (ô gloire souhaitable!)  
Qu'à grand labour il a fait imitable. (157-160)

In October 1549 Ronsard has yet to publish a full collection of his own, but Du Bellay is careful to give him credit for initiating the ode form in French.<sup>38</sup> Although he seeks other poets as readers in the preface to the 1549 *l'Olive*, he does not mention debts to any of them in the three works published that spring. Beginning with the *Recueil de Poésie*, however, he will be careful to situate his work not only with respect to the classical authors that he seeks to imitate, but also in regards to the contemporary French poets who have influenced his work as well.

Du Bellay then self-consciously says that he needs to find some way to catch public attention and fulfill his quest to render his subject immortal. He says that he will build a metaphorical temple of victory, one whose black and white marble and decorative elements all recall Diane de Poitiers, without mentioning her directly.<sup>39</sup> The king will figure in the center of this temple, and Catherine and Marguerite will join him. He first addresses Catherine:

Tu y seras, de Florence l'honneur,  
 Royme en qui gist le comble de bon heur,  
 Que la vertu digne epouze a fait estre  
 Du plus grand Roy que ce siecle ait veu naistre. (193-96)

After this dutiful homage to the queen, whose virtue is defined by her status as wife to the greatest king of the century, Marguerite is celebrated as perfection itself, and in her own right:

Toy Vierge aussi, miracle de ton temps,  
 Qui rends le ciel, et nature contens,  
 Alors qu'en toy l'un et l'autre contemple  
 De son sçavoir le plus parfaict exemple. (197-200)

The unmarried Marguerite--"Vierge"--is defined by wisdom: here she is described as exemplifying the best characteristics of heavenly and earthly "sçavoir." In the lines

---

<sup>38</sup> Ronsard has by this time published one ode in Peletier du Man's 1547 *Oeuvres Poétiques*.

<sup>39</sup> Cloulas explains that black and white are Diane's colors (93, 183). Du Bellay's verse to Diane de Poitiers is explored in chapter three of this study.

that follow, Du Bellay addresses the king, Catherine, and Marguerite together, pledging to preach their “grandeur” in the form of hymns, creating their god-like persona and offering the gift of immortality:

De voz grandeurs le prestre je seray,  
Et devant vous maint hymne chanteray,  
Duquel pourront les nations estranges  
Et noz nepveuz apprendre voz louanges. (201-4)

Catherine and Marguerite are thus given equal stature to the king. The two women were intimate friends, having been educated together at court after Catherine’s arrival at age fourteen (Stephens 31). Although Du Bellay wrote relatively few poems to Catherine over his career, he is careful in this collection to put her at the forefront alongside her husband--before mention of Marguerite and certainly before any allusion to Henri’s mistress, Diane de Poitiers. This delicate attention to the queen’s status may have come at the recommendation of Marguerite, who would have been sensitive to Catherine’s feelings as her friend and confidante. Du Bellay finds little to say about the queen, however, beyond invoking her wifely status and her Italian origins.<sup>40</sup> Catherine only reappears one more time in the collection, in the ode titled “A La Royne” which immediately follows these two pieces to the king. This ode is important for its placement in the sequence, but otherwise Du Bellay’s attitude towards Catherine remains either dutiful or aspirational throughout this collection. Although he has little to say about her as an individual personality, it would be a slight to omit her from the sequence, and her closeness to Marguerite may indicate that she holds potential as a patron.

Henry and Marguerite are thus the two true subjects of Du Bellay’s praise: either one or the other is mentioned in nearly every other poem that follows. Unlike other addressees, their names are often printed in capital letters, as is their father’s, so

---

<sup>40</sup> In the ode to Catherine that follows, he praises her fecundity, as do many other poets.

in addition to being mentioned more frequently they are also allotted additional space on the printed page.<sup>41</sup> While there are two odes explicitly dedicated to Marguerite, she also surfaces in the ode to Catherine and in others addressed to the poets Saint-Gelais and Bouju. The king, however, typically appears in poems addressed to great men at court like the Cardinal de Guise, the Cardinal de Chastillon, Cardinal du Bellay, and the Seigneur du Boysdaulphin who was *Maistre d'Hostel du Roy*. In addition to being described as valued advisors to the king, these men are said to be lovers of poetry, and even writers themselves as in the case of Jean, Cardinal Du Bellay. There are no allusions to specific poets, however, in these odes.

This pattern creates a clear distinction between the brother and sister and their attitudes towards literature: Marguerite is consistently associated with poets, whereas Henri is linked to powerful men at court. These men are described as appreciating poetry, perhaps an attempt by Du Bellay to incite the king to support letters as much as his advisors do. Henri's distance from literary circles can be measured by the fact that his name does not appear in any odes addressed to poets, or in odes where poets figure prominently.

There is one exception to this pattern: a piece towards the end of the collection is addressed at the same time to both the "Feu Roy François" and "Treschrestien roy Henry", and it includes specific references to Du Bellay, Ronsard, and the older poets Marot and Saint-Gelais who were associated with the court of François Ier. The poem clearly seeks to link Henri's reign to that of François. Just as Marguerite's name is consistently linked with those of poets in Du Bellay's *oeuvre*, so is her father's. Henri's name is only linked to poetic circles in poems when his father is also mentioned. This phenomenon revises Du Bellay's assertion in the preface that Henri

---

<sup>41</sup> HENRY (124, 128, 135) ; FRANÇOYS (128, 166) ; MARGUERITE (136) ; etc.

and Marguerite are the two true inheritors of their father's taste and cultural values, since an examination of the linked names in odes shows that Henri is generally not tied to those of poets unless his father figures in the poem. His name is linked rather to powerful men in his administration. Only Marguerite is consistently paired with other poets in the odes, showing her to be the sole inheritor of her father's taste for poetry and a mediating figure through whom Du Bellay can appeal to Henri and Catherine.

Moreover, since meeting Marguerite, Du Bellay seems to turn from aspirations of male patronage to female patronage. Where the first collections were dedicated to Cardinal Du Bellay and the *Vers Lyriques* only contain odes dedicated to men, the *Recueil* is dedicated to Marguerite and contains several strategically placed poems to women at court, the first of which is to Catherine. This ode, "A La Royne," opens a numbered sequence of seventeen odes. It begins with a reminder that without poetry, the glory of kings can be fleeting:

La vertu est meprisée,  
Qui n'est point favorisée  
Des Graces, contre ces trois,  
Le Temps, la Mort et l'Envye,  
Desquels souvent est ravye  
La gloire mesme des Roys. (7-12)

The implicit suggestion is that poetry is the solution, the lasting form that overcomes time, death, and envy to record the greatness of kings. This is the justification that Du Bellay uses to defend his offering to Catherine in the following stanza:

Royne donques, ne refuse  
De l'humble, et petite Muse  
Les vers que j'ay mariez  
A ma Lyre, qui accorde  
Leur sons divers sur sa chorde  
A ta grandeur dediez. (13-18)

His small, humble muse has apparently already written on behalf of Catherine's sister-in-law, however, as the next stanza asserts:

Par eulx n'agueres fut dicte  
Ceste belle MARGUERITE,  
Qui enclose en mes ecriz,  
Ainsi que la pierre honnore  
Son anneau, elle decore  
Mes vers d'assez petit priz. (19-24)

Marguerite is said to be the jewel of Du Bellay's poetry.<sup>42</sup> The reference to earlier poems written to Marguerite is intriguing, because no explicit ones appear in the three earlier collections published in 1549: the *Recueil* is the first published collection to contain poems addressed directly to Marguerite. Does this mean that the first edition of *l'Olive* was in fact written for Marguerite? Were there earlier poems to Marguerite, now lost, that circulated in manuscript form? In any event, Du Bellay uses his previous connection with Marguerite to recommend himself to her sister-in-law, the queen.

In the next stanza, Du Bellay mentions that the poet Bouju has already written many times in praise of Catherine:

Pourtant si tu es chantée  
Par la Muse tant vantée  
Du tien Bouju bien souvent,  
Ne dedaigne point d'entendre  
La mienne encor' jeune et tendre,  
Qui met ses ailes au vent. (25-30)

Du Bellay seeks to follow in Bouju's footsteps. He seems to think he has a chance of succeeding because his poetry is simply better than that of other poets. He writes:

Sur la rive oblivieuse  
La noire tourbe envieuse  
Des corbeaux, fait devaler  
Les noms, que de l'eau profonde  
Les cygnes tirant sur l'onde,

---

<sup>42</sup> When writing about Marguerite, poets commonly played on the Latin *margarita*, or *pearl*. They also played on the fact that in French *marguerite* means *daisy* (see pages 54-55). Sonnet 180 of the *Regrets* uses both terms in verse 6 (see page 127).

Font par le monde voler. (37-42)

In these lines he clearly considers himself one of the swans rather than a crow.<sup>43</sup>

Bouju presumably is a swan as well, since ode number nine of the collection is addressed to him (“A Bouju Les Conditions du Vray Poète”).

Only after this ode to Catherine does Du Bellay address Marguerite: “A Tresillustre Princesse Madame Marguerite Seur Unique du Roy.” In this piece Du Bellay explains that he would have liked to have written to Marguerite earlier, but that he was intimidated by her royal standing and lacked the courage to approach her:

La sainte horreur, que sentent  
Craintifs devant les dieux,  
Rendoit ma muse lente,  
Bien qu’elle fust bruslente  
De s’offrir à voz yeulx.

J’admiroy bien la grace  
Qui montre en vostre face  
Des cieux le plus grand soing :  
Mais si grande hautesse  
Regardoit de bien loing. (1-12)

Here Du Bellay suggests that he knew of Marguerite and admired her long before their meeting in summer 1549, but says that he was too far outside her circle to dare write to her. He now has more courage after having produced his first collections. He concludes the ode by addressing his lyre, exhorting it to aim higher:

Fay resonner sans cesse  
Le nom de ma Princesse,  
Seul honneur de mes vers. (40-42)

Although poems to the king and queen figure first in the collection, these lines affirm that Marguerite is his favorite subject, “seul honneur” of his verses.

---

<sup>43</sup> Joukovsky explains the origins of the crow and swan imagery: “L’apologue des corbeaux, symboles des envieux et des médisants, et des cygnes, symboles des poètes, provient d’un texte de l’Arioste (*Roland Furieux*, XXXV, 11 à 13). Il n’est imité qu’à partir de la Pléiade, qui lit l’Arioste dans le texte, la première traduction (1543) étant très médiocre” (338).

After this first ode to Marguerite, Du Bellay addresses a piece to the older court poet Mellin de Saint-Gelais before once again addressing Marguerite. The opening of the ode to Saint-Gelais acknowledges the senior poet's position at court and hints at a model for the new ambitions that Du Bellay mentions in the previous poem to Marguerite:

Mellin, que chérist, et honnore  
La court du Roy plein de bon heur :  
Mellin que France avoue encore  
Des Muses le premier honneur : (1-4)

Saint-Gelais is a successful, established poet who is as integrated in the court as Du Bellay has been distant from it in his youth, and who is celebrated and honored within this milieu. The young Du Bellay must hope to achieve this sort of position, despite his criticism of Saint-Gelais in the *Deffence*. He quickly moves into a confessional mode, in which he describes his attempt to celebrate battles and military prowess--undoubtedly the "Chant Triumphal sur le Voyage de Boulogne" which appears at the head of the *Recueil*--but suggests that he is ill-suited to this mode and that he is more comfortable writing lighter poetry:

Que ceux là les batailles chantent  
Plus hault que le Grec ou Romain,  
Qui la bonne fortune sentent,  
Et l'heur de la royal main.  
Des Indes le premier vainqueur,  
Le soing, qui la jeunesse amuse,  
Et l'archer qui blesse le cœur,  
Seront les labours de ma Muse. (25-32)

When Du Bellay says that he is leaving military encomia to those poets "qui la bonne fortune sentent/ Et l'heur de la royal main," it is unclear whether he is suggesting that the more established Saint-Gelais should try his hand at such an enterprise. Generally, Saint Gelais wrote "des pieces légères, épigrammes, étrennes, œuvres de circonstance restées longtemps manuscrites" (Aris and Joukovsky 1: 340); the king's military

endeavors were not one of these usual topics. No matter whom Du Bellay has in mind for the more elevated poetry of war, he asserts that he will instead dedicate himself to light poetry on drinking and love.<sup>44</sup> These topics in fact resemble those used by Saint-Gelais and align Du Bellay's sensitivities with those of the older poet, although it contradicts what he said earlier (p.34-35) about elevating his work to write poems for royalty. Perhaps in the context of this poem he is more interested in forging a bond with Saint-Gelais, affirming shared dispositions, rather than maintaining a consistent expression of purpose.

Du Bellay defends his choice of genre by saying that even if writing epic is seen to be a superior literary activity that ennobled Homer and Virgil, Pindar and Horace have their own merits:

Si Homere, et Virgile ont pris  
L'honneur de la premiere place,  
Pourtant n'est demeuré sans pris  
Le nom de Pindare et Horace. (37-40)

This stated appreciation for smaller genres seems to approve Saint-Gelais' verses which are "emmielez / Qui aussi doux que ton nom coulent," as opposed to those produced by lesser, unspecified poets that are "durs et lourds." In fact, Du Bellay urges Saint-Gelais to revise his policy of leaving all his poetry in manuscript form.

Publishing would be a way to secure his reputation, and to conquer time--one of Du Bellay's obsessions:

Pourquoy donques si longue nuit  
Veulx-tu sur tes labeurs estendre,  
Opprimant la voix de ton bruit,  
Qui malgré toy se fait entendre?

---

<sup>44</sup> This potentially alludes to Ronsard, who had the intention to write a French epic. Chamard writes "Dès 1549, dans son *Hymne de France*, on voit déjà Ronsard obsédé par Francus [...]. Un an plus tard, il avait conçu le poème qui devait célébrer l' 'enfant d'Hector', et, dans son *Ode de la Paix* (avril 1550), il en traçait au roi le plan à grandes lignes." (*Histoire* 3: 97-98). Du Bellay potentially knew of this project at the time the *Recueil* was published, but Ronsard certainly had not yet experienced "l'heur de la royale main" as Saint-Gelais had.

Telle est la vertu qu'on palie,  
Estant à soymesmes cruel,  
Que la paresse ensevelie  
D'un silence perpetuel. (61-68)

Publishing is suggested as a means to assure that the name and work of a poet survive, even if one does not write monumental or epic poetry. This chance for posterity seems to be the only thing that Saint-Gelais lacks, since he is so happily inserted at the heart of the court. At a relatively young age, Du Bellay has already published more collections than Saint-Gelais, and his career seems destined to be set in print. He presses Saint-Gelais to do the same, but the audacity of offering advice to his elder causes the young poet to quickly conclude and withdraw to other poetic concerns, inspired and protected, as always, by his muse Marguerite:

Sus, mon luc, va toy reposer  
En la royale MARGUERITE,  
Que le ciel voulut composer  
Sur le protraict d'une Charite. (69-72)

In the following ode (number four), "A Madame Marguerite d'Ecrire en sa Langue," Du Bellay retreats from giving older poets advice and celebrates them instead. He begins by telling Marguerite that it is foolish for contemporary poets to imitate classical authors by writing in Latin or Greek because they can never equal the original and because there is no need to produce something that has already been amply done before. Citing the example of Italian authors who chose to write in their vernacular (Boccaccio, Petrarch, Dante, and Bembo), Du Bellay suggests that poets should write in their native language. Four poets are signaled as exemplars of French writing, represented by the rivers that pass through their native regions:

Le Lot, le Loyr, Touvre, et Garonne,  
A voz bords vous direz le nom  
De ceulx que la docte couronne  
Eternize d'un hault renom. (45-48)

The rivers represent Marot, Ronsard, Saint-Gelais, and Carles; a mix of older and younger poets who write in French.<sup>45</sup> The rivers are natural features of French geography, and Du Bellay seems to suggest that the younger poets are as natural a part of French literary society as the older, more celebrated ones. He wishes to insert himself in this circle as well, but is careful to be humble:

Et moy, (si la douce folie  
Ne me deçoit) je te promés,  
Loyre, que ta lyre abolie,  
Si je vy, ne sera jamais. (49-52)

Du Bellay aspires to eternal renown as an Angevin poet, but allows that this may be a sweetly mad scheme on his part. He nonetheless thinks fame may be possible with a muse such as Marguerite, capable of supplying him with a “lyre” equal to that of Orpheus himself:

MARGUERITE peut donner celle  
Qui rendoit les enfers contens,  
Et qui bien souvent apres elle  
Tiroit les chesnes escoutans. (53-56)

These lines close the ode, just as a reference to Marguerite’s power as a muse closed the last ode to Saint-Gelais. Whenever Du Bellay seems on the verge of announcing outsized ambitions--giving advice to Saint-Gelais, announcing his desire for fame and a place among older, established poets--he returns to Marguerite as a way to temper his ambitious persona. He contends that his poetic production is channeled through her, a sponsor so indisputable that he cannot be blamed for aspiring to greater heights.

Marguerite next figures in ode number nine, “A Bouju, Les Conditions du Vray Poëte.” Bouju, as we have seen (p.34), was another Angevin poet, a member of Marguerite’s household and the circle of Catherine de Medici. Du Bellay had written

---

<sup>45</sup> Aris and Joukovsky give the following information on Carles: “prélat et poète français, né à Bordeaux (1500-1568). Erudit, ce dernier a fait des traductions d’Homère et d’Héliodore, et composé des poésies sacrées (1561-1562). Il a sous Henri II protégé les poètes de la jeune école” (1: 342).

a first ode to him titled “De l’immortalité des poètes, au Seigneur Bouju” in the *Vers Liriques*. In that ode Du Bellay praised Bouju as “l’honneur Angevin” (v.4) and claimed that he was a better writer than Du Bellay himself, writing on a “plus haute et mieux parlante corde” (v.6). Du Bellay then closed by asserting his own devotion to the muses and the immortal glory they bestow in lieu of worldly rewards. Similarly, Du Bellay here repeats that the true poet is not prey to ambition, does not seek the favor of powerful people, is not envious, and avoids the city and the rabble of crowds as well as rich palaces. The poet’s true habitat is instead nature, and he can be found in the open, enjoying fresh air, streams and forests. Du Bellay tells Bouju that he is eager for Bouju to write more, and suggests that they share the same muse:

O que ma Muse a d’envye  
 D’ouyr (te suyvant de près)  
 La tienne des boys suyvie  
 Commander à ces forestz !

En leur apprenant sans cesse,  
 Et à ces rochers ici,  
 Le nom de nostre Princesse,  
 Pendant que mon lyre aussi

Cete belle MARGUERITE  
 Sacre à la posterité  
 Et la vertu, qui merite  
 Plus d’une immortalité. (49-60)

In Bouju, Du Bellay seems to find a peer. He writes as if to an equal, rather than to a senior figure like Saint-Gelais. They both are inspired by Marguerite, whose tremendous virtue merits the praise of multiple poets: “plus d’une immortalité.” Du Bellay ends this ode by addressing his own “luc,” saying that it comforts him, and that any credit he has received as a poet can be attributed to Marguerite.

The Princess is not mentioned in the last eight odes that follow the piece to Bouju, but the seventh and second to last is titled “A Madame la Contesse de

Tonnerre”, otherwise known as Louise de Clermont-Tonnerre, wife of François Du Bellay, a cousin of the poet’s.<sup>46</sup> She also was a court intimate who had been a lady in waiting to Louise de Savoie and the sisters of François Ier before entering the service of Catherine de Medici in 1552.<sup>47</sup> She received a literary education at court and is reported to have been friends with Catherine at the time this poem would have been written. In any event, she would have been known to both Catherine and Marguerite in the tight circle of the court. Du Bellay thus opens and closes the series of seventeen numbered odes with pieces to women at court: the first to Catherine and the sixteenth to Louise de Clermont-Tonnerre. The opening lines of this piece show him to be conscious of adopting a position in the *querelle des femmes*.<sup>48</sup> He says that this is the third or fourth time that he is aiming to praise a woman of such stature, and that he realizes the risks involved:

Haute vrayment dire j’ose  
Trois et quatre fois la chose,  
Où les feminins esprits  
N’ont peu quelquefois atteindre.  
Bien doit donc la cheute craindre,  
Qui a tel œuvre entrepris. (1-6)

Du Bellay then lists many celebrated women from history: the Amazon queen Penthelisea, Semiramis, Camilla, Corinna. He says that contemporary ladies, however, are lucky to have writers who devote poetry to them, presumably more explicit verses than those dedicated to heroines from the past:

Combien sont mieulx fortunées,  
Qui en cet age sont nées,  
Où maint gentil écrivain  
A bien osé entreprendre

---

<sup>46</sup> Many years later Ronsard wrote a sonnet to Louise, who by that time had remarried and become the Duchess of Uzès. The piece was published in a collection dedicated to Henri III, the *Sonnets à diverses personnes*, and titled “A M. de Clermont, Duchesse d’Uzès” (Cohen 309).

<sup>47</sup> See Hector de Masso La Ferrière-Percy, *Une duchesse d’Uzès du XVIe siècle*, Paris : unknown , 1894.

<sup>48</sup> Du Bellay returns to this theme a year later in 1550 when he publishes the ode “Aux Dames Angevines” at the end of the second edition of *l’Olive*.

Par ses doctes vers de rendre  
Leur hault honneur survyvant? (43-48)

Du Bellay here reminds Louise of the function he can fill, of the poet's gift of immortality through verse. Louise's "vertu" naturally inspires poetry, and no one could write praise of women without mentioning her particular case. Du Bellay tactfully closes, however, by saying that the countess' *sçavoir* is such that it doesn't strictly need any poet to be immortalized: it is a monument in and of itself:

La Muse aime la vertu.  
Tu ne verra donq', Contesse,  
Devaler de sa hauteesse  
Ton loz par mort abatu.

Qui publiera les louanges  
Des nostres ou des estranges  
Et de toy ne chantera  
L'esprit, la douceur, la grace,  
Dont la genereuse race  
De Clairmont se vantera ?

C'est pourquoy mes vers aspirent  
Où tes louanges les tirent:  
Bien que ton sçavoir soit tel,  
(Si tu le veulx entreprendre)  
Que ton renom se peut rendre  
Par toymesmes immortel. (51-66)

This first collection dedicated to Marguerite thus opens with two long odes to Henry II, but begins its numbered sequence with an ode to Catherine de Medici, followed by one to Marguerite--who continues to be mentioned throughout the collection in poems to other poets--and the collection then closes with an ode to the well-placed Contesse de Tonnerre, a friend to Catherine and Marguerite. Although he addresses the king and powerful men at court in this collection, the true audience seems to be Marguerite's circle, her friends and favorite poets. The two odes to Henry are inescapably placed first, but are not numbered, setting them in a category all their own. The numbered odes to powerful men are bracketed by odes to powerful women

who were friends with Marguerite. The very last piece, number seventeen, suggests that with regard to these powerful women the poet has adopted the posture of a lover, unsure of his chances yet hopeful that he might be well-received. Playful elements of the poem suggest its entertainment value for an audience, and the stance of lover hoping for a response also reinforces the impression that the poet hopes to reach a particularly female audience.

The piece is titled “Dialogue d’un Amoureux et d’Echo”, and it apparently is the first of a genre of echo poems in French.<sup>49</sup> In the opening lines, the poet is once again wandering the woods, as in the earlier ode to Bouju:

Piteuse Echo, qui erres en ces bois,  
Repons au son de ma dolente voix. (1-2)

He asks himself a series of questions, which are wittily answered by homophonic echoes that suggest his unhappiness in love. They hint that his feelings are not returned, or that they are not even apparent to the lady:

Qu’est-ce qu’aimer, et s’en plaindre souvent? Vent.  
[...]  
Dy moy, quelle est celle pour qui j’endure? Dure.  
Sent-elle bien la douleur, qui me poingt? Point.  
O que cela me vient bien mal à point! (12-14)

Du Bellay sketches the lover’s torment in charmingly musical and playful tones, but the context suggests that he is nonetheless sincere in seeking attention from this female audience. The preface made it clear that he had already received positive encouragement from Marguerite: this final poem seems explicitly to invite additional praise and positive feedback. He concludes by wondering whether he should set his sights differently:

Me fault il donq’(o debile entreprise)  
Lascher ma proye, avant que l’avoir prise?

---

<sup>49</sup> Aris and Joukovsky write “Etienne Pasquier (*Recherches de la France*, VII, 12) dit que ce poème est le plus ancien ‘écho’ français. Jean Second en avait écrit un en latin dans ses *Sylves*. [...] Dans l’édition de 1553, cette pièce a été rejetée à la fin du recueil” (1: 353).

Si vault-il mieulx avoir cœur moins haultain,  
Qu'ainsi languir soubz espoir incertain. (15-18)

The brusquely confident persona of the *Deffence* has been replaced by that of a supplicant lover. The lover's sad impulse to lower his sights and abandon his love object mirror Du Bellay's impulse to abandon poetry, described in the preface to Marguerite. Only her encouragement has kept him at his writing desk. This last poem, ending with a question and the expression of "espoir incertain," seeks renewed affirmation from readers of the collection, presumably female.

In conclusion, the 1549 *Recueil de Poésie* sees Du Bellay begin to write for members of the royal family, and he displays a growing awareness of the possibility of patronage from women at court. Much of this seems attributable to his June 1549 meeting with Marguerite de Berry. Although Du Bellay writes in honor of the king and several powerful men who serve him, he dedicates the collection to Marguerite, writes two odes in her honor, and mentions her in three other poems to Catherine and the poets Saint-Gelais and Bouju. Furthermore, the series of numbered odes opens and closes with pieces that seem destined for women at court. The onomastic association of poets and women also sketches a clear division between the male world of king, defined by action and worldly concerns, and the female, lettered world of Marguerite. This division suggests that there may be some difficulties in winning the king as an audience, but as Du Bellay reaches beyond the intimate, regional, and male audience that he addressed in March 1549, the female audience at court seems to represent receptive possibilities of which Marguerite is the most important.

### **1550: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of *L'Olive***

Du Bellay continues to write for Marguerite in the coming year: his next published volume appears in October 1550, a second edition of *L'Olive*, now

dedicated to Marguerite rather than *sa Dame*. This edition is preceded by a new sonnet to Marguerite, a new preface “Au Lecteur,” and it adds sixty-five sonnets to the original fifty, followed by a long poem titled “La Musagnoeomachie” and five odes.<sup>50</sup> The initial sonnet to Marguerite marks the first time, at least in his published work, that Du Bellay addresses a living person in the sonnet form, in the way that he dedicated odes to male friends in the *Vers Lyriques*, and to male and female *grands* in the *Recueil de Poésie*. In this sense he has begun to “odify” his sonnets.<sup>51</sup> Within this second edition of *l’Olive*, Du Bellay also addresses a sonnet to the poet Maurice Scève and several sonnets to Ronsard. This is an important aesthetic development that foreshadows the epistolary aspects of Du Bellay’s 1558 *Regrets*, in which Du Bellay addresses countless sonnets to living *destinataires* and works proper names into the aesthetics of the verse.

In another development, in these sonnets he repeatedly refers to his *vers* and the act of writing--an element missing from the first *l’Olive*, where the poet expressed his work in oral terms as *chantz*, *cris*, or *voix*. Du Bellay thus gives evidence of a growing writerly identity, and for the first time he expresses it in sonnet form rather than in odes. At the same time, the second *Olive* exposes growing tensions between the individual identity that Du Bellay wants to affirm in relation to his literary achievements, and the group identity of the *Brigade*--represented most particularly by Ronsard. As Du Bellay becomes increasingly aware of the economy of patronage and the organization of literary society, he realizes that laurels are not dispersed *en bloc* to

---

<sup>50</sup> All citations of the sonnets in the second edition of the *Olive* are taken from Du Bellay: Œuvres poétiques, eds. Daniel Aris and Françoise Joukovsky, vol. 1 (Paris : Éditions Classiques Garnier, 2009).

<sup>51</sup> There is, however, a precedent for writing this sort of sonnet in French since Peletier du Mans had already opened his 1547 *Oeuvres Poétiques* with a dedicatory sonnet to Marguerite. In fact, we will see Peletier’s influence in several of Du Bellay’s new sonnets in 1550. Additionally, Cécile Alduy has described the evolution of Du Bellay’s sonnets in the 1550 collection in this way: “*L’Olive* de 1550 rivalise alors peut-être avec l’ode lyrique en inventant une forme mixte d’ode en sonnets” (“D’Un Cygne Absent” 52).

groups of poets like the *Brigade*, but to individuals who need to compete for them. His greatest competitor is Ronsard, and the contested object at this time is likely to be Marguerite's patronage.<sup>52</sup> Du Bellay's attitude towards his friend combines reverent appreciation for Ronsard's writing and gratitude for his friendship with an equal desire to distinguish himself from Ronsard and call attention to his own special gifts. Jealousy arises as a theme, along with seeming anxiety about Ronsard's experimentation with the sonnet form as he begins work on the *Amours*. This rivalry produces developments in the sonnets of the second *Olive* (addressing living people directly, introducing topics other than the torments of love) that prefigure many of the innovations that Du Bellay makes in his later sonnets written in Rome.

Du Bellay had already written two odes to Ronsard in the *Vers Liriques*, but did not address him in the *Recueil de poésie*. In the first ode in the *Vers Liriques*, titled "De l'inconstance des choses, au Seigneur Pierre de Ronsard," Du Bellay congratulates his friend for having chosen to live far from the court and assures him that he will be duly rewarded for the choice:

Amy, qui pour vivre  
Des ennuiz delivre,  
Que la court procure,  
T'es venu ranger  
Comme un etranger,  
En la tourbe obscure:

Ne regrete point  
L'ambicieux point  
De cete faveur.  
Le ciel favorable  
D'un plus honorable  
T'a fait receveur. (103-114)

This ode affirms Ronsard's poetry without referring back to Du Bellay's own work, though the second ode to Ronsard, titled "Au Seigneur Pierre de Ronsard" will

---

<sup>52</sup> Alduy addresses the rivalry between Ronsard and Du Bellay: "Dès l'ouverture de la 'suite' de 1550, l'apostrophe à Ronsard signale un changement de perspective : au solipsisme amoureux succède un appel à témoin et une compétition ouverte" ("D'un cygne absent" 47).

contrast the writing styles of the two friends. Here Du Bellay exhorts Ronsard to write in a variety of different classical styles, concluding:

Bref, chante tout ce qu'ont chanté  
Homere, et Maron [Virgil] tant fameux,  
Pyndare, Horace tant vanté,  
Afin d'estre immortel comme eux (22-25)

Du Bellay offers broad encouragement before describing his own more modest writing style:

Quand à moy, puis que je n'ay beu,  
Comme toy, de l'unde sacrée,  
Et puis que songer je n'ay peu  
Sur le mont double, comme Ascrée,  
C'est bien force que me recrée  
Avec Pan, qui soubz les ormeaux  
fait resonner les challumeaux. (36-42)

Aris and Joukovsky say that this humility trope is a commonplace in classical literature (325); Du Bellay repeats it often and it resurfaces in the second edition of *L'Olive*, but it is the most heartfelt here in the *Vers Lyriques*. It becomes more difficult for the poet to use it with the same sincerity once he has published, come to the attention of Marguerite, and begun to stake his claim in literary history. In this second edition of *L'Olive* we will see him struggle to efface himself to the same extent, alternating between a modest persona and an assertive one that emphasizes the value of his own poetry. In the *Vers Liriques* of 1549, however, he and Ronsard are true peers, each having published one poem in Peletier du Mans' *Oeuvres Poétiques*.

Du Bellay can still dream of combining their two muses, concluding:

Si tu m'eusses, fecund Mercure,  
Voulu etre un peu favorable,  
Et toy Phebus, j'eusse pris cure  
De rendre mon bruyt honorable,  
Voyre par escrit memorable  
Un jour avec triumphe et gloire  
Marier Loyr avecques Loyre. (50-56)

The chronological sequencing is important: Du Bellay published these verses in early 1549, followed by the *Recueil* in November, which is devoted largely to Marguerite with no mention of Ronsard (except in the “Chant Triomphal” where Du Bellay mentions that Ronsard was the first to introduce the ode form to France). Ronsard then published his *Odes* in January 1550, and a few months later Marguerite and Michel de l’Hospital defended him at court against the ridicule of Saint-Gelais. Did Marguerite’s public support of Ronsard provoke jealousy, or at least anxiety in Du Bellay? Perhaps his friend’s foray into print was enough to stir competitive feelings. In any event, his treatment of Ronsard becomes more complicated in the new *Olive*, and although in the *Recueil* Du Bellay could write to Bouju in pastoral terms about sharing Marguerite’s patronage, he is no longer so keen to do so in the second *Olive*. The dedication of a second volume to the princess, after that of the *Recueil* only a year earlier, seems to mark a desire to reinforce Du Bellay’s relation with the princess and emphasize his continued claim to her as a patron. Replacing the *Dame*--dedicatee of the first collection--with Marguerite also seems calculated to suggest that Du Bellay had always been writing for Marguerite from the very earliest days of his career, even before meeting her in person.

The first lines of the opening sonnet to Marguerite acknowledge that she has helped Du Bellay reach unknown heights in his work:

Par un sentier inconnu à mes yeux  
 Vostre grandeur sur ses ailes me porte  
 Où de Phebus la main sçavante et forte  
 Guide le frein du chariot des cieulx. (1-4)

The “sentier inconnu” immediately situates the poet’s work in terms of a voyage, a path, and he has been led to new and more elevated destinations thanks to the princess. This growth and new inspiration are a comfort, and his gratitude leads him to describe Marguerite as a goddess:

Là élevé au cercle radieux  
Par un Demon heureux, qui me conforte,  
Celle fureur tant douce j'en rapporte,  
Dont votre nom j'égalle aux plus haulx dieux. (5-8)

For Du Bellay, Marguerite is the virgin goddess Astraea, the personification of Justice and the last immortal to live among humans in the Greek Golden Age before ascending to the heavens as a star:

O Vierge donc, sous qui la Vierge Astrée  
A faict encor' en nostre siecle entrée !  
Prenez en gré ces poétiques fleurs. (9-11)

*L'Olive* is presented to the virgin goddess as a bouquet of flowers, many and multicolored, inspired by chaste muses:

Ce sont mes vers, que les chastes Carites  
Ont emaillez de plus de cent couleurs  
Pour aller voir la fleur des MARGUERITES. (12-14)

Du Bellay closes by playing on the French meaning of Marguerite's name (daisy) rather than the Latin (pearl) which he sometimes invokes. He makes clear that she has a special status as the superlative flower of all flowers.<sup>53</sup> The "plus de cent couleurs" hints at the variety to be found in the 115 sonnets that compose the collection: they are indeed inspired by many different Italian poets, and reflect both Petrarchan and Platonic ideas of love before turning to Christian elements at the end. They offer a variety of rhyme schemes, and the new edition also adds the double innovation of including sonnets to Ronsard and Maurice Scève with others that reflect on the writing process itself, a theme previously only found in the collections of odes.<sup>54</sup> The princess is indeed offered a bouquet of diverse content.

This sonnet is followed by the preface "Au Lecteur." Marguerite does not figure in this new preface, but several aspects of it continue developments that began

---

<sup>53</sup> Peletier du Mans also attributes special status to Marguerite, saying that of all the beautiful ladies at court, she stands out "comme au milieu des estoilles, la Lune" (François 291).

<sup>54</sup> See Lombart, "Pensée," 109.

in the *Recueil de Poésie* and that coincide with the beginning of Du Bellay's relationship to Marguerite. Most noticeably, for much of the preface Du Bellay adopts a humble and apologetic stance--sometimes defensive--quite different from the *Deffence*. He begins by saying that although he wasted much of his youth, he always loved literature, and particularly French literature since he lived in a milieu that had little contact with other languages:

Combien que j'aye passé l'aage de mon enfance et la meilleure part de mon adolescence assez inutilement, lecteur, si est-ce que par je ne sçay quelle naturelle inclination j'ay tousjours aimé les bonnes lettres : singulièrement nostre poesie françoise, pour m'estre plus familiere, qui vivoy' entre ignorans des langues estrangeres. (7)

Du Bellay often laments his early lack of education, which he attributes to the fact that his parents died early, leaving him in the care of an older brother who apparently neglected to provide opportunities for instruction (Chamard *Joachim*, 22-26). Du Bellay feels especially keenly his lack of Ancient Greek, the most highly regarded discipline of the time and the vehicle for promotion at the courts of François Ier and Henry II (Gadoffre, *Révolution* 102). Unlike Du Bellay, Ronsard and other members of the *Brigade* had competence in the language. As it is, Du Bellay must concentrate on writing in French. He explains:

si je vouloy' gagner quelque nom entre les Grecz, et Latins, il y faudroit employer le reste de ma vie, et (peult-estre) en vain, etant jà coulé de mon aage le temps le plus apte à l'étude [...] Au moyen de quoy, n'ayant où passer le temps, et ne voulant du tout le perdre, je me suis volontiers appliqué à nostre poésie [...]. (7)

He goes on to allow that writing in Greek or Latin would have brought greater renown, but since he was incapable of doing so he settled on writing in French.<sup>55</sup>

As he describes his earliest writing projects in this preface, Du Bellay makes clear that he was deeply influenced by his friends. This is in part giving credit where

---

<sup>55</sup> Later in Rome, Du Bellay began to write Latin poems, assembled in a 1558 collection titled *Poemata*.

it was due, being careful to acknowledge all his sources and avoid being seen to take credit for his friends' accomplishments. It is also a defensive move, which allows him to shift responsibility for any blameworthy features of his early pieces to his friends.

In fact, it is these very friends who pressured him to publish in the first place:

[...] à la persuasion de Jacques Peletier, je choisi le Sonnet et l'Ode, deux poèmes de ce temps là (c'est depuis quatre ans) encores peu usitez entre les nostres : étant le Sonnet d'italien devenu françois, comme je croy par Mellin de Saint Gelais, et l'Ode, quand à son vray et naturel stile, représentée en nostre langue par Pierre de Ronsard. Ce que je vien de dire, je l'ay dict encores en quelque autre lieu, s'il m'en souvient : et te l'ay bien voulu ramentevoir, lecteur, afin que tu ne penses que je me vueille attribuer les inventions d'autruy. (8)

Ronsard in particular urged Du Bellay to publish:

[...] voulant satisfaire à l'instance requeste de mes plus familiers amis, je m'osay bien avanturer de mettre en lumiere mes petites poësies : après toutesfois les avoir communiquées à ceux que je pensoy' bien estre clervoyans en telles choses, singulierement à Pierre de Ronsard, qui m'y donna plus grande hardiesse que tous les autres, pour la bonne opinion que j'ay tousjours eue de son vif esprit, exact sçavoir, et solide jugement en nostre poësie françoise. (8)

These respectful lines about Ronsard suggest that Du Bellay's early publishing of the *Deffence* and the attention he garnered--even if often negative--may have caused hard feelings among other members of the *Brigade*, who had been studying languages and writing poetry for much longer than Du Bellay. Where the preface to the 1549 *Vers Lyriques* seemed to resist Ronsard, by declaring a certain independence from his preference to alternate masculine and feminine rhymes in odes, here Du Bellay is deferent to Peletier and Ronsard, careful to give them credit for influence on his work.

He proceeds to explain his reasons for writing the *Deffence*, and makes a passionate plea for improving the quality of French poetry. He praises the court milieu and stresses the stakes that it has in promoting the quality of French letters:

Les gentilz espriz, mesmes ceulx qui suyvent la court, seule escolle ou voluntiers on apprend à bien proprement parler, devraient vouloir pour l'enrichissemnet de nostre langue, et pour l'honneur des espriz

françois, que tez poètes barbares, ou feussent fouettez à la cuysine,  
juste punition de ceulx qui abusent de la pacience des Princes, et  
grands Seigneurs par la lecture de leurs ineptes œuvres [...]. (9-10)

In the first edition of *l'Olive*, before meeting Marguerite, Du Bellay made no mention of the court milieu. By this date, however, he has had more contact with courtly circles and he gives a general appreciation of the rhetorical skills that are practiced within them.<sup>56</sup> After stating that some French poets are “petiz Rimeurs” unworthy of patronage, Du Bellay concludes with an emphasis on his own aesthetic and financial independence:

Je te prie donques, amy Lecteur, me faire ce bien de penser que ma  
petite muse, telle qu'elle est, n'est toutefois esclave ou mercenaire,  
comme d'ung tas de rymeurs à gaiges : elle est serve tant seulement de  
mon plaisir. (13)

Despite his claim to write only for himself, however, it is clear that from the *Recueil de Poésie* to the dedication of the second *Olive*, Du Bellay has been writing for Marguerite's pleasure as much as his own.

A few of the sixty-five new sonnets that are included in the second *Olive* contain elements that may refer to Marguerite, although these connections remain conjecture. As this edition is explicitly dedicated to her and Du Bellay has already published odes in her honor in the *Recueil*, there is greater legitimacy in linking some of these sonnets to the princess compared to the first edition of the *Olive*. The majority of the new poems, however, do not seem relevant to her as an individual; in them Du Bellay seems rather to be aiming most of all for formal and thematic variety in a continuing sonnet exercise.<sup>57</sup>

Of the new sonnets, number thirty-two is the easiest to link to Marguerite. It is one of nine additions that are woven into the original fifty sonnets. The two quatrains

---

<sup>56</sup> In his next collection, the 1552 *Oeuvres de l'Invention de l'Auteur*, Du Bellay will become critical of the court milieu.

<sup>57</sup> Alduy contends that these last poems fit into a plan to mirror and expand the first *Olive*; she also believes they hew more closely to Petrarch (*L'Arbre* 52, 55).

praise the hardy nature of autumn fruits which can withstand winter, unlike those which appear in spring and summer.<sup>58</sup> This ability to outlast seasons, to transcend time, is then linked to the lady's virtues in the tercets:

De ton printemps les fleurettes seichées  
Seront un jour de leur tige arrachées,  
Non la vertu, l'esprit, et la raison.

A ces doux fruits, en toy meurs devant l'aage,  
Ne faict l'esté ny l'automne dommage,  
Ny la rigueur de la froide saison. (9-14)

Aris and Joukovsky state that scholars have been unable to find any specific poem that this sonnet imitates, but it resembles a *huitain* that Peletier du Mans wrote to Marguerite in 1547, and I believe that this poem informs Du Bellay's choice of images. Peletier's poem is titled "A Madame Marguerite, Huitain" and it precedes a series of four poems on the seasons, inspired by Virgil's *Georgics* and dedicated to the Princess. The poem celebrates Marguerite in the spring of youth, and wishes her the best for the following seasons of life. It then specifies that it is only her physical being that will age, since her spirit will always be eternally youthful:

Vostre printemps est florissant assez,  
Dieu doint qu'ayez un plantureux Esté,  
Et des doux fruiz en l'Autonne amassez  
L'Hyver iouir avec ioyeuseté:  
C'est pour le corps qu'ay cela souhaitté :  
Quant a l'esprit, il n'en a point mestier  
Pource qu'il est, sera & a esté  
En son Printemps perdurable & entier. (227)

Peletier only lists Marguerite's *esprit* as her ageless quality. In sonnet thirty-two, Du Bellay adds virtue and reason to Peletier's single trait. All three qualities are commonly associated with Marguerite. Given its resemblance to Peletier's *huitain* which is explicitly dedicated to Marguerite, it seems likely that Du Bellay composed

---

<sup>58</sup> In her discussion of the relationship between the first and second editions of *L'Olive*, Alduy reads the praise to autumn fruits in the quatrains as referring to the second *Olive*, in comparison to the "early fruit" of the first edition (*L'Arbre* 52).

sonnet thirty-two with Marguerite in mind. This sonnet aside, however, the other eight new poems woven into the 1549 sequence do not seem particularly applicable to Marguerite.

The remaining fifty-six new sonnets included in the 1550 edition of *L'Olive* appear in a block at the end of the collection, after sonnet number fifty-nine. The first of these, number sixty, is addressed to Ronsard and represents an abrupt shift from the first fifty-nine. It is the first sonnet addressed to a named, living person since the liminal sonnet to Marguerite and it contains an ambiguous combination of deference towards his friend--not unlike that expressed in the "Au Lecteur" of the second edition--and pride in his own writing. It begins to signal competition between the two friends.<sup>59</sup> In the quatrains Du Bellay stresses Ronsard's founding role in the new poetry and calls him the prince of odes:

Divin Ronsard, qui de l'arc à sept cordes  
Tiras premier au but de la mémoire  
Les traictz aelez de la François gloire,  
Que sur ton luc haultement tu accordes.

Fameux harpeur, et prince de noz odes,  
Laisse ton Loir haultain de ta victoire,  
Et vien sonner au rivage de Loire  
De tes chansons les plus nouvelles modes. (1-8)

In the first five lines Du Bellay insists on Ronsard's primacy and on his mastery of the ode form. At the end of the second quatrain, however, he invites Ronsard to descend from his native "Loir" in order to visit Du Bellay's native "Loire" and share his poems "in the newest modes." At this date Ronsard had shifted from writing odes to

---

<sup>59</sup> Gerard Defaux believes that a very real rivalry between Du Bellay and Ronsard came to a head in the years 1549-1550. He argues against Chamard, Laumonier, and others who tend to portray the relationship between Du Bellay and Ronsard as an ideal literary friendship ("Moy ton Poete" 2003). After acknowledging contentious aspects of the *Olive*, Susan Delaney, however, has claimed that the final sonnet of the 1550 *Olive* represents sincere praise of Ronsard and the desire to forsake "the cycle of rivalry" ("*L'Olive* and the Poetics of Rivalry, 195-96). For an account of continued rivalry between the two friends in later years, see Michel Dassonville's article "A propos d'un autre différend entre Ronsard et Du Bellay" (1974).

writing sonnets and was working on the *Amours*, destined to be published two years later in 1552. Du Bellay's invitation places him in the role of host, proprietor of sonnets. It establishes his own primacy with regards to the sonnet form, balancing Ronsard's ownership of the ode. Describing this switch in genres as a descent, from the high Pindaric style of the ode to the lower style of the love sonnet, Du Bellay maintains the modest stance that he established in the *Vers Lyriques*.

The first tercet then asks Ronsard to bury his "Pindaric bow" in Anjou:<sup>60</sup>

Enfonce l'arc du vieil Thebain archer,  
Où nul que toy ne sceut onq' encocher  
Des doctes Sœurs les sajettes divines, (9-11)

Does burying Pindar's bow refer to abandoning the high style? Or is it meant to represent influence: that Ronsard should lend his Pindaric tendencies to the sonnet form, to Du Bellay's own work, which has never captured the Pindaric aesthetic? Perhaps it signals an exchange: Ronsard can take lessons in sonnets from Du Bellay, whereas Du Bellay can learn from Ronsard's odes. Du Bellay in fact adds the "Musagnoemachie" and five new odes to the end of this edition of *L'Olive*, and the last is addressed to Ronsard.

The last tercet concludes with a gesture of humility:

Porte pour moy parmy le ciel des Gaulles  
Le saint honneur des nymphes Angevines,  
Trop pesant faix pour mes foibles epaules. (12-14)

Here Du Bellay seems to suggest that his own talent is too slender to carry the full reputation of Anjou, or the full possibilities for the sonnet form. He asks that Ronsard

---

<sup>60</sup> In her edition of *L'Olive*, Caldarini notes "L'identification de l'arc avec la lyre, fondée sur l'aspect extérieur des deux objets, était à la base de l'idée d'harmonie d'Eraclite [...] Du Bellay a peut-être trouvé une suggestion pour cette expression assez obscure dans Aristote, *Rhetorique*, III, 1413a, où l'arc est indiqué par la métaphore de *lyre sans cordes*" (114).

make the glory of the sonnet form visible to the whole of France, a seeming admission that his own work has been incapable of doing so.<sup>61</sup>

Just as this sonnet displays a mix of humility and pride, the following sequence of 55 new sonnets will show Du Bellay adopting various literary stances: sometimes he is a humble second to Ronsard, sometimes the proud inventor of the French sonnet sequence, sometimes a jealous friend worried about losing inspiration and being unable to write. As evidence of his growing sense of himself as a writer, he now adopts the sonnet form (as opposed to the ode) to refer self-consciously to his own writing, as he does in the next sonnet, number sixty-one:<sup>62</sup>

Allez, mes vers, portez dessus vos aeles  
Les saintz rameaux de ma plante divine,  
Seul ornement de la terre Angevine,  
Et de mon cœur les vives etincelles.

De vostre vol les bornes seront telles,  
Que dès l'aurore, où le Soleil decline,  
Je voy desjà le monde, qui s'incline  
A la beauté des beautez immortelles. (1-8)

Whereas in the previous poem Du Bellay needed Ronsard to broadcast the “honneur” of the sonnet form (and possibly Du Bellay’s own poetry), here Du Bellay’s poetry is able to take flight on its own and ascend to the highest spheres.<sup>63</sup> Du Bellay is not lacking in poetic furor; he seems only to need help with making himself known in France. In lines that revise the deferential tone of the previous sonnet, the tercets here

---

<sup>61</sup> Katz analyzes this poem, but overlooks the fact that it was added in 1550. He only analyzes the 1550 edition as a whole, and sees this sonnet as a critical link in the middle of the collection: “Even more important is the way that this sonnet, so near the center of the *Olive*, relates to sonnets 1 and 115 ... here Du Bellay calls upon Ronsard to take up the poetic burden which he is not able to bear; in the last sonnet, the content of sonnets 1 and 60 is combined: it is Ronsard who must teach him how to celebrate “la Plante que j’adore” (32).

<sup>62</sup> Further examples where Du Bellay refers to his poetry: s. 67 “mes vers,” s. 69 “mes escriz,” s. 97 “humbles vers.”

<sup>63</sup> In an earlier ode *Au Seigneur Pierre de Ronsard* in the *Vers Liriques*, Du Bellay makes a similar request for praise: “Amy, vole plus hautement, / Et en lieu si humble n’amuse, / Qu’à me louër, ta docte Muse” (47-49).

point to the type of friendship and rivalry that existed between Du Bellay and Ronsard:

Si quelqu'un né sous amoureuse étoile  
Daigne eclersir l'obscur de vostre voile,  
Priez, qu'Amour lui soit moins rigoureux :

Mais s'il ne veult ou ne peult concevoir  
Ce que je sen', souhaitez lui de voir  
L'heureux object, qui m'a faict malheureux. (9-14)

The *quelqu'un né sous amoureuse étoile* is likely to be Ronsard, whose first published poem was an ode titled "Des beautez qu'il voudroit en s'Amie" in Peletier's 1547 collection. Here Du Bellay says that if Ronsard stoops "daigne" to bring his talent to the still unfamiliar sonnet form "eclersir l'obscur de vostre voile," he hopes that love will prove less rigorous to his friend, meaning perhaps that it will speed the writing of the *Amours*.<sup>64</sup> If, however, Ronsard will not or cannot imagine love sonnets--a process Du Bellay describes in proprietary terms according to which Ronsard would "concevoir/Ce que je sens"--then the last tercet wishes that he be given direct contact with Du Bellay's muse and source, the "heureux object" that made Du Bellay "malheureux." Ronsard has not written or published sonnets before: here Du Bellay seems supportive enough of his friend's attempt to write his own *Canzoniere*, but at the same time eager to remind Ronsard and others that even if Du Bellay came to poetry later than his friends in the *Brigade*, and even if he benefitted from their experience and tutelage, he nonetheless had his own qualities, attributable to no one except his own muse. *L'Olive*, as the first sonnet sequence in French, is unquestionably Du Bellay's own, original not only in the French language, but different also from Petrarch, whose sequence was written in at least three different

---

<sup>64</sup> Later, sonnet 106 explicitly mentions Cassandra and Ronsard's work on the *Amours*.

genres (Lombart 76). In this sonnet, he both affirms the vigor of his inspiration and marks his possession of the sonnet form.

The following sonnet, number 62, seems to be even more invested in proclaiming the value of Du Bellay's writing:<sup>65</sup>

Qui voudra voir le plus precieux arbre,  
Que l'orient ou le midy avoüe,  
Vienne, où mon fleuve en ses ondes se joüe :  
Il y verra l'or, l'ivoire, et le marbre. (1-4)

Two sonnets earlier, Du Bellay's fleuve is defined as the Loire, located in his home region of Anjou. This quatrain suggests that the cultural treasures not only of France but also of Anjou are equal to those of any other region in the world. The second quatrain continues the positive comparison:

Il y verra les perles, le cinabre  
Et le cristal : et dira que je loüe  
Un digne object de Florence, et Mantoüe,  
De Smyrne encor', de Thebes, et Calabre. (5-8)

While in the quatrains it is possible to believe that the object of praise is the French language or poetic tradition, the first tercet suggests that Du Bellay is instead boasting about his own writing:

Encor' dira que la Touvre, et la Seine,  
Avec' la Saone arriveroient à peine  
A la moitié d'un si divin ouvrage : (9-11)

Elsewhere in his *oeuvre*, Du Bellay has represented his fellow poets by the rivers that irrigate their regions. In general, the Touvre represents the poet Saint-Gelais, the Seine represents Antoine Heroët, and the Saone represents Maurice Scève. Saint-Gelais had experimented with the sonnet form, Heroët had written platonic love poetry, and Scève had written a love sequence in *dizains*. Du Bellay pays homage to these poets elsewhere. Moreover, his work clearly builds on theirs. Nonetheless, he

---

<sup>65</sup> Katz says that sonnet 62 "alludes to Ronsard's accomplishments" (30), rather than Du Bellay's, but I disagree since the poet invites the reader to visit the region where "mon fleuve en ses ondes se joüe." I read this as an invitation for the reader to inspect Du Bellay's own writing.

here seems to suggest that his own poetry is a “divin ouvrage” that outstrips anything written by the former poets. This also creates a comparative, competitive context into which Ronsard’s love sequence will be born: he may yet write splendid sonnets, but they will be judged against Du Bellay’s rich accomplishments in the genre.

As these three sonnets show, the literary friendship between Ronsard and Du Bellay becomes more complicated as their careers progress and they compete for audiences and patrons, including Marguerite. The new theme of envy enters this collection with sonnet 98, the first in a sequence of five sonnets on envy and human greed. Jealousy seems to have been aroused when an un-named third person upsets the *moy-toy* binary between the lady and lover/poet that has defined the Petrarchan-inspired sonnets 63-97. This third person--*il*--has apparently made a false report of some kind. In the first quatrain we read:

S’il a dict vray, seiche pour moy l’ombrage  
De l’arbre saint, ornement de mes vers,  
Mon nom sans bruit erre par l’univers,  
Pleuve sur moy du ciel toute la rage. (1-4)

Du Bellay pleads that if the false report be true, the laurels that reward his poetry should dry up and his name should wander the universe unknown. However, if the report proves false, the lady should crown him with laurels anew, and his reputation should spread:

S’il a menti, la blanche main d’yvoire  
Ceigne mon front des feuilles que j’honore :  
Les astres soient les bornes de ma gloire : (9-11)

Since the poet’s glory is at stake, it is possible to interpret this jealousy poem in terms of poetic rivalries. It may refer to Saint-Gelais’ ridicule of Ronsard at court and Marguerite’s defense of him, or it may refer to criticism of Du Bellay’s poetry from which he wants to defend himself, and for which he solicits recognition from his lady--perhaps Marguerite. Aris and Joukovsky allow that jealousy was a *topos* in love

poetry (305), but in this case as in so many others in *L'Olive*, amorous tropes seem equally applicable to creative torments and aesthetic ideals.

The next two sonnets continue to struggle with feelings of jealousy, followed by two sonnets that denounce the vice of gold and the quest for wealth.<sup>66</sup> Do these five sonnets on jealousy and the curse of money reveal two vices that Du Bellay regrets in himself and struggles to overcome? Or does he suffer from the jealous reactions of other poets and their competition for sinecures and other financial rewards? Du Bellay seems worried that the report/criticism mentioned earlier may be true, and this affects his writing. His request that “S’il a dict vray, seiche pour moy l’ombrage/De l’arbre saint” seems to come true in the next sonnet, number 103, which opens:

Mais quel hiver seiche la verde souche  
Des saintz rameaux, ombrage de ma vie? (1-2)

Both poetry and the French language are frequently described as green, growing organic matter.<sup>67</sup> In this case they seem to have withered, suggesting perhaps that Du Bellay is facing a writer’s block of some kind. Aris and Joukovsky suggest that this sonnet and the following one represent an illness of the lady, akin to Laura’s death in the *Rime Sparse*. But the poet and his writing also suffer equally with the lady:

Mais quele main, quele pillarde mouche  
Ravist ses fleurs? c’est toy, fievre hardie,  
Qui fais languir par une maladie  
Moy en mon ame, et Madame en sa couche. (4-8)

---

<sup>66</sup> Katz sees a grouping in sonnet 98 and the following 17 “which is further underlined by the abrupt shift in tone between sonnets 98 and 99. [...] With the exception of sonnet 5, which describes the beginning of the relationship between poet and lady, the first ninety-eight poems contain none of the “biographical” or “external” facts of the poet’s love, he is concerned exclusively with the data of an emotional experience which exists out of time and in constantly shifting space. The shock created by the exclamation and vituperation of sonnet 99 creates a rupture and clearly signals the intrusion into the sequence of the “factual reality” of a poetic fiction: the poet has a rival” (48).

<sup>67</sup> Alduy, *Arbre*, 45.

Du Bellay referred to his sonnets as flowers in the liminal piece to Marguerite: here we see the flowers ravaged by the tormented soul of the poet, wracked with anxiety and the jealousy alluded to in previous poems.

In the next sonnet, number 104, the poet asks Aphrodite and the Graces to help relieve these ills, before turning to Pallas Athena:

Soutien aussi, vierge Tritonienne,  
De ton vieulx tige une branche nouvelle :  
Toy qui sortis de la sainte cervelle,  
Sage Pallas, Minerve Athenienne. (4-8)

Is it possible that these verses refer to Marguerite, so commonly designated Minerva and Pallas Athena by contemporary poets? Is Du Bellay requesting additional help in establishing the new poetry--*une branche nouvelle*--championed by Ronsard and the *Brigade*? Does he ask for further defenses against an older generation of poets or skeptics?

In the next two sonnets, Du Bellay addresses the poets Scève and Ronsard, both described as successful and inspirational. They represent the new poetry that Du Bellay wishes to promote and he seems to seek comfort in allying himself with their aesthetic visions. He praises Scève as a “Cigne nouveau,” saying “J’aime, j’admire, et adore pourtant / Le hault voler de ta plume dorée,” and the last lines portray him as a successor to Scève’s work (69).

The sonnet to Ronsard (s. 106) is more intimate and even more passionate, written not only to a peer or a friend, but to a soulmate, a twin “de mon Coeur la seconde moitié!” Du Bellay says that their friendship is no accident: their shared qualities destined them to be “etroitement lié.” These opening lines emphasize the balance in the relationship between the two poets, but in line seven Du Bellay asks Ronsard to comfort him and to help him write:

Soulage un peu le torment que j’endure,

Me consolant d'excuse, ou de pitié.

Inspire moy les tant douces fureurs,  
Dont tu chantas celle fiere beauté,  
Qui t'aveugla à semblables erreurs (7-11)<sup>68</sup>

Du Bellay seems to feel that he has lost his way, his inspiration: he has somehow fallen into "erreurs." Does he fear he has overreached? Was he too ambitious, too eager for fame or fortune? Too quick to publish and cultivate powerful patrons? Does he need to reconnect with his creative roots and friends from the College of Coqueret? His request for comfort and inspiration goes unanswered in this sequence: the sonnet to Ronsard is followed by a sequence of seven pieces, religious in nature. This Christian turn suggests that the poet seeks even higher sources of comfort in an effort to transcend all worldly tribulations.

The religious sequence is followed by two final sonnets that allude to Ronsard and possibly Marguerite. In the next to last sonnet, Du Bellay affirms that he writes for an intellectual audience (*doctes esprits*) and then asks for recognition of his verses:

Te plaise donc, ma Roine, ma Déesse,  
De ton saint nom les immortalizer, (5-6)

Is Marguerite the "Déesse"? Perhaps. But Du Bellay bids the blind bird of love to open its eyes and lead his inspiration elsewhere:

O toy, qui tiens le vol de mon esprit,  
Aveugle oiseau, dessile un peu tes yeux,  
Pour mieulx tracer l'obscur chemin des nues. (9-11)

This change will liberate his poetry, and allow it to reach ever new heights:

Et vous, mes vers, delivres et legers,  
Pour mieulx atteindre aux celestes beautez,  
Courez par l'air d'une aele inusitée. (12-14)

---

<sup>68</sup> Katz's reading of this sonnet underlines the substitution of Ronsard for the Petrarchan lady, and the suffering of poetic creation for the suffering of love (52).

This could be read as a challenge to Ronsard, who will appear in the next and final sonnet: now that he is at work writing love sonnets in the *Amours*, he can only follow in Du Bellay's footsteps. While he is repeating what has already been done, Du Bellay will move on to new and inventive poetry, marked by "une aele inusitée." Worried about overreaching, however, Du Bellay quickly acts to counterbalance this sonnet with praise for his "seconde moitié." He closes the second *Olive* with a sonnet that addresses a series of rhetorical questions to Ronsard, all of which express amazement at his gifts:

De quel soleil, de quel divin flambeau  
Vint ton ardeur? lequel des plus haulx Dieux,  
Pour te combler du parfaict de son mieulx,  
Du Vandomois te fist l'astre nouveau? (1-4)

In the last tercet, Du Bellay asks Ronsard to answer these questions, to show him the way and help him achieve the project laid out in the *Deffence*:

Montre le moy, qui te prise, et honnore,  
Pour mieulx haulser la Plante que j'adore  
Jusqu'à l'egal des Lauriers tousjours verds. (12-14)

Thus, the second edition of *L'Olive*, which opens with its dedicatory sonnet to Marguerite, closes with a sonnet in praise of Ronsard.

This new edition has seen at least one sonnet added that seems to refer specifically to Marguerite (s. 32), without ever naming her explicitly. Other poets are also named, however: Peletier and Ronsard in the preface, and Maurice Scève and Ronsard in several of the sixty-five new sonnets. For the first time, Du Bellay begins to use the sonnet form to discuss his poetics. Where the first edition of *L'Olive* focused thematically on the torments of love and represented a tight binary relationship between the poet and his lady, the second edition adds the torments of jealousy, pride and humility about his own poetry, anxiety about losing the inspiration to write and about being forgotten, as well as criticism of materialism and the chase

for money. These topics and the habit of addressing living people previously only appeared in the *Vers Liriques* and the *Recueil de Poésie*--both collections of odes. Aside from Marguerite, Ronsard is the most prominent addressee. Du Bellay praises him and expresses friendly, even passionate affection for his friend, but also seeks to remind him that his *Amours* follow Du Bellay's own experiments with sonnets and will be measured against them. *L'Olive* thus moves from a binary relationship between the poet and his lady in the first edition to a triangular one in the second: Du Bellay and the lady now contend with Ronsard.<sup>69</sup> Du Bellay's solution in the second to last sonnet seems to be an exploration of new directions in his writing, trying new forms and pushing in unknown directions ahead of his peers--most importantly Ronsard. Marguerite lead Du Bellay "par un sentier inconnu" in the past: perhaps her support will provide his new inspiration as well.

**La Musagnoeomachie**<sup>70</sup>

In the six pieces that Du Bellay adds to the collection after *L'Olive*, he abandons the sonnet form but continues to address questions of jealousy and affirm his place in the new French poetry. The first piece, the "Musagnoeomachie," is a long allegorical poem that dramatizes a war between the muses and monstrous ignorance. Some scholars have read the poem as an attempt to write epic poetry, one of the genres most recommended by the *Deffence* (Alduy 44). This would mean that Du Bellay published a long epic poem before Ronsard wrote the *Franciade*--another instance of Du Bellay practicing a new genre ahead of his peers, and an illustration of

---

<sup>69</sup> René Girard's work on mimetic desire may be a useful framework for understanding the rivalry between Du Bellay and Ronsard insofar as it identifies conflict as arising outside the individual, in contact with an "other" that closely resembles or "doubles" the self. For Girard, "conflict does not merely *produce* doubling [...] it actually *depends* upon it" (Fleming 42). Given the close relationship between the two poets and their status as peers in a restricted social circle, Girard's theory seems helpful for understanding the psychology behind Du Bellay's references to Ronsard and I thank Stamos Metzidakis for bringing it to my attention.

<sup>70</sup> Citations from the "Musagnoeomachie" and the five odes that follow are taken from Du Bellay: Œuvres poétiques, ed. Henri Chamard, vol. 4 (Paris : Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1934).

one of the new directions that Du Bellay hinted his work would take at the end of the second *Olive*.<sup>71</sup> If considered as a variant of the ode form, however, the poem is also an illustration of the open, inclusive nature of the ode and its social networking, connecting possibilities (Rouget *L'Apothéose* 41, 60, 83-86). Here Du Bellay breaks out of the triangular relationship sketched out in the second *Olive*, and manages to link numerous powerful people to a long list of poets, assembling them in an army that aids the muses against ignorance. The poem begins and ends with Du Bellay's own work, however, and assigns him a central role in this struggle.

The first lines of the “Musagnoemachie” explain that Du Bellay began his career in a dark time, described as a dark and stormy night:

Sous l'oeil palle de la nuit  
J'ay faict ma course premiere (1-2)

It is a time dominated by the monster ignorance, and Du Bellay gives a long description of the monster and explains the human ills that it causes. Happily, there are heroes to fight the beast. First among them is the royal family:

FRANÇOIS premier le chassa  
Par la compaigne de France  
Et l'estommac luy passa  
D'une inevitable lance.  
Voicy HENRY qui s'avance  
[...]  
CATARINE & MARGUERITE  
Chacune d'elles irrite  
La Beste au dos & au flanc,  
Qui d'une haleine depite  
Vomist un fleuve de sang. (128-32)

These are the same members of the royal family that were addressed in the *Recueil*. They are aided by the three powerful cardinals addressed in the same collection (Du Bellay, Chatillon, Guyse), by the *Chancelier* François Olivier, and by learned men

---

<sup>71</sup> The *Françiade* was conceived as early as 1550, but was only published in an incomplete version in 1572.

attached to the king's household: Pierre du Chastel (lecteur particulier de François Ier), Jean de Monluc (orateur), and Pierre Danès (premier lecteur de grec au Collège Royal). Du Bellay then imagines that the entire *parlement* has been drafted into the battle as well.<sup>72</sup>

To these illustrious allies, Du Bellay adds a generation of new poets, hidden as yet but ready to split Parnassus in two and emerge to fight the enemy with neoclassical forms:

[...] la France dans son corps  
Cache d'enfans poétiques :  
Qui en sonnez & cantiques,  
Qui en tragiques sangloz  
Font revivre les antiques  
Au seing de la mort enclos. (211-216)

This poetic squadron features Carle, Heroet, Saint Gelais, Rabelais, Bouju, Scève, Salel, Peletier du Mans, Jean Martin, Maclou de la Haye, Salmon Macrin, Tyard and Paschal. Described as a "divine cohort," they are led by three shining lights: Ronsard, Baïf, and Du Bellay, who are said to have been mentored by Baïf's father and Dorat.

Ronsard is then singled out for individual praise in the next stanza:

Qui est celuy qui du chef  
Hurte le front des estoiles ?  
Qui les aeles de sa nef  
Empenne de riches toiles ?  
[...]  
A voir sa riche depouille,  
C'est le Pindare François,  
Qui de Thebe & de la Pouille  
Enrichist le Vandomois. (273-76)

While in the *Olive* Du Bellay has already referred to Ronsard as the "prince of odes" and stressed his leading role in the *Brigade*, the adjective *riche*, here used twice, may reveal additional information about Du Bellay's perception of his friend. Whereas Du

---

<sup>72</sup> He will seek the patronage of *parlement* members more explicitly in the 1552 *Oeuvres*, particularly that of Robert de la Haye and his sister.

Bellay hints that he is *pauvre* and refers to his muse as *humble* and his verses as *petiz*, here Ronsard is *riche* and clearly *grand*, with his head brushing the stars.<sup>73</sup>

After this stanza celebrating Ronsard, Du Bellay writes about his own muse without mentioning anything about Baïf, who had been described as one of the three leading lights of the “divine cohorte.” Baïf’s name may have been included for political reasons, but the leadership of this group is apparently contested between only two rivals: Du Bellay and Ronsard. As if motivated by Ronsard’s model, Du Bellay spurs his muse to action, but then typically loses confidence and needs to cite the support of another poet. He says that Salmon Macrin, who wrote a dedicatory poem for *L’Olive* in Latin, has encouraged him to write:

Le docte luc tant vanté,  
Qui la mort de l’Ignorance  
Parmi Loudun a chanté,  
Voire par toute la France,  
Me veult donner assurance  
De lâcher par l’univers  
Les traiz de mes petis vers : (289-95)

Du Bellay is frequently unable to assert himself fully, particularly with respect to Ronsard. He justifies his writing and publishing by citing encouragement that he has received from Peletier and Macrin, reinforcing his stance as a modest second to Ronsard.

The war comes to an end, and as Du Bellay sees Ignorance falter and die he dreams of a hybrid weapon: half bow, half lyre, able to fire his name and the legend of his fight far and wide. He personalizes the origins of the battle against ignorance, calling it the “guerre commence/Par moy l’Angevin Alcée” (476-77), before allowing that he was following in the footsteps of unspecified others “Suivant les scadrons divers / Qui l’ignorance ont chasse / Par la foudre de leurs vers” (478-80). Du Bellay

---

<sup>73</sup> See “Au Seigneur du Boysdaulphin,” *Recueil de Poésie* (160, v.30).

seems to want credit for the sally he made with the *Deffence*, but stops short of saying that he began the war all alone when he acknowledges that there were predecessors.

He further dreams of building a triumphal arch, a gathering place for the new generation of poets:

La, diront mille cantiques  
Les jeunes, qui ont choisi  
Le thesor presque moisi  
De la vieille Poesie,  
D'une honneste jalousie  
Enflammez par la saveur  
Qui distile en l'Ambrosie  
De la royale faveur. (497-504)

These lines make clear that the royal family, “la royale faveur,” is seen to fuel the young poets and their movement. For the first time Du Bellay acknowledges openly the spirit of competition that exists among the “divine cohorte:” they are possessed by an “honneste jalousie,” and vie with each other for fame and favors from royal patrons.

In the final stanza, Du Bellay retreats from this public battle and returns to the personal one described in the new sonnets of *L'Olive*: his anxiety and struggle to write. He prays to his muse to help relieve these, and seems to regret having joined the worldly squirmishes of the court:

En ton nectar adouci,  
Muse, enyvre ton eponge,  
Pour desaignrir le souci  
Qui la poitrine me ronge.  
Retien l'ame qui se plonge  
Au gouffre tempestueux  
Du Palais tumultueux.<sup>74</sup> (505-11)

Might this Muse be Marguerite? Is Du Bellay signaling his distress at trying to curry favor and distinguish himself at court? Or perhaps this refers to his distress at the

---

<sup>74</sup> Chamard believes that the “Palais tumultueux” refers to “démêlés judiciaires,” explaining that “Selon toute apparence, le poète fut impliqué dans le démêlé de son frère avec les Malestroit d'Oudon” (26). If this is true, then the *Palais* would refer to the court of law rather than the royal court.

poetic feuds that erupted in previous years--described here as a "war." He seems to seek harbor at Marguerite's table, and the lines that follow indicate that *L'Olive* is an offering he lays at her altar:

Encre icy ma nef captive  
Affin que dessus ta rive  
Dedans ton temple immortel  
Des rameaux de mon OLIVE  
J'encourtine ton autel. (512-16)

As this new edition of *L'Olive* is in fact dedicated to Marguerite, it is possible to believe that Du Bellay ends his war between the muses and ignorance--a war into which Marguerite stepped when she took up Ronsard's defense at court--by seeking Marguerite's protection from the fray. He essentially rededicates the collection to her here, an offering undoubtedly calculated to provoke continued support and acts of patronage.

### *Autres Oeuvres Poétiques*

The *Musagnoeomachie* is followed by five odes, the majority of which celebrate women and their virtues, whether as devoted wives, beauties of nature, or wise and learned patrons. In this way the second edition of *L'Olive* concludes by reaffirming the importance of women as patrons of letters, just as it was first celebrated one year earlier in the *Recueil de Poésie*.

The first ode is an elegy written to the poet Salmon Macrin on the death of his wife Gelonis. Macrin had written series of Latin love poems to his wife; she was the "ornament de [ses] vers" (68), much as Marguerite is described as the ornament of Du Bellay's poetry. The poem comforts Macrin and describes his poetry more than it speaks of Gelonis as an individual, but it allows for her "chasteté louable/Son ardent amitié" (51-52).

The second ode is titled “Description de la corne d’abondance, Présentée à une mommerie.” It celebrates an unknown woman, offering her poetic flowers in the context of a masquerade at court. Du Bellay playfully says that he intentionally will not reveal her name, so each woman can imagine that she is the intended recipient of the bouquet. The liminal sonnet to the second *Olive*, of course, describes the collection as a bounteous bouquet of multicolored flowers that is offered to Marguerite, the fairest flower of them all.

Du Bellay continues this gallant vein in the third ode, where he rejoins the *querelle des femmes*, writing “Aux Dames Angevines.” He says that after “Chantant des Rois les louanges à gré / Et l’arbre saint à Minerve sacré” (3-4), he will now celebrate “Des Demydieux & Nymphes Angevines” (26) and right the wrongs of other poets like Gratien du Pont who had written against the fairer sex.<sup>75</sup>

Des envieux les plumes de corbeau  
 Ont mis l’honneur des Dames au tombeau,  
 Sentant combien les graces feminines  
 Seroient en prix, si les plumes benignes  
 Les oppoioient au tiltre ambicieux  
 Dont nostre nom s’eleve jusq’aux cieux. (31-36)

Chamard explains these lines by saying that the criticism of the “envious poets” is due to their envy of female beauty and its potential to rival their poetic glory. Du Bellay, however, doesn’t flinch: he dedicates his “plume” to immortalizing the virtues of the ladies of Anjou, before allowing that in fact they may no longer need him to burnish their reputations:

Mais maintenant je voy le temps changer,  
 Qui vous souloit sous sa force ranger,  
 Puis que desja commencent à vous plaire  
 Les doctes vers, vous n’aurez plus à faire,  
 Pour voz honneurs rendre à jamais vivans,  
 De mandier la main des ecrivans. (55-60)

---

<sup>75</sup> See Chamard 4: 38.

This last stanza seems to repeat the strategy that Du Bellay used at the end of his ode to the Contesse de Tonnerre in the *Recueil de Poésie*: after insisting on his investment in celebrating her virtues, he concluded by saying that her wisdom was ultimately such that it could assure her immortal reputation without any help from the poet. Similarly, the “Dames Angevines”, quite independent of Du Bellay’s *plume*, assure their own glory through their growing appreciation of learned poetry, “les doctes vers.” The poem concludes with this flattering flourish, undoubtedly calculated to further develop the female audience for the *Brigade*’s new poetry.

Du Bellay follows this celebration with an elegy to the woman most celebrated for her learning and appreciation of letters, one who could serve as a model for the *dames angevines* and all others. The “Imitation de l’ode latine de Ian Dorat sur la mort de la Roine de Navarre” celebrates the the first Marguerite as a brilliant star and ends by saying that she has ascended to the heavens, where she reigns like a queen over a larger, more substantive (“plus grand & ferme” 46) kingdom than that of Navarre. This is the adoration that the *dames angevines* could expect if they dedicated themselves to the new poetry.

Finally, Du Bellay ends the sequence of five odes, which also end the second edition of *L’Olive*, by returning to the topic of envy and poetry in a long ode titled “Contre les envieux poetes: A Pierre de Ronsard.” Du Bellay’s engagement with his friend once again leads him to defend his own work and invoke Marguerite as a valiant protector, before declaring his metamorphosis as a poet with a newly great profile, destined for fame.

Du Bellay opens by asserting the value of praise poems: they are more precious than gold because they outlast the celebrated person and because they serve as moral models for others. He then says that praise coming from “un loüeur loüable”

is the most precious of all, and that he has been fortunate to earn the praise of two regional poets in Anjou: Soucelle and Patriere. Du Bellay's own work is said to lead theirs in an effort to join the poetic tradition of Anjou to that of Ronsard. Similarities between Du Bellay and Ronsard are emphasized once again, an echo of the description of Ronsard as Du Bellay's "second half" in sonnet one hundred fourteen of *L'Olive*:

La Nature & les Dieux sont  
Les architectes des hômes.  
Ces deux (ô Ronsard) nous ont  
Bâtiz de mesmes atômes. (49-52)

Why does Du Bellay mention the two obscure poets from Anjou before addressing Ronsard directly? Does mentioning that other poets admire his work suggest that Ronsard has not been generous enough in his praise? Or is it to prove that Du Bellay has more admirers than just Ronsard, his close friend? These two poets, however, have such a limited reputation that their praise does not seem to carry much weight. Perhaps Du Bellay wishes to insist on a difference between the two friends before considering similarities: aligning himself with a regional identity in Anjou, modestly claiming to be at the top of a regional scene rather than claiming to have earned any particular reputation at court. It builds an identity for Du Bellay as an "outsider," or provincial poet, as opposed to Ronsard. In this way, Du Bellay may seek to diffuse any perception of aggression or competition before asserting that he and Ronsard are cut from the same cloth, "bâtiz des mesmes atômes." The poets have different profiles but equal talents.

Despite their similar poetic dispositions, Du Bellay seems to feel that their work has not been received with equal favor, and that he has been unfairly accused of imitating Ronsard:

Or cessent donques les Mômes

De mordre les ecriz miens,  
Puisqu'ils sont freres des tiens,  
Que les plus haux Dieulx admirent.  
Si deux bons archers aspirent  
Ficher leurs traictz au milieu  
Du blanc, bien souvent ilz tirent  
Tous deux en un mesme lieu. (53-60)

Du Bellay contends that all archers aiming for the same target will necessarily produce similar results if they reach their goal. Thus it would be natural to find resemblances between his poetry and Ronsard's. Although he and Ronsard may share similar ideals and goals, the next lines begin to analyze the difference between sonnets and odes in order to differentiate the work of the two friends. Du Bellay begins by discussing the ode form and the fact that Peletier urged him to try his hand in the genre:

Peletier me fist premier  
Voir l'ode, dont tu es prince,  
Ouvrage non coutumier  
Aux mains de nostre province.  
Le ciel voulut que j'apprinse  
A le raboter ainsi,  
A toy me joignant aussi,  
Qui me cheminois par la trace  
De nostre commun Horace,  
Dont un Demon bien appris  
Les traitz, la douceur, la grace  
Grava dedans tes espriz. (61-72)

Du Bellay is careful to say that he has not attempted to write odes in order to imitate or rival Ronsard; he only followed the advice of Peletier, his first model. He later worked with Ronsard, who further helped Du Bellay understand the Horatian model. In the next stanza, Du Bellay assures Ronsard that his odes are unequalled in France, but quickly asserts that his own contribution to French poetry is the introduction of the Italian sonnet in *L'Olive*:

La France n'avoit qui peust  
Que toy, remonter de chordes  
De la Lire le vieul fust,

Ou bravement tu accordes  
 Les douces Thembaines odes.  
 Et humblement je chantay  
 L'OLIVE, dont je plantay  
 Les immortelles racines.  
 Par moy les Graces divines  
 Ont faict sonner assez bien  
 Sur les rives Angevines  
 Le sonnet Italien. (73-84)

This contribution was made humbly, but is unquestionably Du Bellay's own. He asserts that the sonnet has an entirely different aesthetic than the ode:

Le sonnet Italien :  
 Dont le branle industriel,  
 Et la pesante mesure  
 De ses piez laborieux,  
 Qui ne vont à l'aventure  
 Par les champs, dont la peinture  
 Dyapre ces belles fleurs,  
 N'entendent point les valeurs,  
 Que la Lire babillarde  
 Te fredonne plus gaillarde  
 Ores hault & ores bas  
 Sur sa chorde fretillarde  
 A la cadence des pas. (84-96)

The sonnet thus described is the product of hard work, carefully planned and controlled. This contrasts with the chatty ode, product of "la Lire babillarde" which gaily bounces from topic to topic, whether in high Pindaric style or lower Horatian modes. This distinction between the two genres defines the accomplishments of the two poets: Du Bellay the poet of effort, hard work and careful self-cultivation; Ronsard the poet of both easy *gaillardise* and easy learning, better educated than Du Bellay starting from a young age, inspired by a *Demon bien appriz* and able to leap to Pindaric heights without strain. It is difficult to say that one form is valued over the other; Du Bellay seems to insist on the value of each. He perceives a common threat to both him and his friend: envious poets, of different generations or philosophies:

Je voy venir la gent noire  
 Mile corbeaux envieux,

Qui du bord oblivieux,  
Et des chaulx rivages Mores  
Icy revolans encores,  
Troublent d'un son eclatant  
Les nouveaux Cygnes, qui ores  
Par la France vont chantant. (185-192)

Just as she came to Ronsard's defense against Saint-Gelais in spring 1550, Marguerite will scatter the menacing crows and champion the new poets:

Voiray-je point dépouiller  
La grand' troupe deloyale,  
Qui du bec osoit souiller  
La belle fleur liliale ?  
Je voy la Nymphé royale  
Qui les éparpille tous,  
Et d'un son heureux doux  
Reclame la bande blanche.  
C'est la MARGUERITE franche  
Promise aux Astres luyans,  
Si la Parque ne me tranche  
Le fil de mes jeunes ans. (217-228)

Du Bellay asserts that poets who do not adhere to the values of the *Brigade* soil France and the monarch--represented by the fleur de lis, *la belle fleur liliale*--with their mediocre poetry. Marguerite can protect against them, and Du Bellay promises to write her into immortality, if he doesn't die young. Like her aunt Marguerite, described as a star in the heavens after her death, Marguerite is "promise aux Astres luyans." Du Bellay constructs the impression of a special relationship to her: the other "nouveaux cygnes" go unmentioned here and her glory depends solely on Du Bellay's praise poems.

In the next and last stanza, he describes a renewal of his muse, his metamorphosis into a successful poet who rises to new heights by singing the praises of his prince:

D'où vient ce plumage blanc,  
Qui ma forme première emble ?  
Desja l'un & l'autre flanc  
Dessous une aule me tremble.

Nouveau Cigne, ce me semble,  
Je remply l'air de mes ecriz,  
et je porte par le monde  
La mémoire vagabonde  
De mon Prince non pareil,  
De l'Aurore jusq'à l'onde  
Où se baigne le Soleil. (229-40)

Du Bellay expresses amazement at his own development as a poet, his metamorphosis into a swan. He effectively rededicates himself to the cause of the new poetry, affirming that he will seek to write about the highest patrons possible--not only Marguerite but her brother the king. After early hints of anxiety and frustration with criticism from various sources, this ode to Ronsard seeks once again to define Du Bellay's particular poetic gifts and assert his intention to carve a name for himself in literary history, beginning with his special relationship with Marguerite. The volume containing the second edition of *L'Olive* thus begins with a dedicatory sonnet to Marguerite and moves through a series of sonnets that push the form in new directions, addressing the topic of jealousy and Du Bellay's relationship with Ronsard. These sonnets are then followed by a declaration of war against ignorance and the old poetry in the "Musagnoeomachie," a long poem with epic aspirations that traces the full lines of power at court and in literary circles, before returning obsessively to the topic of competition among poets and an appeal for Marguerite's support. He follows the "Musagnoeomachie" with an appreciation of various women in the last odes and a final, refined definition of the roles played by himself, Marguerite, and Ronsard in nurturing a new French poetry ("Contre les envieux poetes"). Du Bellay's sense of audience and patronage has grown since his first collections which were dedicated to Jean Du Bellay and which contained no poems addressed to women: the *Recueil* revealed Du Bellay's growing sense of the potential of female patrons, and his solicitation of Marguerite's patronage becomes more

insistent in the second edition of *L'Olive*. The collection both begins and ends with Marguerite, and Ronsard appears increasingly a rival as much as a friend. After Marguerite's public and famous defense of Ronsard at court in spring 1550, Du Bellay may have felt the need to press his own case and call her to his defense as well. At the very least, he wanted to reaffirm his connection to her in print.

**1552: *Oeuvres de l'invention de l'auteur, 13 Sonnets d'honneste amour***<sup>76</sup>

In this collection, we encounter a changed Du Bellay, metamorphosed not into a soaring swan but rather a Christian poet who ultimately contemplates renouncing poetry. Marguerite figures less in this collection, although she is still a presence and is acknowledged in the preface. Du Bellay continues to reflect on what it means to be a poet, but legal problems in his family and a long and debilitating illness have sapped his initial energy and enthusiasm. His illness forced a withdrawal from the world and limited his publications between 1550 and 1552. This distance and physical vulnerability seem to have tempered his ambitions and attitude about competing for patronage. He mostly turns inward, towards moral reflections, religion, and a reassessment of what he has written to date.

Marguerite is explicitly named three times: first in the preface, then in a poem titled "Les Deux Marguerites," and then briefly in the "Ode au Seigneur des Essars." The preface is addressed to Jean de Morel, who wrote an appreciative sonnet that precedes the dedication. He was an intellectual and friend of Marguerite's who has been credited with introducing her to Du Bellay and other authors (Stephens 116-

---

<sup>76</sup> Citations from the *Oeuvres de l'invention de l'auteur* and the *13 Sonnets d'honneste amour* are taken from Du Bellay: Œuvres poétiques, eds. Daniel Aris and Françoise Joukovsky, vol.1 (Paris: Éditions Classiques Garnier, 2009).

118). Du Bellay opens by telling his “cher amy Morel” that literature had never been such a comfort to him until the advent of his many personal calamities. He says that he has continued to write for his pleasure, but most of all to leave a record of his existence. He hopes to be well received:

Je me laisseray encor’ abuser d’une si douce folie, que de penser mes petiz ouvraiges avoir trouvé quelque faveur en l’endroit de ceux dont le jugement a bien ceste auctorité de donner (s’il fault ainsi parler) droict d’immortalité à mes labeurs. (192)

Du Bellay then speaks of the pleasures of pleasing *les grands*: the king and

Marguerite:

Je diray d’avantaige, que ce n’est une des moindres felicitez dont les hommes se puissent vanter, que d’avoir peu en quelque liberal exercice faire chose agréable aux Princes. Et quand la conscience de mon peu de merite m’auroit du tout retranché l’esperance d’ung si grand bien, si est-ce (cher amy) que pour le droict de nostre amitié je prendray ceste hardiesse de me glorifier (en ton endroit seulement) d’avoir quelquefois par la lecture de mes escriz donné plaisir aux yeux clervoyans de celle tant rare perle et royale fleur des Princesses, l’unique MARGUERITE de nostre âge : au divin esprit de laquelle est par moy dès long tems consacré tout ce qui pourra jamais sortir de mon industrie. (192-93)

Here Du Bellay suggests that he never managed to truly charm the king with his writing, due to his “peu de merite:” having pleased Marguerite is his consolation. This suggests that the king was his desired audience, but that Marguerite--and possibly other female patrons--were more accessible and receptive to his poetry.

Du Bellay then returns to an expression of insecurity about the quality of his education:

Ce sont les principales raizons, qui m’ont donné courage de continuer jusques icy en l’estude des choses que j’ay suyvies, non tant de ma propre election, qui pour ne laisser mon esprit languir en oysiveté : lequel je sentoy (à mon grand regret) assez mal préparé à l’estude des lettres plus sévères. (193)

This early lack of education haunts Du Bellay and reinforces his impression of trailing other poets in his circle, particularly Ronsard.<sup>77</sup> The sentiment of inferiority returns at the end of the preface, after Du Bellay has explained his surprising choice to translate the fourth book of the *Aeneid* in this collection.<sup>78</sup> When he describes the original poems that he has included after the translation, he says:

[...] je ne les estimoi' dignes de se monstrier au jour, pour comparoistre devant ces divins esprits Tholoizains (Pierre de Paschal), Masconnais (Pontus de Tyard), et Autres [...]. (196)

In the two years since Du Bellay last published, Paschal and Tyard seem to have had growing success at court--enough to make Du Bellay feel that he could be measured against them. He says that he only overcame his reluctance to publish because so many faulty manuscripts of his poems were circulating that he thought he needed to establish an accurate record.<sup>79</sup> His initial plan was to organize his poems into two sections: one for those of Christian inspiration and one for those of pagan inspiration. He doesn't separate them in the present edition, but he dedicates the Christian poems to Morel, whom he admires and calls fortunate due to his marriage to "une femme si entierement conforme à la perfection de ton esprit" and due to his friendship with

cete incomparable lumiere des loix et des lettres plus doulces,  
MICHEL DE L'HOSPITAL, dont les singulieres vertuz louées de toute la France, et particulièrement admirées de toy et de tous ceux qui sont si heureux que de luy estre familiers, seroient par moy plus laborieusement descrites, si je leur pouvoy donner quelque grace après l'inimitable main de ce Pyndare François PIERRE DE RONSART nostre commun amy : des labours duquel (si l'Apollon de France est prospere à ses enfentements) nostre poëzie doit esperer je ne sçay quoy plus grand que l'Iliade. (196)

---

<sup>77</sup> He mentions his lack of education yet again in the first poem of the *Œuvres*, "La Complainte du Désespéré:" "Qu'ay-je depuis mon enfance / Sinon toute injuste offence / Senty de mes plus prochains? / Qui ma jeunesse passée / Aux tenebres ont laissée / Dont ores mes yeux sont plains" (121-26).

<sup>78</sup> The choice is surprising because Du Bellay expresses a strong preference for imitation over translation in both the *Deffence* and the preface to the second edition of *L'Olive*.

<sup>79</sup> This is the same trope he uses in the introduction to the first *L'Olive* to justify publishing the collection.

Morel's "fortune heureuse" contrasts with the calamities of Du Bellay's own life: on the personal side, Morel has a wife who was reputed for her learning and who helped her husband organize a literary salon in their home (Keating 29-30). Du Bellay lacked any such partner, and his explicit mention of her points once again to the poet's appreciation of learned women. It seems that he was not close to Michel de L'Hospital either, even though he expresses admiration for him and says that he would write in his honor if he felt that he could measure up to Ronsard's famous ode to the *chancelier*, a work that had already circulated and which was destined to be published later that year in the fifth book of *Odes* included at the end of the *Amours*. Here once again Du Bellay grants Ronsard ownership of the ode form as well as the epic, and suggests that he has a more concrete chance of being rewarded by the king (l'Apollon de France) than Du Bellay himself, who has once more produced "petiz ouvraiges" rather than heroic and kingly forms.

In this collection Du Bellay no longer competes with Ronsard as he did in the second *Olive*: he does not try to balance Ronsard's domination of the ode form with boasts about being the first to introduce the sonnet in France. This collection is written in resignation--he consistently adopts the stance of a second or lesser poet and makes little attempt to vie for patronage. This perhaps explains Marguerite's limited presence and the repeated deference to Ronsard. Ronsard is strangely present even in three liminal poems by friends, placed after Du Bellay's preface to Morel: it seems that Du Bellay no longer seeks individual reward, or is too unsure of himself to publish solely in his own name. These liminal pieces pair him with his "second half:" Marie de la Haye writes "Sur les oeuvres poëtiques de J. Du Bellay et P. de Ronsard," Thomas Sebillet writes a sonnet encouraging the two friends together, and Robert de la Haye writes a Latin ode "De I. Bellay, et P. Ronsardo." These poems pay as much

tribute to Ronsard as to Du Bellay and reinforce the impression that Du Bellay is positioned as a member of a team--or at least as co-captain--and that his writing should be read in tandem with Ronsard's. The insistence on his partnership with Ronsard may also represent Du Bellay's decreased confidence, and an internal sense that a larger audience appreciates him only in relation to Ronsard. He may feel he needs Ronsard's continued friendship and patronage in order to obtain any particular favor at court, particularly if his illness caused him to be absent for two years. The dedication of this collection to Jean de Morel may indicate that Du Bellay feels that his old friend, responsible for his introduction to Marguerite and thus the growth of Du Bellay's early career, appreciates his individual voice in a way that others do not.

In the first six odes Du Bellay laments the misfortunes that have befallen him and turns toward God, seeking forgiveness for his sins. He renounces court life saying that it is incompatible with virtue, and in an ode titled "La Lyre Chrestienne" he announces the intention to stop writing "pagan verses" and seek Christian inspiration instead:

Moy cestuy là, qui tant de fois  
Ay chanté la Muse charnelle,  
Maintenant je haulse ma vois  
Pour sonner la Muse eternelle.(1-4)

The Muses, so dear to Du Bellay in earlier collections, are now described as a cackling and useless bunch:

Quand j'oy les Muses caqueter  
Enflant leurs motz d'ung vain langage,  
Il me semble ouyr cracqueter  
Ung perroquet dedans sa cage.(121-24)

Du Bellay thus dramatically redefines his values as a poet: the neoclassical ideals of past years are described as "l'offrande de mes jeunes ans" (234, v.144) and abandoned as part of his youth. In the following "Discours sur la louange de la vertu

et sur les divers erreurs des hommes,” dedicated to Salmon Macrin, Du Bellay satirizes court society and the poets associated with it: he abandons this too in his quest to lead a virtuous life:

Que me sert-il que je suyve  
Les princes, et que je vive  
Aveugle, müet et sourd,  
Si apres tant de services  
Je n’y gaigne que les vices  
[...]  
C’est une loüable envie  
A ceux qui toute leur vie  
Veulent demeurer oyzeux,  
D’ung nouveau ne faire conte,  
Et pour garder qu’il ne monte,  
Tirer l’eschelle apres eulx. (121-26)

Life at court necessarily imprints its vices and corrupts the poet who attempts to write for his prince. Du Bellay suggests that one facet of this corruption is a lazy “oyzeux” enjoyment of pleasures, and a jealous guarding of rank that seeks to quash any attempt by new poets to join the inner circle. It is easy to read this as an allusion to Du Bellay’s own experience at court, as his feelings of being shut out by older courtier poets.

Not every aspect of the princely court is subject to rejection: the following ode, “Les Deux Marguerites,” balances the impulse for rupture and marks an element of continuity in the collection. Despite shifting from worldly to spiritual inspirations, Du Bellay has not wavered in his devotion to Marguerite and her aunt. This ode had been written earlier, however, and published first in 1551 at the end of the *Tombeau de Marguerite de Navarre* (381). It represents a slightly earlier phase in Du Bellay’s writing, but its inclusion here signals that he still found it relevant: the two Marguerites are one measure of permanence in a world of change and disappointment. They are “deux fleurs d’eslite” who must be celebrated.

At the beginning of the ode, Du Bellay refers to the myth that the Gods would change their favorites into stars, and he mentions several deceased members of the Valois family who already shine from the heavens as planets. He then says that Marguerite de Navarre merits the same reward as those earlier family members. She represented “nostre mieux,” but her niece deserves mention as well:

C'est de mes vers l'ornement :  
Seule, qui divinement  
Anime, enhardist, inspire  
Les bas fredons de ma Lyre :  
C'est elle, et je sçay combien  
Mes chansons luy plaisent bien.

Si des premiers je n'ay pas  
Orné le Royal trespas,  
Aussi ma Muse est trop basse  
Pour une premiere place :  
Et qui sçait si les derniers  
Se feront point les premiers? (73-84)

Du Bellay once again insists on Marguerite's unequalled role in his writing: she is “seule” to motivate, encourage and inspire him. He is unusually confident of her appreciation, which suggests close contact with her during 1550 and 1551. He then excuses the fact that he did not write immediately for the royal family when he dedicated the 1549 *Deffence* to Jean Du Bellay: he says that his “basse” Muse was too modest to ascend to such heights. This contrasts with Ronsard, whose first published volume, the 1550 *Odes*, was dedicated to Henri II and written in high Pindaric style. Nonetheless, Du Bellay hopes here--perhaps still optimistic about his chances for expanded royal patronage in 1551--that his own muse may eventually come to be appreciated by the king and his circle, or at least gain greater reknown: “qui sçait si les derniers / Se feront point les premiers?”

At the end Du Bellay addresses Marguerite de Navarre, eternally radiant in the heavens but with worthy successors left to the world:

Le ciel t'a reprise donc,  
Nous laissant d'ung mesme tronc,  
Cete autre Fleur, ta compaigne,  
Et ta fille, qui se baigne  
En ce labeur glorieux  
Qui t'a mise au rang des Dieux. (133-38)

Du Bellay thus uses the commemoration of Marguerite de Navarre's death to cultivate living female patrons: her niece Marguerite "cete autre fleur" and her daughter "ta fille" Jeanne d'Albret, who both are said to share her "labeur glorieux." Jeanne was known to write, as her mother had, but no writings of Marguerite survive, and she is never mentioned as an author.<sup>80</sup> The glorious labor to which Du Bellay refers may then be literary patronage and the support of new learning, rather than literary production.

The last remaining concrete reference to Marguerite in the *Oeuvres de l'Invention de l'auteur* appears in passing in the next "Ode au Seigneur des Essars sur le discours de son Amadis." Nicolas d'Herberay, Seigneur des Essars, had translated the Spanish *Amadis de Gaula* into French in the 1540's and it was immediately a popular success, praised by poets of the Pléiade. It was a great favorite of both François Ier and Henri II (Bourciez 60), and Du Bellay presents it as a *roman à clés* in which François Ier is represented by the character of king Périon, whose offspring are Henri and Marguerite (Aris and Joukovsky 384). Marguerite's opinion of *Amadis* is unknown, so it is impossible to gauge whether this reference within a praise poem of the translator would have pleased or interested her. It would surely have pleased, or amused her brother, however, and perhaps a courtly audience who enjoyed reading the romance. The poem must have pleased Herberay himself, who is

---

<sup>80</sup> Du Bellay wrote a series of fourteen sonnets to Jeanne d'Albret, to which she responded with four of her own. These were published in 1561 after the poet's death, but Chamard believes they date to at least ten years earlier (2: 218). See page 209 for further discussion of Marguerite's limited production in writing.

roundly complimented and whose choice of genre (romance) is defended by Du Bellay.

The first twelve pieces of this collection are followed by a sequence of thirteen sonnets titled “Sonnetz de l’Honneste Amour.” Just as the first part of the collection describes a rejection of Du Bellay’s past writing and his rebirth as a Christian poet, these thirteen sonnets largely reject the genre of sonnets that were included in *L’Olive*, judged to be too concerned with physical beauty. These poems focus instead on the lady’s virtue and spirit. Despite this movement towards abstraction, a few references seem to link the lady concretely to Marguerite--much like *L’Olive*--although she is never named.

The poet addresses the lady and says that he remembers her beauty:

[...] je peins au tableau de Memoire  
Vostre beauté, le seul beau de mes vers. (7-8)

Du Bellay repeatedly refers to Marguerite as the “seul ornament de mes vers” (243) or “seul honneur de mes vers” (140), a superlative construction echoed in “le seul beau de mes vers.” The lady, or her virtue, prevent the poet from being too seduced by this physical beauty, however, and they point him in a different direction:

Mais si ce beau ung fol dezir m’apporte,  
Vostre vertu plus que la beauté, forte,  
Le coupe au pié : et veult qu’un plus grand bien  
Prenne en mon cœur une accroissance pleine : (9-12)

The poet will abandon the “vieil Cäos de [sa] jeune pensée” (264) and turn towards the ideal and the divine: “Rien de mortel ma langue plus ne sonne” (265). If the lady herself is divine, however, rather than mortal; if her virtue is great enough, surely she will still be worthy of poetry. In the second to last sonnet, Du Bellay describes just such a divine lady, who shares certain similarities with Marguerite. He begins:

La docte main, dont Minerve eust appris,  
Main dont l’yvoire en cinq perles s’allonge,

C'est ô mon cœur ! la lyme qui te ronge,  
Et le rabot qui polist mes ecris. (1-4)

Marguerite is commonly referred to as “docte,” and as being the Minerva of her era. Here, the lady is described as being so learned that even Minerva could have learned something from her. The lady not only shapes the poet’s feelings, but his poetry. He is haunted by her penetrating eyes:

Les chastes yeux, qui chastement m’on pris,  
Soit que je veille, ou bien soit que je songe,  
Ardent la nuict de mon œil, qui se plonge,  
Au centre, où tend le rond de mes esprits. (4-8)

The lady is described as *chaste*, just as Marguerite is the *vierge* (135) to whom Du Bellay writes from the very beginning. The attraction here is depicted as chaste as well--one that touches Du Bellay’s spirit to the very core: it is a meeting of minds. In fact, it is the lady’s mind and conversation that enable the poet’s writing:

L’esprit divin, et la divine grace  
De ce parler, qui du harpeur de Thrace  
Eust le ennuiz doucement enchantez,  
  
Vous ont donné la voix inusitée  
Dont (ô mes vers) saintement vous chantez  
Le tout-divin de vostre Pasithée. (9-14)

Pasithée was the woman who inspired the *Erreurs Amoureuses* of Pontus de Tyard, published in 1549. She has consistently been identified with a living woman (Lapp xvii). When Du Bellay writes that he is celebrating his own Pasithée, does he mean that he is celebrating his own living muse, Marguerite--just as Tyard celebrated his own mistress (always referred to as *Pasithée*)? Here he celebrates “l’esprit divin” of the lady, just as in the preface he describes Marguerite’s “divin esprit” to Jean de Morel. The frequency of elements that can be associated with Marguerite, the end reference to a living woman who inspired Tyard’s sonnet sequence, and the self-conscious references to writing and inspiration--processes repeatedly associated with

the princess--suggest that this sonnet may in fact reference Marguerite. It is one further example of the pattern that Du Bellay has established in this collection (in the preface, in the sequencing of the “Lyre Chretienne and “Les Deux Marguerites”): he affirms change in his poetry and rejects certain aspects of the past, but at the same time stresses his continued devotion to Marguerite.

After the thirteen *Sonnets de l’Honeste Amour*, the collection ends with Du Bellay’s translation of a Latin poem by the Scottish humanist Buchanan: “L’Adieu aux Muses.” The very choice of topic and title suggests that Du Bellay may contemplate an even greater rejection of his past and decide to stop writing altogether. His attitude, however, is more complicated if we compare “L’Adieu aux Muses” to the preface. *L’Adieu* bids farewell to the muses, and depicts the poet as bitterly disappointed by his lack of success:

Toy, que les Muses ont eleu,  
De quoy te sert-il d’estre leu,  
Si pour tout le gaing de ta peine  
Tu n’as qu’une louange vaine ?  
[...]  
Pleurant d’avoir ainsi perdu  
Le tems aux livres despandu,  
Et d’avoir semé sur l’arene  
De ses ans la meilleure grene. (137-40)

In contrast to this, Du Bellay affirms in the preface to Morel that during his recent tribulations “le non moins honneste que plaisant exercice poëtique m’a donné tant de consolation, que je ne puis encore me repentir d’y avoir perdu une partie de mes jeunes ans” (192). Here, he doesn’t regret any of the time spent on poetry, and insists on the pleasure and comfort he finds in the exercise. He later concedes that although poetry can be a thankless activity, the onset of his long illness created a desire both to keep his mind active and to leave behind some mark of his existence. Poetry answers both needs. This indicates a restructuring of goals compared to the *Recueil* or the

second edition of *L'Olive*: in this collection Du Bellay writes less for immediate glory among the *grands* than for personal satisfaction and consolation. He chooses a friend (Morel) as a dedicatee, cedes the first place among poets to Ronsard, and experiments with Christian themes and latin translations of Ovid and Virgil. In fact, in the preface he alludes to his translation of Virgil and says “si je congnoy que ce mien labour soit agreeable aux lecteurs, je mettray peine (si mes affaires m’en donnent le loysir) de leur faire bien tost voir le sixiesme de ce mesme aucteur” (194). Du Bellay here invites positive responses from his readers, and announces his willingness to embark on future translations. Although he does not mention writing original poetry in the future, he clearly is willing to continue publishing translations if he receives positive feedback on the current collection. He thus does not categorically renounce writing; he is rather at a crossroads, conscious of past and present, and preoccupied by themes of both continuity and change. Throughout this period of flux, his relationship with Marguerite appears calmed but unchanged.

### **March 1553: Second Edition of the *Recueil de Poésie***<sup>81</sup>

Du Bellay in fact does not abandon the muses in 1552: he publishes again in March 1553, a second edition of the *Recueil de Poésie* with four new poems added at the end. The collection remains dedicated to Marguerite, but the new pieces do not address her directly. Thematically, they continue the tension between rupture and continuity that was evident in the *Oeuvres de l'Invention de l'Auteur*. The first ode, “A Une Dame,” opens with the line “J’ay oublié l’art de petrarquizer” (170) and satirizes the excesses of neo-petrarchan poetry, Du Bellay’s own included. After

---

<sup>81</sup> All citations from the second edition of the *Recueil* are taken from Du Bellay: Œuvres poétiques, ed. Henri Chamard, vol. 4 (Paris : Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1931).

rejecting the pagan muse in favor of a Christian one in the 1552 *Oeuvres* and hinting at a shift in inspiration for the *13 Sonnets de l'Honneste Amour*, Du Bellay here explicitly rejects the Petrarchan muse that produced *L'Olive*. In this sense, he might be seen to be sweeping the slate clean before leaving for Rome one month later in April 1553: he abandons both Horace and Petrarch, the largest influences on his early work.

“A Une Dame” is followed by a translation from the fifth book of Virgil, a continuation that was promised in the preface to *Oeuvres de l'Invention de l'Autheur*. This short selection--“la Mort de Palinure, du Cinquiesme de Virgile”--focuses on the death of Palinurus, the boat captain who lost his life while shepherding Aeneas from Italy to Sicily. According to the legend, Aeneas survives the trip and his coterie goes on to found Rome. Palinurus's death thus enables the flourishing of Roman civilization. It is possible to wonder whether Du Bellay considers himself a sixteenth-century Palinurus, having himself founded the neo-classical revival in French poetry with the *Deffence*, but quickly seeing his stature diminish as Ronsard published and moved to the fore. As he prepared to leave for Rome and several years of secretarial work for Cardinal Jean du Bellay, Joachim may have felt that he had been a sacrificial figure of the new poetry, just as Palinurus died while enabling the founding of Rome. This particular passage of the *Aeneid* continues the theme of rupture and ending that was established in “A Une Dame.”

The final two pieces, however, an “Elegie” of 114 lines and a “Chanson” of 108 lines, both take as a theme the poet/lover's unwavering constancy. They are filled with metaphors of permanence that contrast with the changing world around the poet. It is unclear whom the poems address: no woman is mentioned specifically. The elegy establishes a relationship between a “toy” and a “moy” who pledges his “eternelle

foy” (184, v.96): the chanson describes a relationship between a hard-hearted lady “vous,” and the poet who is “toujours ferme” and “jamais variable.” Indeed, the second edition of the *Recueil de Poésie* remains dedicated to Marguerite and repeats the praise of the *grands* that had been published three years earlier. The *Recueil*, written in French to living French dignitaries in the exuberant afterglow of meeting Marguerite in 1549, was the least imitative of Du Bellay’s early collections. It was written in large part about the contemporary French court, and was neither overtly Petrarchan nor Horatian in nature. There is little that Du Bellay would need to reject, then, in this collection: he can issue a second edition, still dedicated to Marguerite, while renouncing earlier Petrarchan and neoclassical “errors” in his poetry.<sup>82</sup> We saw earlier that the first edition of this collection was particularly solicitous of Marguerite, Catherine de Medici and the Contesse de Tonnerre: Du Bellay thus leaves for Rome with a last assurance of fidelity to the ladies of the Royal court. In his 1549 preface to Marguerite he says “je me suis remis aux choses que j’ay pensé vous pouvoir donner quelque plaisir” (121-22) : at the end of the 1553 *Chanson* he concludes “Jamais rien ne me desplaira/Qui vous soit agreable” (187, v.107-08). Analysis of the Roman collections that Du Bellay eventually publishes in 1558 will show that pleasing Marguerite remains one of his primary concerns in the intervening years.

---

<sup>82</sup> François Rigolot has written on error in the Renaissance: his 2004 article looks at how Petrarch’s theme of *giovanile errore* was adapted and transformed by several French poets, but does not treat Du Bellay. His 2002 book *L’Erreur de la renaissance*, does treat Du Bellay, but mostly in regard to his discussion of translation in the *Deffence* (306-311).

## A Temple for Marguerite : Du Bellay's Poems after Rome

### 1558 Poems to Marguerite

In April 1553, Du Bellay left France for Rome to work as a secretary in the household of his relative, Cardinal Jean Du Bellay. He did not return to France until late 1557, and published nothing during his years away. He did continue writing while in Rome, however, and in 1558--only months after his return--he was able to publish two long poems to the king (*Discours au roy sur la trefve de l'an MDLV* and *Hymne au roy sur la prinse de Callais* [privilege granted January 17, 1558]) and four collections: *privileges* for the first two (*Regrets* and *Divers Jeux Rustiques*) were issued in January 1558; those for the second two (*Antiquitez de Rome* and *Poemata*) were issued in March of that year. Although many scholars have asserted that the four collections benefit from being read together (or at least complement each other), few have actually done so in a systematic way, with the result that they have received uneven critical attention. The *Regrets* are generally seen to be Du Bellay's masterpiece and have frequently been studied both as a sonnet sequence and as individual sonnets (Bellenger, Bizer, Katz, Gadoffre, etc.). The sonnets of the *Antiquitez*, followed by the *Songe*, have also received considerable scholarly attention (Tucker, Skenazi, etc.). The *Divers Jeux Rustiques* have aroused far less critical interest, as is the case with the *Poemata*, partly because these last were written in Latin and French translations were not published until the mid 1980's. As Aris and Joukovsky note, however, "non seulement l'élaboration des recueils est sans doute parallèle, mais ces cycles presentent de nombreux points communs, que l'on oublie trop souvent quand on aborde l'étude détaillée" (2: x).<sup>83</sup> Because the 1558 collections

---

<sup>83</sup> Along the same lines, Screech says "Les quatre recueils se complètent" (in his edition of the *Regrets* 10), although he does not explain how. Saulnier also notes that "une certaine permanence de sentiments

have more frequently been studied independently rather than in light of each other, Marguerite's carefully choreographed presence has gone unnoticed.

With the exception of the *Antiquitez*, which is dedicated to Henri II and which is preoccupied by themes of empire and (by implication) the king's power, the three other 1558 collections are bound by the continued presence of Marguerite. Only by reading these three together can the full significance of her presence be understood. Seventeen sonnets to her included at the end of the *Regrets* have frequently been alluded to, if rarely studied in detail, and scholars have duly noted that the collection of *Poemata* was dedicated to her, as were some of the pieces contained within. Her presence in the *Jeux Rustiques*, however, has gone unnoticed and for this reason the deliberate, programmatic inclusion of poems to the princess in the *Regrets*, *Divers Jeux Rustiques*, and *Poemata* has remained invisible. Considered as a whole, these poems construct a cornucopic offering to Marguerite, a veritable monument that testifies to Du Bellay's abiding devotion to his princess even at a great distance during a five-year absence, and one that provides a female, royal link between three of the four 1558 collections. Marguerite's ubiquitous presence also attenuates the praise

---

s'indique" (*Du Bellay* 111) across all four collections. At the same time, other alignments are possible and in the *Antiquitez* and the *Regrets* he sees "les deux parts d'un diptyque romain" (98). Olivier Millet cites G. Sutherland's assertion that of the four Roman collections "chaque recueil contribue pour une part essentielle à l'oeuvre totale" (*Epigrammata* 569), but Millet limits his analysis to a comparison of the epigrams of the *Poemata* to sonnets in the *Regrets*, in which he finds a "Muse parallèle" (582). Perrine Galand Hallyn's study of the theory of poetic "genius" in Du Bellay requires her to examine all four Roman collections together (*Le 'Génie' Latin de Joachim du Bellay*); elsewhere she focuses on comparing ekphrasis in the *Antiquitez* and the *Elegiae* (*Jeux intertextuels*). She cites André Tournon as saying that the 1558 Latin poems serve as a "hypertexte" for the French ones (*Jeux Intertextuels* 75). Finally, Genevieve Demerson--who edited and translated Du Bellay's Latin poetry and has written on its latin and neo-latin sources--says that she finds it difficult to understand the architecture of the collections, and she makes no overarching claims in this regard (*Poemata*, 7:18).

assigned to Henri II in these publications, and suggests that the princess, rather than her brother, is the true inheritor of François Ier's cultural values and ambitions.<sup>84</sup>

Sixteenth-century French poets thought carefully about the structure of their collections. Cynthia Skenazi notes that sixteenth-century authors of treatises on poetry and rhetoric were preoccupied by the question of *dispositio* and its relation to *inventio*:

Dans son *Art Poétique* (1544), Jaques Peletier du Mans assimile la *dispositio* à une partie de l'*inventio* ; sans aller plus loin, Ronsard souligne les liens étroits qui unissent les deux notions. 'Et ne fault point douter', remarque-t-il dans l'*Abrégé de l'art poétique françois* (1565), 'qu'après avoir bien et hautement inventé, que la belle disposition de vers ne s'ensuyve, d'autant que la disposition suit l'invention mere de toutes choses, comme l'ombre faict le corps' [...] Tout ainsi que l'invention despend d'une gentille nature d'esprit, ainsi la disposition despend de l'invention laquelle consiste en une elegante et parfaicte colocation et ordre des choses inventées, et ne permet pas ce qui appartient à un lieu soit mis en l'autre. (Skenazi, *L'Ordre*, 161)

Skenazi goes on to analyze Ronsard's strategies of ordering his odes.<sup>85</sup> Paul J. Smith has worked on the concept of *dispositio* as it applies to other poets in sixteenth-century France, Du Bellay included. He compares Du Bellay's attitude towards *dispositio* to Quintilian's, saying that both authors seem to think that order is too dependent on the specific context of a work to be able to prescribe any solid rule on ordering in a treatise on writing. He cites Du Bellay in the *Deffence*:

Pour autant [...] que la disposition gist plus en la discretion & bon jugement de l'orateur qu'en certaines reigles & preceptes : veu que les evenements du tens, la circunstance des lieux, la condition des personnes & la diversité des occasions sont innumerables [...]. (Smith 5)

---

<sup>84</sup> Scholars most often have stressed the relationship between the poet and the Prince. See for example Timothy Hampton (*Literature and Nation* chapter 5) or Philippe Desan, who mentions Marguerite but says that behind his poems to her Du Bellay actually targets the king ("De la poésie de circonstance à la satire" 426). Du Bellay's relationship to the king is clearly important, but it takes on a much different color when read against the full body of poems to Marguerite.

<sup>85</sup> For a concise list of studies of order in Ronsard's works, see Skenazi's same article, page 161.

Thus Peletier, Ronsard, and Du Bellay all seem to stress the importance of order, but without constructing any specific theory. Smith was only able to find a theory of dispositional phenomena in twentieth-century work, and cites Evert van der Starre's "six-part working typology" of ordering principles (13).<sup>86</sup> For Smith, Du Bellay's ordering strategies are programmatic:

This is the case when poems are intentionally placed at the most strategic places: the beginning or the end of the collection, or the exact middle. Sometimes collections are ordered according to the principle of concentric inclusion [...] One of the most spectacular examples is Du Bellay's *Divers Jeux Rustiques* (1558), which contrary to the title's promise of rustic and playful diversity, turns out to be an extremely sophisticated example of well-wrought ordering [...]. (Smith 15-16)

To justify this last assertion, Smith cites Platt's study of the *Jeux Rustiques* without going into detail, because he is mostly interested in the way Du Bellay structures the *Antiquitez*, rather than the *Jeux*.<sup>87</sup> Whereas Smith applies this idea of programmatic ordering only to the *Antiquitez*, and Platt investigated only the *Jeux Rustiques*, I believe that a program of order applies across all of the 1558 collections, the nature of which will become apparent after an examination of each individual collection.<sup>88</sup>

Before this examination, however, one general question remains to be asked: if poets thought that the ordering of their collections was important, did they effectively have control over the order of their printed collections? Studies of Ronsard suggest that they did. It is commonly known that Ronsard was preoccupied with shaping his

---

<sup>86</sup> According to van der Starre, order can be based on 1) formal qualities (genres, structures of lines or stanzas, etc.), 2) chronological or autobiographical progress, 3) the extra-literary order of the poem's objects, 4) thematic groupings, 5) programmatic ordering, and 6) no order at all (Smith 14-16).

<sup>87</sup> Helen O. Platt, "Structure in Du Bellay's *Divers Jeux Rustiques*," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 35 (1973) 19-37. I refer to Platt later in my section on the *Jeux Rustiques*, note 136 p.147.

<sup>88</sup> In *The Ordered Text: The Sonnet Sequences of Du Bellay*, Richard Katz has examined Du Bellay's sonnet sequences (*L'Olive*, *Les Regrets*, *Les Antiquitez*) as ordered works, without relating the collections to each other, and without dealing with the question of editions or the control that Du Bellay would have had over the printed form of his sonnet sequences. Gilbert Gadoffre in his *Du Bellay et le sacré* believes that all of Du Bellay's works, regardless of genre, must be read as a whole, but his analysis is thematic (tracing Du Bellay's religious beliefs and attitude towards the church) rather than structural.

poetic heritage, and that he produced a first edition of his collected works quite early in 1560. He continued to produce new editions of his collected works at regular intervals--seven in all appeared under his guidance (Rouget *Monument* 295). François Rouget has studied the differences between the successive editions of Ronsard's collected works, finding a strong shaping theory behind suppressions and additions. This suggests that well-established poets like Ronsard enjoyed a high degree of control over their printed works.

If Ronsard had such control over his printed editions, it is clear that Du Bellay too could have had control over the sequencing of his published pieces. Saulnier, among others, refers to the anxiety Du Bellay experienced during his absence from the French court and its literary life, and his ambition to maintain or further his standing upon his return to Paris. These four collections represent Du Bellay's effort to "préparer sa rentrée littéraire, afin de faire savoir, dès le moment du retour chez soi, qu'on n'avait rien abdiqué de ses prétensions" (*Du Bellay* 77). Accordingly, the collections "révèlent un plan de travail, lentement mûri : Du Bellay Romain compose moins que jamais comme l'oiseau chante" (77).<sup>89</sup> The Roman collections thus represent a carefully crafted ensemble, published nearly at once in 1558 as a grand announcement of his return to Paris society. Marguerite's ubiquitous presence, in multiple genres, is not a casual occurrence: the sheer number and variety of poems and their careful placement indicate a female patron whose power and prestige are absolute for the poet. In these collections she frequently overshadows her brother the king, and it is she, rather than Henri, who is shown to perpetuate the cultural legacy of

---

<sup>89</sup> Along these same lines, Terence Cave writes "Les quatre recueils qui sortirent en 1558 chez Frédéric Morel--*Regrets*, *Antiquitez*, *Divers Jeux rustiques*, *Poemata*--ont pourtant l'air d'une *summa* poétique, destinée à rétablir sa réputation dès son retour en France" (Demerson's *La Belle Romaine* 5). Demerson herself insists on the fact that it is impossible to date the composition of the Roman poems, written over many years, and that it is only upon his return to Paris that the poet "a véritablement *construit* les recueils dont il avait élaboré les pièces au long des quatre années d'exil" (*Belle Romaine* 23).

François 1er. Du Bellay still desires the king's support, since the king's patronage carries both an unavoidable cachet and the potential for additional material rewards, but access to the monarch--and Du Bellay's own self respect--comes only through Marguerite's mentorship and intercessions on behalf of her protégé.<sup>90</sup>

### **Ordering and privileges**

An indication of Du Bellay's conception of the 1558 collections may be found in the order in which he sought privileges to print them. An examination of this process also reveals the politics of publishing during the reign of Henri II, and the strategies an author could use to insure that he was granted publishing rights. The first privilege of 1558 is for "*Divers Jeux Rustiques et autres oeuvres poétiques de JOACHIM DU BELLAY.*" It is short, and is signed by Duthier on January 17. It seems that the *Regrets* were also published under this same privilege.<sup>91</sup> Although Joukovsky's introduction to her edition says that the *Regrets* were not accompanied by a privilege, the *princeps* edition on which she based her own does note *Avec privilege du roi* on the title page (available electronically on the BN website). Joseph Du Moulin's book on the printer Frédéric Morel lists the 1558 *Regrets* as being published under the January 17, 1558 privilege used for the *Jeux Rustiques*, and Chamard (2: v) and Saulnier (*Du Bellay 177*) concur, based on a different 1558 copy of the *Regrets* that carries the date of the privilege. Apparently, Du Bellay used this

---

<sup>90</sup> In a letter written to Jean de Morel on October 3, 1559, Du Bellay explains that although his primary goal was always to please Marguerite, he did occasionally have the hope that she would facilitate a connection to her brother: "Or, tel qu'il est, si madicte Dame s'en contente j'estimeray mon labour bien employé ne m'estant, comme vous sçavez, mieulx qu'homme du monde, jamais proposé aultre but ny utilité à mes études, que l'heur de pouvoir faire chose qui lui feust agréable, j'avois (et peult estre non sans occasion) conceu quelque espérance de recevoir quelque bien et advancement du feu Roy plus par la faveur de madicte Dame que pour aultre mérite qui fust en moy" (Nolhac 37).

<sup>91</sup> In his edition of the *Regrets* and *Antiquitez de Rome*, Screech says that it is impossible to identify with certainty the order of publication of these works, but he suggests that the order might have been first the *Regrets*, published before the the January 17<sup>th</sup> privilege and thus unable to include it, then the *Divers Jeux Rustiques*, and then the *Antiquitez de Rome* and the *Poemata*. I agree with this order, and think that analysing the dedications (which Screech does not do) help confirm it.

same January 17 privilege to publish his long poem *Hymne au roy sur la prinse de Callais* (Hartley 113, Saulnier 177), a legitimate use since the privilege did specify that it was not only for the *Jeux Rustiques* but for “*autres oeuvres poétique.*”<sup>92</sup>

These first two collections appear to be dedicated to functionaries who not only had served in Rome at the same time as Du Bellay, but who also were in a position to procure royal *privileges* for him to publish.<sup>93</sup> *The Jeux Rustiques* were dedicated to Duthier, the very functionary who in fact signed the January 17 privilege to publish it. Duthier was also the subject of several sonnets in the *Regrets*, which was dedicated as a collection to Jean D’Avanson, a protégé of Diane de Poitiers and close ally of the king who replaced Cardinal Jean Du Bellay in Rome during Du Bellay’s time there. Elizabeth Armstrong observes that in most cases, the king is unlikely to have played much of a role in the granting of privileges (26), which was probably left to functionaries such as Duthier.<sup>94</sup> If the privilege system relied on favors (see Zemon Davis in *Histoire de l’édition française* p.260 and Armstrong 22-33, 75-77), then it would have been logical for Du Bellay to first seek to publish a work dedicated to the functionary who would grant the privilege: the dedication would be rewarded with the privilege.<sup>95</sup> The dedication of the *Regrets* to D’Avanson seems equally strategic as

---

<sup>92</sup> The “Discours au roy sur la trefve de l’an M.D.L.V.” was also published in 1558 with the “Privilege du Roy,” but apparently there is no edition that mentions the date. Neither Hartley, Saulnier, nor DuMoulin’s careful bibliography of Frédéric Morel’s printed volumes refer to any date for the “privilege” granted this long poem.

<sup>93</sup> In her recent article “Du Bellay et la publication de ses oeuvres,” Florence Bonifay alludes to Du Bellay’s relationships with these two functionaries, but says only that the relationships prove that Du Bellay was well-connected at court (68).

<sup>94</sup> Armstrong does go on to say that in particular cases the king may have been personally involved: “An occasion like the formal presentation of a hitherto unpublished work to the king or queen by the author may sometimes have given an opportunity for a privilege to be requested and for verbal assent to be given. The request would then be passed to one of the secretaries in attendance, to be dealt with in the chancery” (26).

<sup>95</sup> According to Armstrong, “An expedient which occurred very naturally to certain authors seeking a privilege from the royal chancery, especially lawyers and royal officials, was to offer the dedication of the book in question to the chancellor. If the chancellor accepted the dedication, he might be expected to look favourably on the request for privilege” (75). Furthermore, if an author or printer had no direct

that of the *Jeux Rustiques*, with the following result: two months later Du Bellay received a long, open privilege from the king, signed at Fontainebleau by Duthier in D'Avanson's presence on March 3. Du Bellay subsequently used this privilege to publish the *Antiquitez* and the *Poemata*.<sup>96</sup> The text of this privilege is much longer than the one issued on January 17 (used for the *Jeux*, *Regrets*, and *Hymne*) and is written in the king's voice.<sup>97</sup> It refers to François Ier's dedication to the muses, humanist learning and the French language. Henri claims that he shares his father's cultural values, and this explains his motivation for granting Du Bellay this particular privilege:

Pour ce est-il, que nous ne desirans moins que nostre dit feu seigneur et père, l'augmentation des bonnes lettres et illustration de nostre dicte langue François, et à ces fins les œuvres des bons auteurs (du nombre desquelz est nostre cher et bien aimé Joachin Dubellay) estre bien elegamment et correctement (comme elles meritent) imprimees, avons à iceluy Dubellay enjoinct et tresexpressément enjoignans eslire, choisir et commettre tel Imprimeur docte et diligent qu'il verra et cognoistra estre suffisant pour fidellement imprimer les œuvres par luy ja mises en lumiere, et autres qu'il composera et escrira cy apres [...].  
(Aris and Joukovsky 2: 3-4)

Duthier and D'Avanson, recent recipients of collections published under Du Bellay's January *privilege*, may have personally approached the king on Du Bellay's behalf in order to suggest this open privilege. They may have mentioned that this privilege would be used to publish a collection of sonnets dedicated to the king and the glory of France, as well as a collection of Latin poems dedicated to his sister Marguerite (*Les*

---

connections to the chancery, he "might be able to call upon the help of a friend or patron who had such connections" (77). Armstrong's study examines the French book privilege system only from 1498-1526. Additional information on the privilege system can be found in Henri Falk's *Les Privilèges de librairie sous l'ancien régime*, although this study focuses most on the eighteenth century. I am unaware of any study of the book privilege system in France during the exact years that Du Bellay was publishing.

<sup>96</sup> Armstrong documents the granting of privileges for multiple books in the period up to 1526, although this was not the norm (128). She also mentions a "perpetual" privilege that Henry II granted Ronsard on February 23, 1559, but gives no context for the granting of that particular privilege. (27).

<sup>97</sup> Chamard notes that the entire beginning of the privilege is the same as the one issued to Ronsard for his 1554 *Bocage*, but that there are some differences in the end sections of the two privileges (2:40).

*Antiquitez, Poemata*). Du Bellay thus seems to have carefully planned the sequencing of publication of his collections, first seeking to publish those dedicated to men who had been powerful in Rome and who had a recent and immediate connection to him, and who also were in a direct position to grant him an initial privilege. He used the first privilege not only to publish the *Regrets and the Jeux Rustiques*, but a laudatory *plaque* on the Calais victory as well, which was sure to have pleased the king and which Hartley claims was popularly received and much reprinted (115). Then, with the support of D'Avanson and Duthier, and with long victory poems to the king already published as evidence of his support of the Valois, he could comfortably seek a more open privilege, promising to use it to publish two additional collections dedicated to the king and his sister.<sup>98</sup>

In this case, the order of printing of the Roman collections (although not the order of composition, which with few exceptions is impossible to determine and seems to have spanned the years 1554-1558 inclusively) is likely to have been the *Regrets and Jeux Rustiques* following the January 1558 privilege, and then the *Antiquitez and Poemata* following the March 1558 privilege. The symmetry of the first two collections dedicated to important royal ministers in Rome, followed by two collections dedicated to the king and his sister, also points to a certain ordered conception of the works. Accordingly, my analysis will follow this same order: *Les*

---

<sup>98</sup> The attention that the March 3 *privilege* pays to the importance of Du Bellay finding an accurate printer must certainly refer to Du Bellay's claims that many of the poems written in Rome had been circulated without his permission. He expresses dismay at this in the *Au Lecteur* address that precedes the *Jeux Rustiques* and in later letters to his relative, Cardinal Du Bellay, which refer to pirated sonnets from the *Regrets* (Nolhac 44). Armstrong writes that "By 1554 it was being stated in royal grants that wrong was done to an author by unauthorized and incorrect printing of his works, and that he was naturally the best person to supervise the printing" (84). Preventing inaccurate editions and the harm they could cause an author thus became one of the reasons to grant a royal privilege, in addition to the earlier logic of assuring that an author (or printer, as the case may have been) would be able to recoup the initial investment required to produce an edition.

*Regrets, Les Divers Jeux Rustiques, Poemata.*<sup>99</sup> I will examine Marguerite's presence in each of the collections individually before tracing the overarching, binding structure that they create among the collections.

### *Les Regrets*

The *Regrets* is a sequence of 191 sonnets that have commonly been understood to have three major sections, although the original editions did not number the sonnets and there are no titles or other devices to divide one section from another. These sections are generally seen to be first a series of elegiac sonnets, followed by a series of satirical ones and then a final series of encomiastic sonnets in honor of powerful people at the French court (Katz 71, Bellenger *Ses "Regrets"* 44). Marguerite hardly figures in the first two sections: she appears in sonnets 7 and 8 of the first, then in sonnet 79 of the second. She is an integral part, however, of the final sequence of thirty-three sonnets written to *les grands*, which begins with sonnet 159 to Diane de Poitiers and finishes with sonnet 191 to Henri II.<sup>100</sup> Marguerite is in fact the subject of 17 of the 33 sonnets (sonnets 174-190) and she is also mentioned in passing in sonnet 167 to Michel de L'Hospital. Thus, by the sheer quantity of sonnets in which she appears, combined with the centrality of their placement, Du Bellay grants Marguerite a dominant position in the pantheon of the French court. Three of the sonnets are to her alone, and these are placed at the exact center of the 33 sonnets: sonnets 174, 175, and 176. The fourteen sonnets that follow (177-190) address other poets and members of court in celebration of Marguerite's virtues. There is thus a movement to first address Marguerite and celebrate her in her own right before

---

<sup>99</sup> I do not treat the *Antiquitez* because they are dedicated to Henri II and engage with questions of empire and kingly power. Marguerite does not figure in this collection.

<sup>100</sup> This is my division. Some scholars have included sonnets 157 and 158 to the royal architect Clagny in the sequence to the *grands*, but as these two sonnets deal with questions of poetics, I believe they belong in the previous sequence that Du Bellay writes to other poets. In my opinion, they serve as a transition to the sequence dedicated to *les grands*.

reaching out to share the sentiment with other members of Du Bellay's social network, all of whom were likely protégés and acquaintances of the princess as well--even guests at her table.

### **Previous studies of the sequence to Marguerite in the *Regrets***

There is a large body of literature on the *Regrets* and critics have interpreted this sequence to Marguerite in various ways. An early tendency was to dismiss the whole section of encomiastic poems--including those to Marguerite--as an unlikely or inappropriate conclusion to the first elegiac and satiric series, perhaps never even intended to be included as part of the *Regrets*.<sup>101</sup> When critics did turn their attention to these poems, they focused on the following four themes: onomastics in the *Regrets* (Sutherland, Mathieu-Castellani, Monferran and Rosenthal), power at court and the poet's relationship to both the *grands* and his peers (Bovey, Bellenger, Demerson, Bizer), the writing process and its relationship to the poet's identity (Winn, Gray, Katz), and Du Bellay's return to religious poetry (Gadoffre). When these critics discuss the sonnets to Marguerite, it is in service to their larger concerns about the entire sequence of encomiastic poems. I draw on their work, but my own study aligns most with three article-length studies in which sonnets to Marguerite are the sole focus.

Marie-Dominique Legrand wrote the first of these articles in 1987: it is a detailed *explication* of sonnet 176, the last of the three sonnets addressed solely to Marguerite. Her close reading showed how Marguerite is idealized by Du Bellay "elle est médiatrice de la perfection qui est la poésie même" (87), and in such an absolute

---

<sup>101</sup> Legrand cites Saulnier, Jasinski, Weber, Screech, and Py in this vein (*Explication* 85). Bellenger adds that Chamard studied the first sections of the collection but not the last encomiastic section of the *Regrets* (*Ses "Regrets"* 42-43). Monferran and Rosenthal also offer a brief summary of critics who have studied this sequence to Marguerite ("Nommer" 314).

way that “le poème de clôture des *Regrets* dédié au roi en est presque éclipsé” (84). Ultimately, for Legrand the sonnet 176 encapsulates the function of all the last praise poems in the *Regrets*: “le poète retrouve ici son unité, son identité; la poésie retrouve son sens: le voyage était une initiation, un catharsis” (88). In a second 1987 article, Legrand traces the trajectory from sonnets seven and eight to the last seventeen to Marguerite and explains that for Du Bellay in Rome “L’absence de cette princesse parfaite, à l’égale de celle du Roi, tarit l’inspiration [...]” (*Exil* 42) and it is only when Du Bellay returns to France that he is able to find inspiration again, thanks to Marguerite. Legrand concludes “La sublimation amoureuse sensible dans les poèmes à Marguerite de France célèbre la poésie autant que la princesse: la quête de la poésie s’exprime dans *Les Regrets* sous les termes de la quête amoureuse” (42).

In 1994 Catherine Magnien-Simonin builds on Legrand’s sense of an itinerary in the poems to Marguerite, and without analyzing each sonnet, she provides a more sweeping examination of the entire series rather than focusing on one or two individual poems as Legrand does. This analysis yields insights that are consistent with Legrand’s reading of sonnet 176. Magnien-Simonin finds that the series to Marguerite “semble assurer dans les *Regrets* la résolution du déséquilibre initial, bref un dénouement euphorique et ouvert sur l’avenir” (50). She identifies further evidence of Marguerite’s superior position to the king: “en tant que réplique de Dieu où frère de sa soeur Henri tient la seconde place sur tous les plans” (53). For Du Bellay, “Le roi représente le pouvoir temporel constamment présent pendant le séjour romain; Marguerite, elle, n’a pu coexister avec l’obscénité de la confidence en français des premiers sonnets, ni avec celle des pièces satiriques: la nymphe ne voisine pas avec le satyre” (52).

Of all the critics who have worked on the *Regrets*, Legrand and Magnien-Simonin come closest to capturing the significance of Marguerite's presence in this collection. They, however, limit their analysis to the *Regrets*, and neither presents an exhaustive study of each reference to Marguerite within the collection. Comparing Marguerite's presence in the *Regrets* to the same in the *Jeux Rustiques* and the *Poemata* will show Magnien-Simonin's prescience when she categorized the last poems of the *Regrets* as "un dénouement euphorique et ouvert sur l'avenir" (50). In order to show how the *Regrets* open a triumphal construction of poetic collections to Marguerite, it is necessary to document more closely her presence in this first collection.

### **Marguerite in the *Regrets***

Although Marguerite is hardly present in the early sections of the *Regrets*, the collection opens with a Latin epigram that also figures in the *Poemata*--a collection dedicated to Marguerite--and which immediately follows epigram number six in which Du Bellay evokes Marguerite's protection of his work.<sup>102</sup> This is the order of the epigrams in the *Poemata*:<sup>103</sup>

#### **(Ép. 6) Sur son livre, qu'il va faire paraître sans le nom de l'auteur**

Va mon livre, va sans nom ; porte notre renom jusqu'aux astres, et grâce à notre renom fais-toi un nom. Un nom, tu en auras un à coup sûr si tu es digne de renom. Si ce n'est pas le cas, tu seras en sûreté si l'on ignore ton nom. Du génie, des forces, la vierge royale t'en accorde; elle qui t'a donné du génie, te donnera elle-même la garantie de son nom.  
(84)

#### **(Ép. 7) Sur les *Regrets*, œuvre française de l'auteur**

---

<sup>102</sup> I have not found any acknowledgement of this fact in other critics, perhaps once again because it would be necessary to consider Du Bellay's 1558 collections as a whole, which seldom has been done.

<sup>103</sup> The French translations of the Latin originals are by Geneviève Demerson in the STFM edition of *Oeuvres Poétiques VII*. Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1984.

Ce petit livre que nous te donnons maintenant ô Lecteur, A un arrière-goût composite : celui du fiel, et en même temps du miel et du sel. S'il y a là quelque chose pour plaire à ton palais, viens, je t'invite : pour toi, ce repas est prêt. S'il en est autrement, retire-toi, je t'en prie : je n'ai pas eu l'intention de t'inviter à ce repas. (84)

In the first epigram, Du Bellay addresses his book and suggests that he doesn't have a grand enough name to contribute to the book's success. The book's own merits will have to be good enough, but since Marguerite (*la vierge royale* is identified as Marguerite by G. Demerson) has inspired the work (given its *genie*) its renown is guaranteed by her own name. As the *Poemata* are dedicated to Marguerite, her name in fact does protect the collection. Although this epigram likely refers to the *Poemata*, there is a possible slippage of associations with epigram seven which follows. Although the title refers to the *Regrets* ("Sur les *Regrets*, oeuvre française de l'auteur"), it is easy for the reader to understand "ce petit livre" as the volume of *Poemata* that is in hand, and which do in fact contain satiric, elegiac, and amorous poems that correspond to "fiel, miel, and sel." The inclusion of epigram 7 both at the head of the *Regrets* (here with the title *Ad Lectorem*) and seventh in the *Epigrammata* section of the *Poemata* signals a certain continuity of content and inspiration between the works written in French and those in Latin, and thus Marguerite--the stated inspiration and protector for Latin poems in epigram 6--may be an unnamed inspiration and protector for the *Regrets* as well, despite the fact that the *Regrets* is officially dedicated to Jean D'Avanson and the *Ad Lectorem* epigram in the *Regrets* is followed by a dedicatory ode to this "Conseiller du Roy en son Privé Conseil."

After this opening epigram, Du Bellay mentions Marguerite for the first time in sonnet 7 of the *Regrets*, associating her with a happier writing past at the French court and lamenting his lack of inspiration in Rome:<sup>104</sup>

Ce pendant que la court mes ouvrages lisoit,  
Et que la sœur du Roy, l'unique Marguerite,  
Me faisant plus d'honneur que n'estoit mon merite,  
De son bel œil divin mes vers favorisoit,

Une fureur d'esprit au ciel me conduisoit  
D'une aelle qui la mort et les siecles evite,  
Et le docte troppeau qui sur Parnasse habite,  
De son feu plus divin mon ardeur attisoit.

Ores je suis muet, comme on voit la Prophete  
Ne sentant plus le Dieu, qui la tenoit sugette,  
Perdre soudainement la fureur et la voix.

Et qui ne prend plaisir qu'un Prince luy commande ?  
L'honneur nourrit les arts, et la Muse demande  
Le theatre du peuple, et la faveur des Roys.

In the quatrains, Du Bellay associates Marguerite's patronage and the wider audience of the French court with an ability to find lofty inspiration and write immortal verse.

The first tercet represents the loss of inspiration that he feels in Rome, and the second asserts that royal patronage and a wide audience are necessary for the production of poetry. Poetic inspiration is thus not the work of a solitary soul, but is a social construction dependent on the poet's social standing, networks, and audience, for whom the poet assumes a prophet-like role.<sup>105</sup> Although Du Bellay describes patronage in terms of the "faveur des Roys," the first quatrain that refers to France and the court only mentions the king in relation to Marguerite: "la soeur du Roy," and the next epithet celebrates Marguerite in her own right "l'unique Marguerite." The king, Henri II, is not mentioned as a patron or reader, unless he is counted as part of

---

<sup>104</sup> All citations from the *Regrets* are taken from volume two of Du Bellay's *Œuvres poétiques* edited by Daniel Aris and Françoise Joukovsky (2009).

<sup>105</sup> Timothy Hampton sees in this sonnet and the following one the importance of location for Du Bellay, for whom there is an important "link between geographical position and poetic inspiration" (*Literature and Nation* 163).

“la court.” It is Marguerite’s favor that is explicitly necessary to fuel Du Bellay’s muse, and her stature is associated with the king’s through the use of the related terms “faveur” (in reference to kings) and “favorisoit” (in reference to the princess).<sup>106</sup>

In the next sonnet, number eight, Marguerite is in fact referred to as Du Bellay’s “Soleil,” a life-giving force.<sup>107</sup> The sonnet is addressed to Ronsard, whose continued integration at court is contrasted to Du Bellay’s distance. In fact, the court has come to represent “France” as a whole:

Ne t’esbahis Ronsard, la moitié de mon ame,  
Si de ton Dubellay France ne lit plus rien,  
Et si aveques l’air du ciel Italien  
Il n’a humé l’ardeur qui l’Italie enflamme.

Le saint rayon qui part des beaux yeux de ta dame,  
Et la sainte faveur de ton Prince et du mien,  
Cela (Ronsard) cela, cela merite bien  
De t’eschauffer le cœur d’une si vive flamme. (1-8)

Here Du Bellay reconnects with a figure that he first used in the second edition of *L’Olive*: Ronsard is “la moitié de mon ame,” but is the half that remains in France.

Whereas in the previous sonnet it was the court who read Du Bellay’s poems, here it is France who “ne lit plus rien” because Du Bellay is unable to write as he used to.

Ronsard, who has continued to write his *Amours* and who was named poet to the king in 1554 is fuelled by “Le saint rayon qui part des beaux yeux de ta dame / Et la sainte faveur de ton Prince et du mien.”

---

<sup>106</sup> This poem can be compared to sonnet 180, discussed on pages 126-28 of this chapter, in which Du Bellay describes himself as the oracle Pythia, inspired by Apollon/Marguerite. In sonnet 7 when he says that he is “muet, comme on voit la Prophete / Ne sentant plus le Dieu, qui la tenoit sugette” it is possible to wonder whether the “Dieu” refers to Marguerite.

<sup>107</sup> Hampton believes that it is impossible to determine whether “mon Soleil” refers to “a lady or a prince” and concludes that what is important is the idea of location and proximity (164). Read in context with the previous sonnet, and with the later series to Marguerite that begins with sonnet 174, I believe that “mon Soleil” refers to the princess. Marc Bizer also believes that “lorsque Du Bellay évoque les ‘raiz de mon soleil’, il s’agit toujours de Marguerite” (*Les lettres romaines* 250).

As in the last sonnet, the tercets represent a contrast: the comparative  
diminishment of Du Bellay's status in Rome:

Mais moy, qui suis absent des raiz de mon Soleil,  
Comment puis-je sentir eschauffement pareil  
A celui qui est pres de sa flamme divine?

Les costaux soleillez de pampre sont couvers,  
Mais des Hyperborez les eternalz hyvers  
Ne portent que le froid, la neige et la bruine. (9-14)

The previous sonnet makes clear that Du Bellay's "Soleil" is Marguerite, who with her "bel œil divin mes vers favorisait." Being far from his patron is described in terms of being banished to one of the icy poles where no vegetation can flourish--he can no longer equal his old writing self, nor that of Ronsard "celuy qui est pres de sa flamme divine." In contrast to Du Bellay's polar isolation, Ronsard resides on a sunny hillside planted with grape vines, reaping the fruits of his privileged position. Once again poetic inspiration is not represented as the expression of an individual self independent of exterior reality. It is rather the result of a certain environment, particular growing conditions. As we have already seen, as early as the *Deffence* the French language was described as a plant, and in *L'Olive* poetry is also a green and growing plant that flourishes thanks to Marguerite and to Du Bellay's contact with fellow poets--particularly Ronsard. In the absence of this network Du Bellay's muse is frozen out by "les eternalz hyvers."<sup>108</sup>

Marguerite next appears in sonnet 79, which is part of the series of sonnets that satirizes Rome and the Vatican. It is one of several sonnets that are organized by

---

<sup>108</sup> Hampton says "Michael Screech has pointed out that the phrase "des Hyperborez les eternalz hyvers" may echo the "Solus Hyperboreas glacies" of Virgil's fourth *Georgic* (v.517). That Latin phrase describes the wandering of the poet Orpheus after his loss of Eurydice and just before his demise at the hands of the Maenads" (165). I believe this strengthens the association of the "Soleil" with Marguerite, because in sonnet 174 which is clearly dedicated to the princess, Du Bellay describes his absence from her as a descent into the underworld. Distance from Marguerite is a cold winter that kills poetic inspiration, whereas being reunited with Marguerite is described as being transported to the Elysian fields (see my discussion pages 119-20 of this chapter).

listing negative anaphors, this time in order to say what he is not writing about in Rome. Marguerite appears in line six:

Je n'escris point d'amour, n'estant point amoureux,  
Je n'escris de beauté, n'ayant belle maistresse,  
Je n'escris de douceur, n'esprouvant que rudesse,  
Je n'escris de plaisir, me trouvant douloureux :

Je n'escris de bon heur, me trouvant malheureux,  
Je n'escris de faveur, ne voyant ma Princesse,  
[...] (1-6)

Here Marguerite is once again associated with favor and patronage. She is also assimilated into the whole list of positives that Du Bellay says he cannot write about in his present circumstances: love, beauty, sweetness, pleasure, happiness, favor--and then in lines 7-14 wealth, good health, the court, France, honor, friendship, virtue, and wisdom. Here the court and Henri are linked: "Je n'escris de la court, estant loing de mon Prince" (v.9), and as this is the third occasion in which Henri is titled a prince rather than king (as in sonnets 7 and 8 analysed above: "Et qui ne prend plaisir qu'un Prince lui commande" [s.7]; "Et la sainte faveur de ton Prince et du mien" [s. 8]), it bears noting that the king here appears three lines after Marguerite and his title is an equivalent one to hers: for Du Bellay she is "ma Princesse" and the king is "mon Prince." These titles reinforce the sibling relationship between Marguerite and Henri, and avoid acknowledging Henri's accession to power at the death of his father. As we have seen in the past (see the first chapter on Marguerite, pp. 38-39), Du Bellay often constructs his poems so that Marguerite is seen to be the true inheritor of her father's legacy. If Marguerite can never be king, in these first two sections of the *Regrets* Du Bellay apparently refuses to acknowledge Henri as king in the same sonnets where his sister is named. This effectively keeps them equal in protocol and manages to suggest that Marguerite is in fact the more important of the two, the center--"Soleil"--of Du Bellay's poetic universe and of France as he would have it.

### Sonnets 159-191 to *Les Grands*

The last time that Marguerite is mentioned before the block of seventeen sonnets that are explicitly addressed to her is in sonnet 167--already a part of the last 33 sonnets to *les grands*, or members of the royal family and their closest advisors who represent the center of power at court. The sequence opens with sonnet 159 to Diane de Poitiers, the king's mistress, which is followed by ten sonnets to male members of the king's cabinet: Jean Bertrand (2 sonnets), François Olivier, Duthier, Jean D'Avanson (2 sonnets), Antoine Escalin des Aimars, Michel de l'Hospital, Charles de Guise, and Odet de Coligny. Since the king was known to seek Diane's counsel on affairs of state, she may be considered as part of the series of advisors to the king, which would mean that the sequence opens with eleven sonnets to the king's political counselors.

Sonnet 167 of this series is addressed to Michel de l'Hospital, who began his career as chancellor of Marguerite's household. In the two quatrains Du Bellay praises the Chancellor's merits, then invokes the Princess as a witness to these merits in the first tercet:

Et qui pourroit, bons dieux! Faire plus digne foy  
Des rares qualitez qui reluisent en toy,  
Que ceste autre Pallas, ornement de nostre aage ?

Ainsi jusqu'aujourd'hui, ainsi encor' voit-on  
Estre tant renommé le maistre de Platon,  
Pour ce qu'il eut d'un Dieu la voix pour tesmoignage. (9-14)

Marguerite is represented by two epithets that Du Bellay commonly uses when referring to her: "ceste autre Pallas" and "ornement de nostre aage." Joukovsky's note to lines 13 and 14 specifies that "le maistre de Platon" refers to Socrates, who was designated the wisest of men by the Delphic oracle ("un dieu"). In this case, Du

Bellay seems to equate l'Hospital with Socrates, and Pallas/Marguerite with the Delphic oracle/dieu, perhaps with Pythia, the priestess through whom Apollo spoke at Delphi. This portrayal is consistent with Du Bellay's other images of the princess: Apollo, the sun god and the god of poets speaks through Marguerite to immortalize l'Hospital, just as she inspires Du Bellay and guarantees the success--the eternal renown--of his poetry. L'Hospital seems to be the only one of Henri's advisors who has a connection to Marguerite: since his career at court was first established in her employment, she is undoubtedly a logical point of reference in the poem.

The series of eleven sonnets to Henri's close counselors is followed by four sonnets to members of the royal family: Marie Stuart, praised for her beauty, intelligence, and the peace her marriage would bring between France and England; Catherine de Medici, praised for her intelligence, courage, sweet courtliness, and general goodness; the dauphin François II, praised for his parentage and military vigor, and Jeanne d'Albret, daughter of Marguerite de Navarre, praised for her poetry. These royal figures are related to both Henri II and Marguerite--by birth or marriage--and form the tight inner-circle of the Valois family. They thus serve as a transition from the section on Henri's counselors to that on Marguerite and her inner circle. The sonnet to Jeanne D'Albret, referring to both Jeanne's writing and that of her mother, represents a thematic transition to the sequence of seventeen poems to Marguerite. In addition to her own writing Jeanne d'Albret served as a patron to poets, and she was perhaps the one royal lady whose appreciation of literary society was at all comparable to Marguerite's.<sup>109</sup> She is thus the member of the royal family with the most in common with Marguerite, from Du Bellay's perspective.

---

<sup>109</sup> See essays in Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore et al., *Jeanne d'Albret et sa Cour : Actes du Colloque International de Pau, 17-19 mai 2001*. (Paris: Champion, 2004).

The series of seventeen sonnets to Marguerite begins with number 174, the first of three that are exclusively dedicated to the princess. These are followed by thirteen that address praise of the princess to poets and members of Marguerite's court, an entourage that potentially rivals the circle of advisors to Henri II. It is certainly more numerous, and it represents the intellectual center of the Valois court (rather than the bureaucratic or administrative one). Whereas three sonnets strategically placed at the very center of the 33 sonnets to *les grands* are dedicated to the princess, only one sonnet--the last one--is dedicated to Henri. Thirteen members of Marguerite's entourage are mentioned, whereas only nine of Henri's are mentioned (2 have 2 sonnets dedicated to them). The numbers are significant: the perfection of the French court is largely assured in this sequence by Marguerite's social circle rather than the king's.<sup>110</sup>

The first sonnet to Marguerite (174) refers to Du Bellay's four-year absence from the French court as a hell which punished him for past sins:

Dans l'enfer de son corps mon esprit attaché  
 (Et cet enfer, Madame, a esté mon absence)  
 Quatre ans et d'avantage a fait la penitence  
 De tous les vieux forfaits dont il fut entaché. (1-4)

It is a physical hell for his spirit, trapped in his body. The next quatrain makes it clear that that the absence he suffers is not so much from the court but from Marguerite, whose presence restores his spirit, purifying and purging the deleterious effects of Rome:

---

<sup>110</sup> In her article "Le Poète et le roi", Cynthia Skenazi underlines the importance of numerology in renaissance verse (54) and stresses the significance of the number 33 in Christian symbolism when analyzing the 32 or 33 sonnets that compose the *Antiquitez de Rome*. She cites Alistair Fowler's *Triumphal Forms* (Cambridge UP, 1970), which is a helpful reference on numerology in renaissance poetry. Additionally, when referring to sonnet 175 in the sequence of poems to Marguerite in the *Regrets*, Marie-Dominique Legrand notes "L'harmonie secrète des nombres--dix-septième sonnet, dix-sept sonnets à l'éloge à Marguerite de France--et leur valeur éventuellement mystique--trois sonnets adressés personnellement à la princesse--participent sans doute de la Perfection et confèrent à la construction du discours d'éloge la valeur sacrée du temple" ("Explication du sonnet 176" 84).

Ores graces aux Dieux, ore' il est relaché  
De ce penible enfer, et par vostre presence  
Reduit au premier poinct de sa divine essence,  
A dechargé son doz du fardeau de peché : (5-8)

Marguerite's virtue is such that it can cleanse and wash away sin--in her presence Du Bellay has returned, once again pure, to his spiritual home. Thanks to her favor, he accedes not to heaven, but to the Elysian fields:

Ores sous la faveur de voz graces prisees,  
Il jouït du repoz des beaux champs Elysees,  
Et si n'a volonté d'en sortir jamais hors. (9-11)

He has no desire to leave this paradise, the pagan resting place for virtuous souls. The only danger of this happening would be if Marguerite adopted the role of Lethe, goddess of the underworld, and poured him drink from the river of forgetting:

Donques, de l'eau d'oubly ne l'abbreuvez Madame,  
De peur qu'en la beuvant nouveau desir l'enflamme,  
De retourner encor dans l'enfer de son corps. (12-14)

The river of forgetfulness might make Du Bellay's *esprit* forget the painful itinerary of the past four years and induce it to return to the hell it had fallen into, described as a physical one in a repetition of the first line: "l'enfer de son corps." Marguerite is thus a mediating figure through whom the poet is able to access to a disembodied, virtuous ideal.<sup>111</sup> The repetition of the same phrase at the beginning and end of the sonnet, however, "dans l'enfer de son corps" suggests a closed cycle that may be difficult to break. Apart from its mythological source, the reference to "oubly" in combination with the theme of absence suggests Du Bellay's continued anxiety about being forgotten, a sort of living ghost stuck in limbo. The lack of forward movement is apparent even in the rhyme scheme, as the six verses that have feminine rhymes (absence/penitence, presence/essence, Madame/enflame) are all encased in masculine

---

<sup>111</sup> Colette Winn, writing about the role of the final encomiastic poems of the *Regrets*, observes that "[...] Marguerite, la soeur du roi, devient une sorte d'intermédiaire entre le poète et Dieu" (221).

rhymes (attaché/entaché, relaché/peché, hors/corps) which seem to represent the permanence of the poet's condition.

In the following sonnet 175 (important because it is number 17 of the 33 sonnets to *les grands* and thus located both at the exact heart of the series and in the middle of the three sonnets that directly address Marguerite), Du Bellay adopts a more concrete, less ideal register. This is a pattern throughout the seventeen sonnets: moments of high idealism that border on excess are balanced by sonnets written in more prosaic terms which make clear that Du Bellay is able to brush aside his own hyperbole and celebrate his princess not as a goddess but simply as a most perfect human being. If in sonnet 174 she is celebrated as a disembodied ideal, in sonnet 175 Marguerite is celebrated for qualities that are hers, independent of her royal birth and connection to power:

Non pource qu'un grand Roy ait esté vostre pere,  
Non pour vostre degré, et royale haulteur  
Chacun de vostre nom veult estre le chanteur,  
Ni pource qu'un grand Roy soit ores vostre frere. (1-4)

This first quatrain affirms that many poets want to sing Marguerite's praises, but does not say why. Instead, it immediately points to the most obvious justifications for encomiastic poetry--royal birth and high connections--and dismisses them. The second quatrain allows that high birth is an advantage that often brings great fortune:

La nature qui est de tous commune mere,  
Vous fit naistre (Madame) aveques ce grand heur,  
Et ce qui accompagne une telle grandeur,  
Ce sont souvent des dons de fortune prospere. (5-8)

It is not this fortune that is admirable, however--many who share Marguerite's fortune of birth do not share her other qualities:

Ce qui vous fait ainsi admirer d'un chacun,  
C'est ce qui est tout vostre, et qu'avec vous commun  
N'ont tous ceulx-là qui ont couronnes sur leurs testes : (9-11)

Do those “qui ont couronnes sur leurs testes” include Henri himself? Du Bellay repeatedly distinguishes Marguerite from her brother in subtle ways, and in this central poem he celebrates Marguerite’s individual qualities independent of her family. The final tercet elaborates these qualities:

Ceste grace, et douceur, et ce je ne sçay quoy,  
Que quand vous ne seriez fille, ni sœur de Roy,  
Si vous jugeroit-on estre ce que vous estes. (12-14)

Grace, a sweet disposition, and a third characteristic for which Du Bellay cannot find any name, combine to form a whole that is not dependent on being the daughter or sister of a king, but which nonetheless is a desired ideal for royalty. The straightforward language and lack of mythological embellishment lend the sonnet a direct and sincere quality that attempts to mitigate any suggestion of flattery. If mother nature “de tous commune mere” endowed Marguerite with genuine grace, then saying so is simply reporting a fact--a different endeavor than that of court poets “noz trafiqueurs d’honneurs” (s. 183, v.2) who are observed to “disguiser ces Seigneurs, / Desquelz (comme lon dit) ilz font comme de cire” (3-4). Du Bellay’s rhapsodizing about Marguerite’s presence in the previous sonnet is justified, because not only he but “chacun de votre nom veult estre le chanteur.” Du Bellay is only doing what everyone else does, celebrating what everyone else can recognize as a fact. As part of this group, Du Bellay is less a sycophant seeking personal remuneration than a voice in the choir, singing for the common good. The poet’s merging with others and transcendence of self translates into a rhyme scheme that is an inversion of the one found in the previous sonnet: a masculine rhyme that imposed the poet and his body. Here there are also six feminine rhymes but they encase masculine rhymes and begin and end the poem (père/frère, mère/prospère,

testes/estes). The sonnet closes with Marguerite's essence, her being: "que vous estes," accentuating a strong female identity.

Marguerite represents the good once more in sonnet 176, which returns to lofty, neoplatonic language but in which the poet seems to break through the "enfer de son corps".<sup>112</sup> Du Bellay's *esprit* was the subject of sonnet 174; here it is

Marguerite's:

Esprit royal, qui prens de lumiere eternelle  
Ta seule nourriture, et ton accroissement,  
Et qui de tes beaux raiz en nostre entendement  
Produis ce hault desir, qui au ciel nous r'appelle, (1-4)

Marguerite is all spirit, one that feeds on eternal light and then radiates this light in such a way that all who see it are uplifted "au ciel." The spirit is addressed in the intimate "tu," whereas in the previous two sonnets Marguerite was addressed by the formal "Madame" and "vous," both of which indicate her place (and the poet's) in the worldly hierarchy. Here, though, she is more than the princess in flesh, and the force of her spirit is like that of a spark or cinder, liable to ignite virtue like fire:

N'apperçoy-tu combien par ta vie estincelle  
La vertu luit en moy? n'as-tu point sentiment  
Par l'œil, l'ouïr, l'odeur, le goust, l'attouchement,  
Que sans toy ne reluit chose aucune mortelle? (5-8)

By way of rhetorical question, the poet suggests that physical evidence sensed from lived, embodied experience—"l'oeil, l'ouïr, l'odeur, le goust, l'attouchement" provides proof of the impact this "esprit royal" has on each mortal being. In this way, as Marie Dominique Legrand shows (*Explication* 86), Du Bellay straddles the material and immaterial worlds. Legrand concludes that "[...] sans Marguerite de France [...] point d'éternité" and "le paradigme des essences circonscrit le paradigme des sens et le transcende" (86).

---

<sup>112</sup> See Legrand's reading of this sonnet in her article "Explication du sonnet 176." Joukovsky's note on this sonnet also finds certain similarities to sonnets 12 and 38 of *L'Olive*, and to sonnet 12 in *Sonnetz de l'honneste amour*.

The first tercet explains that transcendence results from the poet's obsessive thoughts, his preoccupation with Marguerite's image, which is a constant and reassuring reminder of her virtue:

Au seul object divin de ton image pure  
Se meut tout mon penser, qui par la souvenance  
De ta haulte bonté tellement se r'assure, (9-11)

Thanks to this continual memory of *haulte bonté*, Du Bellay says that his soul and his will have been assured the paradise they enjoyed before being imprisoned in the body and subjected to appetites and worldly cares:

Que l'ame et le vouloir ont pris mesme assurance  
(Chassant tout appetit et toute vile cure)  
De retourner au lieu de leur premiere essence. (12-14)

This highly idealized portrait of Marguerite reveals the sort of psychological grounding that she somehow provides for Du Bellay: her example *r'assure*, provides *assurance*, and chases away *tout appetit et toute vile cure*. This last of the three sonnets addressed directly to Marguerite frees the poet from "l'enfer de son corps" in which "oubly" threatened to trap him. Memory, "souvenance," allows him to recover a past existence, "retourner" to his "premiere essence." This sonnet encapsulates how for Du Bellay Marguerite is eternally associated with beginnings, firsts, springtime, light, warmth, and primordial virtue. She oscillates between idea and body (of light)--an *esprit royal* but also an *image* that gives off *beaux raiz*. The force of these rays is mirrored once again in the rhymes: feminine rhymes predominate and encase the four masculine rhymes and the last seven lines all are feminine.

The next sonnet, 177 to Vineus, opens the sequence of thirteen poems to other poets and members of Marguerite's circle. It is linked thematically to sonnet 176, as it straddles the material and immaterial by explaining in the quatrains that if virtue were as visible to the eyes as it is recognizable to our judgment, it would be so beautiful

that even the most evil people would fall in love with it. The tercets then explain that Marguerite is in fact such an embodiment of virtue:

Si tant aymable donc seroit ceste vertu  
A qui la pourroit voir: Vineus, t'esbahis-tu  
Si j'ay de ma Princesse au cœur l'image empreinte?

Si sa vertu j'adore, et si d'affection  
Je parle si souvent de sa perfection,  
Veu que la vertu mesme en son visage est peinte? (9-14)

Marguerite's *image* was the object of the poet's thoughts in sonnet 176: it is here imprinted in his heart. Her beautiful face inspires his affection because it is her virtue made visible, material.<sup>113</sup>

In sonnet 178 which follows, Du Bellay acknowledges that he uses hyperbolic language to describe Marguerite, and that he worries that this might offend her great humility:

Quand d'une douce ardeur doucement agité  
J'userois quelquefois en loüant ma Princesse  
Des termes d'adorer, de celeste, ou deesse,  
Et ces tiltres qu'on donne à la Divinité,

Je ne craindrois (Melin) que la posterité  
Appellast pour cela ma Muse flateresse:  
Mais en loüant ainsi sa royale haultesse,  
Je craindrois d'offenser sa grande humilité. (1-8)

Du Bellay explains, however, that while in antiquity such language represented idolatry, for Christians it is different. Praising any of God's creatures amounts to praising God himself:

L'antique vanité aveques telz honneurs  
Souloit idolatrer les Princes et Seigneurs:  
Mais le Chrestien qui met ces termes en usage,

Il n'est pas pour cela idolatre ou flateur,  
Car en donnant de tout la gloire au Createur,  
Il loüe l'ouvrier mesme, en louant son ouvrage. (9-14)

---

<sup>113</sup> Marc Bizer sees this sonnet as celebrating the poet's virtue in addition to Marguerite's: "Aussi le sonnet sert-il non seulement à faire éloge de la vertu de Marguerite, mais il permet à Du Bellay d'affirmer haut et fort son propre mérite" (*Les lettres romaines* 128).

In previous sonnets Du Bellay used both pagan and Christian terms--invoking the pagan paradise of the "Champs Elysees" in sonnet 174, but the "ciel" and his "ame" in sonnet 176. Here he justifies his writing and locates it in the Christian tradition, even when he invokes pagan traditions or terms. Having here defended himself against possible accusations of idolatry or pagan excess, in the next three sonnets he invokes the classical period when addressing Dorat, Jodelle, and Ronsard--three poets who experimented with classical forms. The reader is now to understand, however, that the classical themes are being used in service of Christian ideals.

Sonnet 179 to Dorat claims that the contemporary period is an iron age riddled with immorality, excepting "Ceste royale fleur, qui ne tient rien du vice" (v.8). The ugliness of "cet aage de fer" contrasts with the natural epithet he chooses for Marguerite "Cest royale fleur." This single flower is all that remains of a golden age:

Il me semble (Dorat) voir au ciel revolez  
Des antiques vertuz les escadrons aelez  
N'ayans rien delaissé de leur saison doree

Pour reduire le monde à son premier printemps,  
Fors ceste Marguerite, honneur de nostre temps,  
Qui comme l'esperance, est seule demeuree. (9-14)

Once again, Marguerite represents an earlier happy period--in sonnets 174 and 176 she was associated with a formative or grounding earlier period of Du Bellay's own life, whereas here she channels the virtues of early Greek civilization "antiques vertuz". She offers a hopeful model not only to the poet, but here to the broader community that lives in "nostre temps".

When he addresses Jodelle in sonnet 180, Du Bellay turns back to a personal mode and imagery used in sonnets 174 and 176 as he writes about Marguerite's effect on his poetry. He opens by saying that writing on any other topic besides the princess leaves him cold:

De quelque autre subject, que j'escrive, Jodelle,  
Je sens mon cœur transi d'une morne froideur,  
Et ne sens plus en moy ceste divine ardeur,  
Qui t'enflamme l'esprit de sa vive estincelle. (1-4)

It is his heart in particular that fills with “morne froideur” when he strays from Marguerite, and he loses the “divine ardeur” whose spark enflames Jodelle’s “esprit.”

The link between heart and mind is more explicit in the second quatrain:

Seulement quand je veulx toucher le loz de celle  
Qui est de nostre siecle et la perle, et la fleur,  
Je sens revivre en moy ceste antique chaleur,  
Et mon esprit lassé prendre force nouvelle. (5-8)

Here, when he turns to praise of Marguerite, Du Bellay feels an “antique chaleur,” and his own “esprit” finds new energy. What warms the heart fuels the spirit. In the context of these poems, “antique” can refer to antiquity as well as to an earlier period in Du Bellay’s own life, when he first met Marguerite and was inspired to write the *Recueil de poésie* and *L'Olive*.

In the first tercet, Du Bellay defines his relationship to Marguerite by comparing it to that of Pythia, the Delphic Oracle, and Apollo:

Bref, je suis tout changé, et si ne sçay comment,  
Comme on voit se changer la vierge en un moment,  
A l'approcher du Dieu qui telle la fait estre. (9-11)

Here, Du Bellay is the “vierge” who is able to speak when inspired by Apollo--in this case Marguerite. The virile reversal of roles--Du Bellay a passive virgin and Marguerite an agent of fecundation, is all the more interesting because elsewhere in Du Bellay’s oeuvre Apollo is usually associated with Henri II or his father François Ier.<sup>114</sup> In Henri II’s case, this is particularly true when Diane de Poitiers is mentioned,

---

<sup>114</sup> Gadoffre has also noted the active role that Marguerite plays in this sonnet: “nous nous trouvons devant une présence active, celle de la Princesse, capable d'établir entre le poète et elle une relation métaphorique du modèle Apollon-Pythie, moyennant une inversion des sexes qui fait de Joachim une sibylle inspirée au contact de Marguerite-Apollon” (*Du Bellay et le sacré* 219). Gadoffre’s reading shows how Du Bellay reinterprets neoplatonic themes as a prelude to writing Christian poetry (220). The position of Du Bellay in sonnet 180 can also be compared to sonnet 7 (cited p. 108 in this chapter)

and Du Bellay uses the Delic twins Apollo and Diana to represent the king and his mistress. Here, Du Bellay is Marguerite's creature and she has supplanted the role often attributed to a king--either her father or her brother. In subsequent sonnets, Du Bellay will explicitly say that he is moving away from writing about kings, and this series to Marguerite can be seen as a validation of the princess's values in contrast to her brother's.

The exact mechanics of this poetic inspiration remain a mystery, as Du Bellay says that it happens "[je] ne sçay comment," and in the final tercet he insists on the naturalness and artlessness of the process:

D'où vient cela, Jodelle? il vient, comme je croy,  
Du subject, qui produict naïvement en moy  
Ce que par art contrainst les autres y font naistre. (12-14)

Encomia of Marguerite are the result of a process amounting to a virgin birth for Du Bellay--naively, unable to describe the process, he produces verse in her honor. For all other topics he is constrained by art; he has to labor in "morne froideur" in able to write.

The following sonnet 181 to Ronsard reconnects with the argument in sonnet 179 that Marguerite represents "antiques vertuz," but this time asserts that she surpasses these virtues. In the quatrains Du Bellay lists all of the relics and marvels that he has seen while in Rome ("Colosses antiques," "theatres en rond," "columnes," etc.). He then summarizes and concludes in the tercets:

Bref, j'ay veu tout cela que Rome a de nouveau,  
De rare, d'excellent, de superbe, et de beau,  
Mais je n'y ay point veu encores si grand' chose  
  
Que ceste Marguerite, où semble que les cieux  
Pour effacer l'honneur de tous les siecles vieux  
De leurs plus beaux presens ont l'excellence enclose. (9-14)

---

when he says that he is "muet, comme on voit la Prophete / Ne sentant plus le Dieu, qui la tenoit sugette, Perdre soudainement la fureur et la voix."

Marguerite represents the excellence of contemporary France. Whereas all the surviving monuments of Rome are now “pouldreuses” monuments that “le temps a dontez” and “l’herbe a surmontez,” Marguerite represents the “plus beaux presens” of the present. Du Bellay’s insistence on his having seen the old monuments himself (“J’ay veu” is repeated six times in fourteen lines) emphasizes precisely that Ronsard has not been to Rome and has not seen the seat of ancient power with his own eyes. Unlike Du Bellay, he has no firsthand experience of Roman culture and its remains, and any references to it in his writing are based on purely textual and imagined sources. Du Bellay casts himself in heroic terms, his four years in Rome described as an Orphic descent into hell, from which Du Bellay has returned more worldly and wise, and presumably better able to celebrate the Princess than his friend and fellow poet. He sought to share the king with Ronsard in sonnet 8 when he referred to Henri as “ton Prince et le mien,” but there is no equivalent sharing of the princess.

After the classical themes of these three sonnets, Du Bellay moves to forestall any questions about his motivations for writing such extensive encomia of Marguerite. In a series of two poems to an unidentified “Gournay” and Jean de Morel, he defines himself against sycophantic poets whose worst practices do injustice to genuinely worthy subjects, while “changeant la noire à la blanche couleur” and making “d’un diable un ange” (s.182, 3-4).<sup>115</sup> He insists that he does not seek payment from any powerful lords:

Et si ne cherche point que quelque grand seigneur  
Me baille pour des vers des biens en contr’exchange. (130)

He does want something from Marguerite, but only dispensation to continue celebrating her in poetry. Sonnet 178 reflected anxiety about offending Marguerite’s

---

<sup>115</sup> In his edition of the *Regrets*, Chamard says that he has not been able to identify Gournay (2:196). Aris and Joukovsky offer no explanation of the identity either.

“grand humilité,” and here again Du Bellay is careful to suggest that the Princess is too modest to enjoy any of the encomia that she inspires. He is also careful to say that his admiration of Marguerite is shared by Gournay (in contrast to the previous poem, where he does not mention that Ronsard admired Marguerite):

Ce que je quiers (Gournay) de ceste soeur de Roy,  
Que j’honore, revere, admire comme toy,  
C’est que de la loüer sa bonté me dispense, (9-11)

Du Bellay tries to balance the equation by saying that he in fact does get something out of these encomia: his admiration of the princess reflects well on him and contributes to his reputation:

Puis qu’elle est de mes vers le plus loüable object:  
Car en loüant (Gournay) si loüable subject,  
Le loz que je m’aquiers, m’est trop grand’ recompense. (12-14)

Defined this way, the quality of poems depends on content as much as technique, and as Marguerite is of unquestionable virtue she in fact does the poet a favor by providing him with quality content. There is thus an equal exchange between the two of them: Marguerite offers the content Du Bellay needs in exchange for which the poet transforms it into a finished poem. The trade is complete and Du Bellay awaits nothing more.

The question of content continues in sonnet 183 to Jean de Morel, in which Du Bellay says that he sometimes wastes time reading the verses of “trafiqueurs d’honneurs” who transform their subjects as if they were molding wax:

Je ry de voir ainsi desguiser ces Seigneurs,  
Desquelz (comme lon dit) ilz font comme de cire.  
  
Et qui pourroit, bons dieux! se contenir de rire  
Voyant un corbeau peint de diverses couleurs,  
Un porceau couronné de roses et de fleurs,  
Ou le pourtrait d’un asne accordant une lyre? (3-8)

These poets differ from Du Bellay not only because they choose “Seigneurs” as objects of praise, whereas Du Bellay concentrates here on a princess, but also because these lords are the equivalents of crows, pigs, and donkeys. None of these is a noble animal and none could inspire admirable poetry, unless humorous or satirical. There is nothing wrong with writing encomia, but to do it right, one must choose praiseworthy subjects:

La loüange, à qui n’a rien de loüable en soy,  
Ne sert que de la faire à tous monstrier au doy,  
Mais elle est le loyer de cil qui la merite. (12-14)

Praise is fitting acknowledgement of deserving subjects, and in the previous sonnet Du Bellay suggests that the praise-giver in such a case garners his own praise in return. For this reason, he is loathe to adopt other, less meritorious topics:

C’est ce qui fait (Morel) que si mal volontiers  
Je diz ceulx dont le nom fait rougir les papiers,  
Et que j’ay si frequent celuy de Marguerite. (12-14)

Unlike other figures who are a disgrace to the very paper on which their encomia are printed, Marguerite is a just topic for praise--her very name rhymes with “merite.”<sup>116</sup>

The relationship between the prais-er and the prais-ee continues to be analysed in the following sonnet 184, but this time in platonic terms. Du Bellay returns to vocabulary and images that he used in *L’Olive* (and earlier sonnets in this series), as he writes to his fellow poet Bouju:

Celuy qui de plus près atteint la Deité,  
Et qui au ciel (Bouju) vole de plus haulte aelle,  
C’est celuy qui suivant la vertu immortelle  
Se sent moins du fardeau de nostre humanité. (1-4)

---

<sup>116</sup> About this sonnet, Hampton writes “Whereas other poets deploy the flowers of rhetoric to praise nothing, Du Bellay deploys the flowers of rhetoric to praise a flower. Marguerite, in other words, is both the ornament and the thing, both the trope and the object of praise” (189).

Here Du Bellay describes virtue that is able to rise above the human “fardeau” and approach “la Deité,” a virtue that is not available to all but that can nonetheless be recognized by those who may not possess it:

Celuy qui n’a des Dieux si grand felicité,  
L’admire toutefois comme une chose belle,  
Honnore ceulx qui l’ont, se monstre amoureux d’elle,  
Il a le second ranc, ce semble, merité. (5-8)

Those who recognize virtue and fall in love with it, even if unable to rise to the full height of divinity, deserve special status in “le second ranc.” In the tercets, Du Bellay situates himself in the hierarchy he has just created, saying that he is incapable of the heights of the first quatrain, but believes himself to be in the second rank--most of all through his encomia of Marguerite:

Comme au premier je tends d’aelle trop foible et basse,  
Ainsi je pense avoir au second quelque place:  
Et comment puis-je mieulx le second meriter,  
  
Qu’en loüant ceste fleur, dont le vol admirable  
Pour gaigner du premier le lieu plus honorable,  
Ne laisse rien icy qui la puisse imiter? (9-14)

Marguerite is thus the “celuy” of the first quatrain, and Du Bellay is the “celuy” of the second quatrain. Using the same pronoun to designate them both creates a certain equality between the two, even though Du Bellay professes to be second in the hierarchy.<sup>117</sup> Marie Dominique Legrand has already noticed that in his relationship with Ronsard, Du Bellay will define himself as “second,” but in such a way that “second” often means different rather than inferior--a category that is separate but equal:

---

<sup>117</sup> On the equation between Marguerite and Du Bellay, Richard Katz writes “[...] what begins to emerge in this section is a certain parallelism which actually equates the poet with the princess, and which explains her uniqueness. Throughout the sequence, the poet has created an antithesis between the “moy” and “les autres,” between “my poetry” and “their poetry.” He has also suggested his superior moral stance as compared to that of “the others” (especially in the satire of Rome). In this section, it is Marguerite who is established as the moral antithesis to the “others,” with whom she constitutes a hyperbolic polarity. Throughout this section, Du Bellay constantly pits her unique virtue against the immorality of the rest of society; his own moral superiority is therefore implied since he wishes to celebrate only her, the object worthy of true encomium” (191).

[...] Ronsard est et n'est pas le plus grand ... ce qui par conséquent permet de conclure que Du Bellay est et n'est pas le second ... au regard divin toutes créatures sont au demeurant égales [...]. (*Ronsard sous la plume* 214).

Du Bellay avoids constructing the completely craven persona of a needy court poet by such careful definitions of roles: Marguerite is inimitable, she represents the highest virtue possible, but Du Bellay has his own merit in “loüant ... si loüable subject.”<sup>118</sup>

In sonnet 185 that follows, however, Du Bellay seems to suggest that upon their first meeting in 1549 he did not immediately recognize the nature of Marguerite's qualities, but only fully realized them upon his return from Rome. He writes to Forget, Marguerite's secretary, describing his early impressions of the princess:

Quand ceste belle fleur premierement je vy,  
Qui nostre aage de fer de ses vertus redore,  
Bien que sa grand' valeur je ne cogneuse encore,  
Si fus-je en la voyant de merueille ravy. (1-4)

Du Bellay then describes his time in Rome, which he casts as a mistake, because far from the princess and the values she represents:

Depuis ayant le cours de Fortune suivy  
Où le Tybre tortu de jaune se colore,  
Et voyant ces grands dieux qui l'ignorance adore,  
Ignorans, vicieux, et meschans à l'envy:  
  
Alors (Forget) alors ceste erreur ancienne  
Qui n'avoir bien cogneu ta Princesse et la mienne,  
La venant à revoir, se dessilla les yeux: (5-11)

---

<sup>118</sup> Marc Bizer writes that “Dans les deux tercets, le mérite du poète tient précisément à sa capacité de chanter une telle vertu en la personne de Marguerite. Du Bellay entend donc réclamer sa part d'immortalité en louant la vertu souveraine de sa princesse. [...] En somme, c'est en louant Marguerite, 'ceste fleur' sans pareil, que [Du Bellay] prétend composer une œuvre inimitable” (*Les lettres romaines* 185).

Here Du Bellay did not follow “la vertu immortelle” of sonnet 184, but rather lady Fortune and the false gods of Rome. He realizes his error upon his return, when he understands what he had only half-sensed before:

Alors je m’apperçeu qu’ignorant son merite  
J’avois, sans le cognoistre, admiré Marguerite,  
Comme, sans les cognoistre, on admire les cieux. (12-14)

Marguerite represents certain ideals and values that Du Bellay thought he would find in Rome, but did not. In an earlier sonnet (32) he listed what he had hoped to learn in Rome:

Je me feray sçavant en la philosophie,  
En la mathématique, et medecine aussi,  
Je me feray legiste, et d’un plus hault souci  
Apprendray les secrets de la theologie :

Du lut et du pinceau j’ebateray ma vie,  
De l’escrime et du bal. Je discourois ainsi,  
Et me vançois en moy d’apprendre tout cecy,  
Quand je changeray la France au sejour d’Italie. (1-8)

In contrast to these intellectual and cultural topics, he instead learned a number of bureaucratic skills and duplicitous behaviors, such as: “Flatter un créiteur [...] Courtiser un banquier, donner bonne Esperance / Ne suivre en son parler la liberté de France” (s. 85, 1-3). Apparently, Du Bellay’s mistake was to seek education independent of Marguerite, thanks to whom in the past he had learned to elevate his poetry “encores basses et tendre” in the 1549 *Recueil de Poésie*, and who already had guided him along a “sentier inconnu” in the second edition of *L’Olive*. The ideals he had aspired to, the learning he hoped to acquire, were actually available to him not in Rome but in France. It seems that unbeknownst to Du Bellay’s younger self, the *translatio studii* had already been accomplished, embodied in Marguerite.

Du Bellay continues to reflect on his youthful self in sonnet 186 to Duval, preceptor to Henri II and also a poet. Youth caused him to write about love, before he moved on to write royal encomia:

La jeunesse (Du-val) me fit escrire  
De cet aveugle archer, qui nous aveugle ainsi:  
Puis fasché de l'Amour, et de sa mere aussi,  
Les louanges des Roys j'accorday sur ma lyre. (1-4)

Writing on love seems to have been an error--the result of being "aveugle", but writing on kings also seems to have been a phase, possibly an equally blind error.

This may have been a spiritual blindness, as he now wants to follow Duval's lead and write on an even more elevated topic:

Ores je ne veulx plus telz arguments eslire,  
Ains je veulx, comme toy, poingt d'un plus hault souci,  
Chanter de ce grand Roy, dont le grave souci  
Fait trembler le celeste, et l'infernel empire.

Je veulx chanter de Dieu. (5-9)

As in the 1552 *Oeuvres de l'invention de l'auteur*, Du Bellay once again asserts that he wants to be a Christian poet and write about God. But, as he said in sonnet 178 to Mellin de Saint-Gelais, he intends to celebrate the creator "en louant son ouvrage":

Je veulx chanter de Dieu. Mais pour bien le chanter,  
Il fault d'un avant-jeu ses louanges tenter,  
Louiant, non la beauté de ceste masse ronde,

Mais cete fleur, qui tient encor' un plus beau lieu:  
Car comme elle est (Duval) moins parfaite que Dieu,  
Aussi l'est elle plus que le reste du monde. (9-14)

Although at a previous point sonnet 178 tried to make clear that praising Marguerite was simply a means to sing God's glory, he nonetheless came repeatedly close to seeming idolatrous in the seven intervening sonnets, particularly when he ended sonnet 185 by saying that he admired Marguerite as he admired "les cieux." He once again finesses his goals and diffuses his mounting hyperbole by clarifying in this

sonnet (186) that writing about Marguerite is a warm-up--an “avant-jeu”--for writing about God because she is as close to God as a creature of this world could be: explicitly not God “moins parfaite que Dieu,” but “plus [parfaite] que le reste du monde.” She is an intermediate figure, a rung on the ladder that brings Du Bellay closer to Christian ideals.<sup>119</sup> This common Platonic ideal--the perfection of the lady leads the poet to God--distinguishes Marguerite from her brother once again: writing the “louanges des Roys” was part of Du Bellay’s past practice and represented a desire to engage with the affairs of the world; he now hopes to transcend them, writing not about the king but about Marguerite.

In sonnet 187 to the Scottish poet Buchanan, Du Bellay restates his intention to write about the princess rather than the temporal misfortunes of kings, which he identifies as the topic of Buchanan’s Latin tragedies:<sup>120</sup>

Bucanan, qui d’un vers aux plus vieux comparable  
 Le surnom de Sauvage ostes à l’Ecoissais  
 Si j’avois Apollon facile en mon François,  
 Comme en ton Grec tu l’as, et Latin favorable,

Je ne ferois monter, spectacle miserable,  
 Dessus un echafault les miseres des Roys,  
 Mais je rendrois par tout d’une plus douce voix  
 Le nom de Marguerite aux peuples admirable (1-8)

The fortunes of kings are here a tragic, rather than triumphal, subject. The preferred choice, and one that requires a “plus douce voix,” is to sing the praises of Marguerite.

Although Du Bellay says that it is impossible to describe Scotland as “wild” or

---

<sup>119</sup> See note 111, page 120.

<sup>120</sup> See Chamard’s note in which he says that sonnets 8 and 18 in the *Antiquitez de Rome* were inspired by Buchanan (2:200). Chamard lists the titles of Buchanan’s tragedies as well, which seem to have lead down a dangerous path towards condemning unjust rulers. In 1579 Buchanan wrote a Latin treatise, *De jure regni*, that justified insurrection against tyrants. He clearly thought about the ethical responsibilities of monarchs (Abbot, Oxford Dictionary of of National Biography). In Katz’s reading, sonnets 187-190 are more about poetry than about Marguerite, but I think that the two are intimately related (192).

“sauvage” when thinking of Buchanan, he nonetheless reintroduces the term at the end of the last tercet:

Je diroy ses vertuz, et dirois que les cieux  
L’ayant fait naistre icy d’un temps si vicieux  
Pour estre l’ornement, et la fleur de son aage,

N’ont moins en cet endroit démontré leur sçavoir,  
Leur pouvoir, leur vertu, que les Muses d’avoir  
Fait naistre un Bucanan de l’Ecosse sauvage. (9-14)

That Marguerite possesses wisdom, strength, and virtue in such an afflicted age, is equated to the fact that such a great poet as Buchanan could come from “l’Ecosse sauvage.” If, by the rhymed association of “aage” and “sauvage” the current era can be understood as an immoral, wild, and savage country, contemporary monarchs would seem to have failed, to be tragic figures in their own right. Marguerite and the poets are offered as a counter-example to the failings of the powers that be—a “plus douce *voie*” than the conflict-ridden present.

Ever careful to hedge and balance any criticisms that he may be seen to make of the French court (he is more categorical when he writes about the Italian court), Du Bellay exploits the discontinuous possibilities built in to the sonnet sequence in order to neutralize what could have been read as criticism of Henri II in sonnet 187. He addresses sonnet 188 to Paschal, historiographer to the king, and makes clear that his admiration for Marguerite implies no militant or dangerous ambitions that threaten Henri II:

Paschal, je ne veulx point Jupiter assommer,  
Ny, comme fit Vulcan, luy rompre la cervelle,  
Pour en tirer dehors une Pallas nouvelle,  
Puis qu’on veult de ce nom ma Princesse nommer. (1-4)

Du Bellay invokes mythology once again to define his poetic intentions, beginning by saying that he has no interest in attacking Jupiter, king of the Gods. Behind Jupiter, is

it possible to understand Henri II? <sup>121</sup> In this case, Du Bellay refers to the mythological origins of Pallas Athena, the goddess who sprang from Jupiter's head, to assure that celebrating Marguerite "ma Princesse" does not mean doing violence to Jupiter. Although there has been a general trend to equate Marguerite with Pallas "on veult de ce nom ma Princesse nommer"--and in fact Du Bellay has done so himself in the past--Du Bellay here says that he does not want to write about her as the incarnation of a Greek goddess, nor as that of the Roman goddess Minerva:

D'un effroyable armet je ne la veulx armer,  
Ny de ce que du nom d'une chevre on appelle,  
Et moins pour avoir veu sa Gorgonne cruelle,  
Veulx-je en nouveaux cailloux les hommes transformer. (5-8)

The negative aspects of these comparisons seem to be the militant qualities of Minerva and Pallas, the weapons that accompany them and the fierce ability of the Medusa head on Minerva's shield to turn men to stone. In this context, Du Bellay wants to avoid associating any of these elements with Marguerite, and he dismisses the myth as an old tale that would only sully Marguerite with monstrous images:

Je ne veulx deguiser ma simple poësie  
Sous le masque emprunté d'une fable moisie,  
Ny souiller un beau nom de monstres tant hideux:

Mais suivant, comme toy, la veritable histoire,  
D'un vers non fabuleux je veulx chanter sa gloire  
A nous, à nos enfans, et ceulx qui naistront d'eulx. (9-14)

Du Bellay insists on the simplicity and transparency of his poetry, which he does not want to "disguise" behind the mask of literary, mythological allusions.<sup>122</sup> Like

---

<sup>121</sup> In epigram 21 of the *Poemata*, titled "La satire est un genre littéraire très dangereux," *Jupiter* is used to refer to *des princes*. Du Bellay advises Marini that "Il ne faut pas moins prendre garde quand il s'agit des princes : ils ont le bras long, dit-on. Personne de bon sens ne va s'en prendre à Jupiter, et il ne reste pas longtemps dans l'impunité l'effronté--quel qu'il soit--qui a attiré l'attention sur les crimes des princes" (Demerson, 7: 94).

<sup>122</sup> This is a reiteration of Du Bellay's earlier announcement of his intent to adopt a "style bas" or "stylus humilis" (sonnets 1-4, Aris and Joukovsky 2: 39-41).

Paschal, he wants to write “la veritable histoire”--which would present Marguerite in direct language that translates her glory both at present and for future generations.<sup>123</sup>

Du Bellay reconnects with his personal history in sonnet 189, the last of the 13 to other poets and intellectuals. He writes to Peletier du Mans, in whose 1547 volume, dedicated to Marguerite, Du Bellay first published a *dizain*. Peletier had since undertaken other projects, including a treatise on Euclidean geometry. In the quatrains, Du Bellay establishes a symmetry between Peletier’s work on geometry and his own encomia of Marguerite:

Cependant (Pelletier) que dessus ton Euclide  
Tu montres ce qu’en vain ont tant cherché les vieux,  
Et qu’en despit du vice, et du siecle envieux  
Tu te guindes au ciel comme un second Alcide:

L’amour de la vertu, ma seule et seure guide,  
Comme un cygne nouveau me conduit vers les cieux,  
Où en despit d’envie, et du temps vicieux,  
Je rempliz d’un beau nom ce grand espace vide. (1-8)

Peletier’s work on Euclid is represented as a contemporary triumph over the ancients:

Peletier is now able to prove what they “en vain ont tant cherché.” Peletier is compared to Hercules, who ascended to Mount Olympus after completing a series of heroic feats. While Peletier’s geometry allows him to “[se guinder] au ciel,” Du Bellay’s love of virtue guides him to new heights “vers les cieux” as well. By this time in the sequence, virtue has been clearly identified with Marguerite, who always plays a mediating role between past and present, the real and the ideal, and who usually represents a path forward as well. Du Bellay describes himself as a new swan--either a contemporary incarnation of the best of classical poets, or a newly inspired

---

<sup>123</sup> Marc Bizer believes that sonnet 188 to Paschal parodies several of Ronsard’s odes and sonnets, and concludes “Cette parodie suggère que dans sa recherche d’images extravagantes pour embellir ses évocations de dames aimées ou protectrices, Ronsard finit par introduire dans ses sonnets des ‘monstres tant hideux’ qui souillent le ‘beau nom’ de Marguerite” (*Les lettres romaines* 151). Ultimately, “il s’agit dans ce dernier sonnet d’un cas de destination multiple particulièrement complexe: un éloge destiné à Marguerite sert à faire une déclaration d’identité poétique auprès d’un ami, mais par sa nature même cet acte de différenciation vise aussi l’incontournable Pierre de Ronsard” (152).

post-Roman version of himself, who, like Pelletier, overcomes the envious immorality of contemporary France in order to explore a purer plane. If mathematicians are able to delineate space using geometric principles, Du Bellay fills in the abstract coordinates of “ce grand espace vide” with “un beau nom.”

Du Bellay claims that, like Pelletier, he had considered abandoning poetry--a claim he first made in the 1549 *Recueil de poésie* which credited Marguerite with changing his mind and giving him the courage to continue:

Je voulois comme toy les vers abandonner,  
Pour à plus hault labour plus sage m'addonner:  
Mais puis que la vertu à la louer m'appelle,

Je veulx de la vertu les honneurs raconter:  
Aveques la vertu je veulx au ciel monter.  
Pourrois-je au ciel monter aveques plus haulte aelle? (9-14)

Here, on the brink of turning to an unspecified “plus hault labour plus sage” he is once again called to praise “la vertu.” He concludes with the last position statement on his own poetry included in the *Regrets*. After listing so many times what he wants or does not want to write, what he would or would not write, he asserts that he wants now to “raconter” “les honneurs de la vertu,” which in the end he sees as the best way to ascend to some exalted height. His final resolution, then, seems to set an agenda of encomia to Marguerite.<sup>124</sup>

In as much as the *Regrets* present themselves as “papiers journalx” (s.1), or Du Bellay’s personal diary, the personal reflections on writing end with sonnet 189 and the resolution to celebrate “les honneurs de la vertu.” Sonnet 190 addresses the historical present and the chances that Du Bellay will have of enacting this writing

---

<sup>124</sup> Katz has an entirely different reading of sonnet 189: “This may be the ultimate disparagement of poetry in the *Regrets*. Not only has it lost its powers of consolation it no longer has the dignity of being an instrument of virtue. The idea is almost Platonic, for poetry is a secondary approach to the idea of virtue; it is an imitation” (194).

agenda he has set for himself, given the wider context of poetry's status in France. He begins the sonnet by tracing the origins of the present moment:

Dessous ce grand François, dont le bel astre luit  
Au plus beau lieu du ciel, la France fut enceinte  
Des lettres et des arts, et d'une troppe sainte  
Que depuis sous Henry feconde elle a produit: (1-4)

Marguerite's father--described here as a star, possibly the sun, the highest star in the firmament--was the catalyst for an artistic and literary movement which came to maturity under Henri II. It no sooner began to flourish, however, than it was threatened by outside forces:

Mais elle n'eut plus-tost fait monstre d'un tel fruit,  
Et plus-tost ce beau part n'eut la lumiere atteinte,  
Que je ne sçay comment sa clairte fut esteinte  
Et vid en mesme temps et son jour et sa nuict. (5-8)

Du Bellay seems to suggest that this was a still-born movement, that his generation's promise has not been fulfilled during Henri's reign. It was mysteriously stymied "je ne sçay comment," perhaps due to the encroachment of wars:

Helicon est tary, Parnasse est une plaine,  
Les lauriers sont seichez, et France autrefois pleine  
De l'esprit d'Apollon, ne l'est plus que de Mars. (9-11)

Pessimistically, Du Bellay says that the sources for poetry have dried up, and that the height of Parnassus has been leveled in contemporary France, now more preoccupied by war than by literature and cultural development.<sup>125</sup> The use of mythological figures--precisely the sort of "fable moisie" that is incongruent with the "simple poésie" that Du Bellay claimed to write in sonnet 188--allows for indirection, however. Mars may represent war and the current battles in which France was embroiled. He may also represent Henri, however, in distinction to Apollo and Pallas.

---

<sup>125</sup> Aris and Joukovsky say that this mention of war might refer to the 1558 military disaster of Saint-Quentin (Vol. II, 360). In his *Recherches de la France*, Estienne Pasquier says something similar about the effect that the wars of religion have on French poetry: "Depuis la mort de Henry, les Troubles qui survindrent en France pour la Religion troublent aucunement l'eau que l'on puisoit auparavant dans la fontaine de Parnasse [...]" (616).

Phoebus Apollo, father of poetry and sun god, is receding from France, and the only defense is left to Pallas Athena--presumably Marguerite:

Phoebus s'en fuit de nous, et l'antique ignorance  
Sous la faveur de Mars retourne encore en France  
Si Pallas ne defend les lettres et les arts. (12-14)

In the first two lines of the sonnet François was portrayed as the central star of the heavens, located "au plus beau lieu." If this is the sun, and it is setting on France, then Henri as king is unable to perpetuate his father's values and rather presides over the return of "l'antique ignorance," "sous la faveur de Mars." In Du Bellay's pre-Rome collections, Marguerite was frequently shown to be the true heir to her father's legacy, in contrast to her brother: here once again she is suggested to be the one force able to protect the cultural offspring of France. Like her father in this sonnet, in sonnet 8 she was described as a "Soleil." Henri, it seems, is preoccupied by military strategies and worldly affairs, effectuated under Diane de Poitiers's emblematic moon, rather than his father's sun-like model.<sup>126</sup> The future of poetry seems to lie with Marguerite, if she is willing to extend her own "faveur" to counter that of Mars.

The last sonnet of the *Regrets*, number 191, is addressed to Henri II, but is a French transcription of Latin epigram 17 in the *Poemata* dedicated to Marguerite. This means that the *Regrets* both opens and closes with an epigram from the Latin collection dedicated to the princess, with sonnets 174-189 buckling this full embrace. While there is a certain hierarchical logic to ending the series of encomia to *les grands* with a piece to the king, and while there is a neat coherence in beginning the sequence with sonnet 159 to Diane de Poitiers and ending it with one to Henri, the fact that this sonnet appears in French in a collection dedicated to Jean d'Avanson, and then in Latin in a collection dedicated to Marguerite detracts from the impression

---

<sup>126</sup> See Chapter 3 on Du Bellay and Diane de Poitiers (note 198, p.242).

of an individually important piece, of a crowning jewel crafted especially for the *Regrets*.<sup>127</sup> By contrast, the opening ode to Jean d'Avanson is longer and more detailed, and where Henri only receives one final sonnet, Marguerite receives seventeen. The poems to d'Avanson and Marguerite are not recycled elsewhere (with the exception of sonnet 174); they are specific to the architecture of this collection. Sonnet 191 seems to indicate a nod to protocol, to Du Bellay's need to acknowledge Henri's position at the top of the hierarchy, based on his role as "un Roy de France" rather than on his individual qualities.<sup>128</sup> There apparently is a limited way to celebrate this official role, and it can be fulfilled by the use of virtually the same piece in different contexts.<sup>129</sup> It is possible to ask whether Du Bellay even anticipated that the king would read the poems in the context of the published collections: the royal reader might find it strange to discover the same poem repeated in two different contexts. Presumably it would be perceived as a less flattering gift than a series of many different poems, like the series to Marguerite. If Du Bellay didn't expect the king to read these collections, then the inclusion of a sonnet to him must be for the benefit of other readers. What function would this sonnet serve for other courtly readers?

The first quatrain addresses the king on the topic of God's creative powers, and it stresses that everything that exists must defer to his power:

Sire, celui qui est, a formé toute essence  
De ce qui n'estoit rien. C'est l'œuvre du Seigneur:  
Aussi tout honneur doit flechir à son honneur,  
Et tout autre pouvoir ceder à sa puissance. (1-4)

---

<sup>127</sup> The *Antiquitez*, however, are a more specific offering to Henri II, as they are dedicated solely to him.

<sup>128</sup> Some scholars read this sonnet as a straightforward encomium, as O. Millet does: "[...] ce dernier sonnet ferme la série encomiastique du recueil à la position la plus élevée, celle qu'occupe le Roi dans l'espace hiérarchisée de la Cour et du monde" (*Epigrammata* 580).

<sup>129</sup> Oliver Millet finds that there is some difference between the French version, which he characterizes as more cosmic and philosophical and which stresses the king's power, while the Latin version is more familiar, good-humored, and stresses the king's "bonté" (*Epigrammata* 580).

This seems like a reminder of the limited, temporal powers of the French king, in contrast to God's divine powers. But Du Bellay goes on to say that after God, nothing is as powerful as a king of France:

On voit beaucoup de Roys, qui sont grands d'apparence,  
Mais nul, tant soit il grand, n'aura jamais tant d'heur  
De pouvoir à la vostre egaler sa grandeur:  
Car rien n'est apres Dieu si grand qu'un Roy de France. (5-8)

In the tercets Du Bellay challenges the king, saying that since God is all powerful and omnipresent, and since the king's own grandeur is circumscribed only by God, the king should test his powers on the poet himself in order to see if he, like God, can create something out of nothing:

Puis donc que Dieu peult tout, et ne se trouve lieu  
Lequel ne soit encloz sous le pouvoir de Dieu,  
Vous, de qui la grandeur de Dieu seul est enclose,

Elargissez encor sur moy vostre pouvoir,  
Sur moy, qui ne suis rien: à fin de faire voir,  
Que de rien un grand Roy peult faire quelque chose. (9-14)

Although Du Bellay adopts a self-deprecating stance at the end--he is "rien"--the king's own status is not clearly superior to the poet's.<sup>130</sup> If Henri were to fail in this challenge to create something out of nothing, he wouldn't be such a "grand roi" and in fact would be diminished by the failure: he would be unable to "faire voir," or make his power visible. On the other hand, the power differential between a "grand roi" and a "rien" is indeed great, and it shouldn't take much for the king to grant some title or favor that would make "quelque chose" of the writer. If it takes so little to create

---

<sup>130</sup>While in his edition of the *Regrets* Screech says that this sonnet concludes with "un bon éclat de rire" (267) and Katz similarly reads the sonnet as concluding with "comic self-deprecation" (196), Thomas Greene (*Regrets Only*) reads it straight: "*Les Regrets*" records successfully an attempt to refashion a self which fails. In the very last sonnet, the poet presents himself as a *tabula rasa*, but now without any hope of an achieved regeneration. He calls himself a nothing, by which he means, distressingly, a social and financial nothing. Now the only hope can come from the king"(18). In light of the previous poems to Marguerite, I disagree with Greene.

something out of nothing, the act of creation isn't worth much in itself, or the king's granting of favors isn't worth much.<sup>131</sup>

It should be noted that Du Bellay avoids praising the king in ways that he praised Marguerite earlier. He neither says that the king contains kingly virtues in his own right, as he claims in sonnet 175 that Marguerite would be noble and virtuous even if not the daughter and sister of kings, nor that the king represents virtue in any way. Whereas Du Bellay tells Gournay in sonnet 182 that he seeks nothing from Marguerite except dispensation to continue praising her because “en loüiant ... si loüable subject / Le loz que je m'acquier, m'est trop grand' recompense,” he seems to want something more concrete from the king--or perhaps nothing at all. Although Marguerite has a radiant effect like the sun figure of her father, an “estincelle” which spontaneously enflames and elevates the poet in sonnet 176, the king gives off no spark and no inspiration in the last sonnet, and Du Bellay makes no promise of future praise or any future poetry, even though he would soon after publish the *Antiquitez* and two long poems dedicated to the king in 1558.

The last sonnet at best represents a stance, a posture towards power in France written for the benefit of a courtly audience: Du Bellay adopts the same position as other courtiers and ministers who are defined by their service to the king and his recognition of it.<sup>132</sup> In the opening poem to D'Avanson, Du Bellay stressed the diplomat's ties to the king and the royal rewards he had garnered:

Ce fut pourquoy ce sage et vaillant Prince,

---

<sup>131</sup> Ulrich Langer finds this to be an expression of the king's absolute sovereignty: “Lorsque le roi rémunère le poète, aucune obligation ne l'y contraint, car car le poète n'est “rien”; l'acte de récompense sera donc une démonstration magnifique de sa souveraineté, de son manque d'obligation vis-à-vis de ceux qui sont ‘enclos’ sous ses lois” (“Discours” 385).

<sup>132</sup> Along these lines, Bellenger writes “Le rêve du poète, la pose de l'exilé, le rôle de l'homme pur à l'écart des vilénies qui l'atteignent parfois mais sans le corrompre autrement qu'en surface, la plainte du ‘pauvre agneau’ ne sont plus de mise à présent. Revenu en France, le poète renonce à prétendre qu'il n'est pas un homme comme les autres. Il est bel et bien un homme social, soumis aux même contingences que ceux qui l'entourent” (“Du Bellay Satirique” 55).

Vous honorant du nom d'Ambassadeur,  
Sur votre doz deschargea sa grandeur,  
Pour la porter en estrange province.

Recompensant d'un estat honorable  
Vostre service, et tesmoignant assez  
Par le loyer de voz travaux passez  
Combien luy est tel service agreable. (97-104)

D'Avanson enjoys a higher status than the poet: the minister has been recognized by the king but Du Bellay depicts himself as not yet rewarded--still "rien". Writing for an audience that lives for royal rewards, he paints himself in their image at the end. He seeks to reintegrate the French court by portraying himself as one of the courtiers, affirming the power of the king and seeming to seek his recognition just as they do.<sup>133</sup> But Du Bellay's more immediate agenda as poet has already been defined in sonnet 189 as encomia of Marguerite. Thirteen writers and members of Marguerite's household stand as witnesses, as do nine of the king's advisors: the richly diverse collection of sonnets that forms the *Regrets* is enclosed by poems dedicated to her, and sonnet 189 promises even more. This promise is fulfilled in other 1558 collections, including the *Divers Jeux Rustiques*, which was published under the same privilege as the *Regrets*.

### *Les Divers Jeux Rustiques*<sup>134</sup>

If in the *Regrets* Du Bellay's Italian muse offers Marguerite sonnets, in the *Divers jeux rustiques* it is his French muse that makes her an offering. Marguerite's presence here is not as explicit as it is in the *Regrets* and the *Poemata*, and in fact

---

<sup>133</sup> Bizer's contention that Du Bellay exploits the epistolary possibilities of the sonnet in order to affirm a certain social cohesion seems relevant here (*Les lettres romaines* 75, 91).

<sup>134</sup> All citations from the *Divers Jeux Rustiques* are taken from from volume two of Du Bellay's *Œuvres poétiques* edited by Daniel Aris and Françoise Joukovsky (2009).

Marguerite has rarely been discussed in connection with this particular collection.<sup>135</sup> Her inclusion, however, can be excavated with attentive reading and it marks an important continuity among Du Bellay's 1558 publications. Links also exist with the 1549 *Recueil de poésie* and the second edition of *L'Olive* from 1550--both of which were dedicated to Marguerite.

As the title might indicate, the *Divers jeux rustiques*, written in French, are diverse: "un livre de mélanges, une oeuvre caractérisée par la variété" (Aris and Joukovsky 2: liv). It contains translations from Italian and Latin, satirical pieces, epitaphs and elegies in rhyming couplets, along with older French forms such as the *villanelle* and the *chant*, and one *hymne*. The collection opens with a statement "Au Lecteur", in which Du Bellay defines the work as "petites pieces assez mal cousues, mais qui, peult estre, ne te donneront moins de plaisir que beaucoup d'autres plus graves, plus polies et mieulx agencées" (144). "Petites" can be read as part of Du Bellay's humility stance, and perhaps refers to the light nature of the poems rather than their length, since some are actually quite long. The poet says that the pieces are hardly organized, unpolished, and geared towards pleasure rather than more weighty reflection.<sup>136</sup> He goes on to instruct the reader on how the poems should be read:

Reçoy donques ce present, tel qu'il est, de la mesme volonté que je te  
le présente: employant les mesmes heures à la lecture d'iceluy, que  
celles que j'ay employées à la composition: c'est le temps qu'on donne

---

<sup>135</sup> The only critic I know who has discussed Marguerite in relation to the *Jeux rustiques* is Charles Béné, who wonders whether one poem, number 22, might be dedicated to Marguerite ("Marguerite de France et l'oeuvre de Du Bellay" 234-35). I agree and examine this poem later on page 159, but I believe that at least four other poems in the collection that Béné does not mention also contain references to Marguerite.

<sup>136</sup> Helen O. Platt ("Structure in Du Bellay's *Divers Jeux Rustiques*") has argued that contrary to what Du Bellay announces in the *Au Lecteur*, there is a careful order to the collection. While she helpfully points out thematic pairings of poems, the rigid symmetry she identifies is dependent on ignoring the first translation by Virgil, and then counting all of the initial translations from Italian (12 total) as one poem. Unlike Platt, Jean Braybrook believes that the collection is "rebelle à l'ordre" (57); Perrine Galand-Hallyn also stresses its diversity (83). I believe that while there is some effort to organize thematic groupings within the collection, Platt's strict order is too limited and is unable to account for the cornucopian variety of the collection.

ordinairement au jeu, aux spectacles, aux banquetz, et autres telles voluptez [...]. (144)

Du Bellay suggests that these pieces were written for social settings and recreation: the topics would then be playful, relaxing, or widely appealing--aimed to please a courtly audience. They may have been written quickly, for particular dinners or events. Du Bellay suggests the context of a meal in the dedication to Duthier that follows the "Au Lecteur:"

[...]  
Mais c'est à toy que je donne  
Le miel de telles douceurs,  
Où des affaires plus graves  
Souvent le souci tu laves,  
Cher nourrisson des neuf Sœurs.

Ne crains point qu'à tes oreilles,  
Lors qu'aux affaires tu veilles,  
Je me vienne presenter:  
Ma Muse non importune  
Espira l'heure opportune,  
Pour tes oreilles tenter.

Elle fournira ta table  
D'un entre-mez délectable (26-38)

The opening epigram of the *Regrets* promised "fiel," "miel," and "sel," but the *Jeux* will contain only the "miel" of tempting dishes, prepared to lift the spirits of hard-working royal servants like Duthier. In fact, the first piece, "Le Moretum de Virgile," is a translation from the Latin in which a simple country man named Marsault makes a sauce with herbs from his garden. Braybrook sees this sauce as the symbol of the whole collection, "qui réunit les elements les plus divers" in order to serve up something appealing (56).

The "Moretum" is followed by twelve translations of rustic or pastoral poems by the Italian poet Navagero. They treat topics such as drinking, harvesting, hunting, and love. The fourteenth piece, the first original one by Du Bellay, is titled

“Villanelle” and addresses “Marguerite.” It is the first of several poems spread throughout the collection that may be dedicated to the princess Marguerite, although to my knowledge no editor to date has attempted to make this identification. In the “Villanelle” Chamard notes only that “Ce refrain est à rapprocher de celui d’une ode de Ronsard, que M. Laumonier [...] qualifie de ‘véritable villanelle’” (5: 27). Ronsard’s ode titled “A Marguerite” appeared in the second volume of his 1550 odes.<sup>137</sup> As the *Jeux rustiques* end with a *Hymne de la surdit * addressed to Ronsard which is written in imitation of the latter’s 1555 *Hymnes*, opening the section of original poems in French with another imitation of a poem by Ronsard creates a symmetrical allusion to Du Bellay’s fellow poet.<sup>138</sup> Choosing what was seen as an older French form (although the name *villanelle* derives from the Italian *villanella*)

---

<sup>137</sup> En mon c ur n’est point escrite  
 La rose, ni autre fleur ;  
 C’est toy, belle Marguerite,  
 Par qui j’ay cette couleur.

N’es-tu celle dont les yeux ont surpris  
 Par un regard gracieux mes esprits?  
 Puis que ta s ur de haut pris,  
 Ta s ur pucelle d’elite,  
 N’es cause de ma douleur,  
 C’est donc pour toy, Marguerite,  
 Que je pris ceste couleur.

Un soir ma fièvre naquit, quand mon c ur  
 Pour maistresse te requit; mais Rigueur  
 D’une amoureuse langueur  
 Soudain paya mon merite,  
 Me donnant ceste paleur  
 Pour t’aimer trop, Marguerite,  
 Et ta vermeille couleur.

H ! quel charme pourroit bien Consumer  
 Le souci qui s’est fait mien Pour aimer?  
 De mon tourment si amer  
 La jouissance subite  
 Seule outeroit le malheur  
 Que me donna Marguerite  
 Par qui j’ay cette couleur.  
 (Cohen 2 : 696)

<sup>138</sup> Chamard dates the “Hymne de la surdit ” as being written at the end of 1556 in imitation of Ronsard’s 1555 *Hymnes*: “Mais, si la forme est celle de Ronsard (alexandrins   rimes plates), le ton est diff rent: l’ uvre appartient au genre berneseque [...]” (257).

and dedicating it to Marguerite is a way of marking Du Bellay's return to France once again: the previous thirteen poems were translations from the Latin and Italian, but once back in France Du Bellay can again take native inspiration from a French princess--and apparently Ronsard. This structure of opening the original portion of the collection with a poem to Marguerite and closing it with one to Ronsard is the same as that of the second *Olive*, which opened with a sonnet to Marguerite and closed with one to Ronsard. In fact, the *Jeux rustiques* frequently refer to *L'Olive*, and it shares many aspects of this earlier collection.

The central poem of the *Jeux*, "A Olivier de Magni sur les perfections de sa dame" (number 19 of 38 poems), specifies:

Si est-ce pourtant que je puis  
 Me vanter qu'en France je suis  
 Des premiers qui ont ozé dire  
 Leurs amours sur la Thusque lyre.

Et mon Olive (soit ce nom  
 D'Olive veritable, ou non)  
 Se peult vanter d'avoir première  
 Salué la douce lumiere. (105-112)

Here Du Bellay takes credit for introducing the Italian form of the sonnet sequence to France, and playfully suggests that *L'Olive* was not the real name of the dedicatee. Like the *Olive* this 1558 collection filled with "miel" is preoccupied by "amours." Love is first established as a theme in several of the Navagero translations ("De Deux amants, à Vénus," "A Vénus," "Estrene d'un tableau"), and it continues in original love poems and elegies, combined with poems that reflect on the nature of love poetry itself. For example, poem 18 alludes to Pontus de Tyard's *Erreurs Amoureuses*, and number 19, the poem cited above to Olivier de Magny, encourages the latter to continue writing love sonnets as he did in his 1553 *Amours*. This is followed by the satirical "Contre les Petrarquistes," which is a more succinct version--40 lines shorter-

-of the 1553 piece “A Une Dame” that was added to the second edition of the *Recueil de poésie* dedicated to Marguerite. Both the 1553 and 1558 versions of this poem poke fun at the worst excesses of neo-petrarchan verse and Du Bellay here rejects the Italian influences that he had earlier embraced:

Noz bons ayeulx, qui cest art demenoient,  
Pour en parler, Pétrarque n'apprennoient,  
Ains franchement leur Dame entretenoient  
Sans fard ou couverture:  
Mais aussi tost qu'Amour s'est faict sçavant,  
Luy, qui estoit François au paravant,  
Est devenu flatteur, et decevant,  
Et de Thusque nature. (145-152)

This reveals that Du Bellay can laugh at himself, at his pride in introducing the “Thusque lyre” to France, and at certain Petrarchan aspects of the *Olive*. The final stanza is the same in both the 1553 and 1558 versions; it parodies the style Du Bellay used in the *Olive*:

Si toutefois Petrarque vous plaist mieux,  
Je reprendray mon chant melodieux,  
Et voleray jusq'au séjour des Dieux  
D'une aele mieux guidee:  
Là dans le sein de leurs divinitez  
Je choisiray cent mille nouveautez,  
Dont je peindray vos plus grandes beautez  
Sur la plus belle Idee. (201-208)

This poem, combined with the two that precede it, is evidence of just how much the question of love verse is central to the current collection and how for Du Bellay the topic immediately recalls the *Olive*, a collection which is necessarily entwined with Marguerite--at least ever since its second edition. In addition to the *Olive*, the *Recueil de poesie*--the first collection that Du Bellay dedicated to Marguerite and one that was filled with courtly verse and encomia carefully pitched to women at court (Marguerite, Catherine de Medici, the Comtesse de Tonnerre)--is also recalled in structure and theme: “Contre les pétrarquistes” was first included in the second

*Recueil* with the title “A une dame”, and the same types of verse are included in both collections. The second edition of the *Recueil* added four pieces to the first edition: “A une dame,” “La mort de Palinure” (a translation from Virgil), “Elegie,” and “Chanson.” In the *Jeux rustiques*, “Contre les pétrarquistes” is followed by two poems of almost exactly the same titles: “Elegie d’amour” and a “Chanson”, and a translation of Virgil--the “Moretum,” appears at the beginning of the *Jeux*. If the *Recueil* represents an early model of what Du Bellay thought would appeal to Marguerite and a courtly audience--praise poems, love poems, translations, light satires that poke fun at self-deprecating poets--then the *Jeux rustiques* repeat this formula and build on it, adding more translations of Latin and Italian poets, more satires, more love poems. The collection may be dedicated to Duthier, but it is filled with allusions to Marguerite and the two collections that Du Bellay dedicated to her before his voyage to Rome. As sonnet 7 of the *Regrets* already attested, for Du Bellay Marguerite is intimately associated with the reception of his poetry at court:

Ce pendant que la court mes ouvrages lisoit,  
 Et que la sœur du Roy, l’unique Marguerite,  
 Me faisant plus d’honneur que n’estoit mon merite,  
 De son bel œil divin mes vers favorisoit (1-4)

Considering the echoes of the *Olive* and the *Recueil* in the *Divers jeux rustiques*, it is difficult not to read the “Villanelle” as a playful allusion to the poet and his princess when it describes a lover pursuing a lady named Marguerite.

The thirty-two line poem is divided in four stanzas of eight lines each. It opens by saying that in the spring all thoughts turn to love, a sentiment denied to the poet, however, by “une rigueur despite.” The refrain laments “Belle et franche Marguerite/Pour vous j’y ceste douleur.” The second stanza teasingly says that this Marguerite may not be all that she seems:

Dedans vostre oeil gracieux

Toute douceur est escrite,  
Mais la douceur de voz yeulx  
En amertume est confitte.  
Souvent la couleuvre habite  
Dessous une belle fleur.  
Belle et franche Marguerite,  
Pour vous j'ay ceste douleur. (9-16)

The poet goes on to say that he is growing old and has decided to retreat to the woods, become a hermit and tend to his psychological wounds. But in the fourth and last stanza, he hopes that Marguerite might nonetheless favor him:

Mais si la faveur des Dieux  
Au bois vous avoit conduite,  
Où, desperé d'avoir mieulx,  
Je m'en iray rendre hermite,  
Peult estre que ma poursuite  
Vous feroit changer couleur.  
Belle et franche Marguerite,  
Pour vous j'ay ceste douleur. (25-32)

Du Bellay then turns to the gods in the next piece, a translation from Ovid titled “Le Combat d’Hercule et d’Acheloys.” This selection details the victory of Hercules over the river god Archelous, whom he battled in order to win the hand of a Princess, Deianeira, described as a “douce guerrière” (v.193). The simple hermit of the “Villanelle,” who pursues Marguerite and hopes to win her in the end, is thus followed by the demi-god Hercules who pursues and wins a princess by defeating a fearsome river god. The figure of lover has clearly made progress from one piece to the next. In the 1550 “Musagnoeomachie” Du Bellay called himself an “Angevin Alcée” (v.477).<sup>139</sup> Is it possible to read this Ovidian tale as an allegory for the poet and his princess?

The theme of love is continued in the next two poems, “Chant de l’amour et du printemps” and “Chant de l’amour et de l’hiver,” two pieces that place a lover and his lady within the frame of events in contemporary France. The poems form a

---

<sup>139</sup> Alcée is another name for Hercules.

pair, by their titles and by content, which carry no direct mention of Marguerite but which contain many echoes of poems written to her in both the 1550 *Olive* and in the *Regrets*. These echoes suggest that she was part of the intended audience for the poems, while the lack of specific names suggests strategic editing to create a publication general enough to engage a wide audience.

“Chant de l’amour et du printemps” opens in imitation of the preceding translation of Ovid which began “Ce n’est icy que je chante / Les Titans outrageux.” Here, Du Bellay writes “Icy je ne chante pas / De Mars la guerrière trope” and he says that some other poet will have to write about the recent French defeat of the Imperial army. Instead, he will write about love, “le seul plaisir de ma vie” (v.46).<sup>140</sup> The sun warms the new season and the poet’s love “se renouvelle” (v.40). The whole world is made green and fresh and the poet sees his beloved mirrored in all of nature’s glorious elements: the colors of spring flowers, the timbre of spring light, the quality of lapping waters, and the wind rustling through trees are so many reminders of his lady. At the end, Du Bellay says he wants to build an altar to his “Déesse,” one that will be decorated with his verse:

Icy dedier je veulx  
Un autel à ma Déesse,  
Pour y consacrer les voeus  
Que ma Muse luy adresse.

De fleurs et de rameaux verds  
Sera la riche peinture,  
Et la rondeur de mes vers  
Y servira de ceinture.

[...]  
Dessus les sièges herbuz,  
Pallisse la verde OLIVE,  
Et le verd tronc de Phoebus

---

<sup>140</sup> This intention to write of love contrasts with the *Regrets*, at the beginning of which Du Bellay said he only wanted to write his daily experience – whether sad or happy, as if in a diary (s. 1), and at the end of which Du Bellay said that he wanted to write of God (s. 186) and of Marguerite, or virtue (s.189).

Y ait sa perruque vive. (165-172, 197-200)

In the context of this love poem, the “Déesse” mentioned could be the goddess Venus or the lady herself who inspires his love. But along with the laurel tree, this altar is graced by the “OLIVE” dedicated to Marguerite, just the same as an altar that Du Bellay describes when addressing his “Muse” at the end of the 1550

“Musagnoeomachie”:

Encre icy ma nef captive,  
Affin que dessus ta rive  
Dedans ton temple immortel  
Des rameaux de mon OLIVE  
J’encourtine ton autel. (512-516)

In my analysis of the “Musagnoeomachie” (see page 69 in Chapter 1) I wondered whether the “Muse” was Marguerite and whether the altar mentioned above was for her. “Muse” and “déesse” are epithets that Du Bellay commonly uses to describe Marguerite. Even before this example, in the 1549 *Recueil de poésie* Du Bellay had written Marguerite an ode in which he described her in terms of a goddess at whose altar he worshipped:

Ores, ores le temple  
Des Graces je contemple  
Desjà plus d’une fois,  
Et la coulonne seure  
Où humblement s’asseure  
Mon couraige, et ma voix.

Là, mon ame incitée,  
Là mon ame agitée  
D’une divine ardeur,  
Comme toute ecstatique,  
Pend ce veu poétique  
Devant vostre grandeur. (13-24)

The likelihood that the spring poem of beauty and renewal celebrates the poet’s reconnection with his princess becomes even more compelling after reading the “Chant de l’amour et de l’hyver” which follows.

This second poem combines images that Du Bellay used in the seventeen sonnets to Marguerite in the *Regrets*. There, Du Bellay describes his separation from Marguerite as a living hell (“Et cet enfer, Madame, a esté mons absence” s. 174) and he falls into a wintry state of “morne froideur” (s. 80) unless he writes about Marguerite, a topic which allows him to feel “revivre en moy ceste antique chaleur” (s.80). Marguerite was also associated with the “soleil” (s. 7) and with radiant light “beaux raiz” (s. 176) and fire that casts an irresistible “estincelle” (s. 176). Here, the “Chant” opens with winter, and says that while the king is attempting to pursue military victories in unfavorable weather, the poet is languishing far from his source of inspiration:

Puis qu’esloignant la lumiere  
De la beauté coustumiere  
D’estre un soleil à mes yeux  
Je sens ma triste pensée  
Ardemment englacée  
D’un aquilon furieux.

L’astre dont la sainte flamme  
Au plus joyeux de mon ame  
Pluvoit un printemps de fleurs,  
Plus ne gresle en mon courage  
Qu’un perpetuel orage  
Et de souspirs et de pleurs. (37-48)

He goes on to specify:

Comme autrefois la nature  
Au plus gay de sa peinture  
Me figuroit les beautez,  
Dont le printemps de madame  
Faisoit esclore en mon ame  
Mille belles nouveautez.

Ainsi le ciel me r’apporte  
Aveques la saison morte  
Une mortelle froideur,  
Pour estre eslongné de celle  
Dont la divine estincelle  
Tient ma vie en sa verneur. (97-108)

Here, just as Marguerite in sonnets of the *Regrets*, the lady is associated with “la lumière;” she is “un soleil à mes yeux,” an “astre dont la sainte flamme pluvoit un printemps de fleurs” whose “divine estincelle” is a life source for the lover/poet.

The poet then mentions his friends Pontus de Tyard and Ronsard, whom he exhorts to keep writing, since he has lost his own inspiration and creative forces:

Ponthus, que l’amour affole  
D’une erreur saintement fole,  
Ponthus, l’honneur Masconnoys,  
Et toy, le plus grand qu’on voye,  
Dont le saint myrte verdoye  
Dessus le bord Vandommoys :

Si encores vous allume  
La fureur, qui vostre plusme  
Ballança d’un vol si hault,  
Empenez les flancz de celle  
Qui tire une plus basse aele,  
De peur de prendre le sault. (19-30)

While these fellow poets are still afire with inspiration, the lover/poet of this “Chant” is wasting towards death. He says that he envies soldiers who die fighting against the imperial army: their death will be honored with accolades from the king and great poets like Ronsard. Unlike the king’s soldiers, the poet is destined to die:

Non devant les yeux des Roys,  
Sur la guerriere campagne  
Rouge du sang de l’Espagne,  
Mais soubz l’honneur de ces bois.

Bois tristes et solitaires,  
De ma peine secretaires (147-152)

Like Marguerite’s lover in the earlier “Villanelle,” he is alone, hermitlike in the woods. The “Chant” closes not with an altar as in the “Chant d’amour et de printemps,” but with the inscription for the poet’s own tomb:

C’ESTOIT LA LYRE ANGEVINE  
D’UN QUE SA TOUTE-DIVINE  
A CONDUIT AU DERNIER POINCT,  
PAR UNE ENNUIEUSE ABSENCE,

POURCE QU'IL N'EUT LA PUISSANCE  
DE VIVRE ET NE LA VOIR POINT. (217-222)

This “ennuieuse absence” that contributes to the poet’s imagined death echoes the “enfer” of his “absence” in sonnet 174 to Marguerite in the *Regrets*, and the capital letters of this inscription recall the OLIVE written in capital letters in the previous poem. There, the springtime altar to the poet’s goddess is decorated by the sonnet sequence dedicated to Marguerite, a sequence described as “poëtiques fleurs” of “plus de cent couleurs” in the dedicatory sonnet of *L’Olive*--all written for the “fleur des MARGUERITES” (6). Proximity to his lady in the “Chant d’amour et de printemps” inspires the same imagery as Marguerite inspires in the *Olive*, the *Recueil*, and the *Regrets*: sunlight, flowers, green growth, fresh inspiration. On the other hand, distance from the lady in the “Chant de l’amour and de l’hyver”, like distance from Marguerite in the *Regrets*, is represented as a descent into winter, writer’s block, a living hell or death itself.

With this sequence of four poems (“Villanelle,” “Le Combat d’Hercule et d’Achélouys,” “Le Chant d’amour et de printemps” and “Le Chant d’amour et d’hyver”) Du Bellay opens the French section of the *Jeux rustiques* with poems that can please a wide audience but which also capture his happy reunion with Marguerite and the painful separation of the years in Rome. The poems may have been written before his return to France (the political events in the two “Chants” have led critics to date them in 1557 or 1556 [Aris and Joukovsky 2: 369,372]) but in the context of their 1558 publication they represent his desire to reassert his connection to the princess using the playful and seductive language of love. This collection doesn’t stand on ceremony and proclaim a “beau nom” as the *Regrets* does in its end sequence: the *Jeux* are neither a palace nor a podium but rather a field or a garden--a “beau clos” (175, v.173), where the poet plays and winks at his audience.

At least two further poems in the *Jeux* seem likely to address the princess. For one of them, poem 22 titled “Chanson,” the composer Arcadelt set the first three stanzas to music in 1561 (380), a fact that indicates that the content of the poem could transcend the immediate circumstances of its composition. In other words, the piece was general enough to be seen as desirable material for a song that would be performed years after the composition of the poem and Du Bellay’s death in 1560. This seems to have been the quality that Du Bellay sought in the selections published in the *Jeux*: courtly verse and love poetry that would have wide appeal and not be limited to an audience of one lady--even if one lady were the inspiration for them. This “Chanson” may be linked to Marguerite because, as Charles Béné has noted (235), it repeatedly refers to the difference in status between the lover and his lady: “ma basse qualité / N’egale vostre hautesse” (v.9-10) and the lover owes “le devoir de reverence” (v.19) to her “royales hauteurs” (v.50). The lover only wishes to serve the lady:

Le loyer de mon service,  
Si rien je puis desservir,  
C’est que seulement servir  
De vostre gré je vous puisse:  
Et que m’ottroyez ce bien,  
Puis qu’il ne vous couste rien. (43-48)

This recalls sonnet 182 of the *Regrets*, in which Du Bellay writes to Gournay to explain:

Ce que je quiers (Gournay) de ceste sœur de Roy,  
Que j’honore, revere, admire comme toy,  
C’est que de la loüer sa bonté me dispense (9-11)

Just as Du Bellay says that he wants nothing from Marguerite except permission to praise her, the lover here wants nothing except permission to serve his lady, and he insists “Je ne veulx rien obtenir/Qu’on doive secret tenir” (101-102), which suggests a chaste and respectful attachment. The poet imagines that the lady will allow this

attachment to continue if she accepts that the lover's fidelity is equal to her own

“grandeur:”

Mais si vous suivez l'exemple  
Des Dieux, qui n'ont à dédain  
Que d'un rustique la main  
Des vœux présente à leur temple,  
Comme eux vous prendrez à gré  
Mon cœur à vous consacré.

J'entends si votre excellence  
Digne de l'amour d'un Roy,  
Vostre grandeur, et ma foy  
Met en égale ballence,  
Puis qu'en cela j'ay tant d'heur  
D'égalier vostre grandeur. (61-72)

The lover is once again in the position of a worshipper making an offering at a temple (“d'un rustique la main des vœux présente à leur temple”), as Du Bellay so often has been with Marguerite. The woman is said to merit the love of a king, and this phrase led Henri Chamard to wonder whether the poem was addressed to Diane de Poitiers.<sup>141</sup> This, however, seems unlikely because the lover goes on to question the affection of princes:

Si un Prince vous honore,  
Ce n'est grande nouveauté:  
Il prend bien la privauté  
Du plus désirer encore:  
Et croit que tout ce qu'il veult,  
Refuser on ne luy peult.  
[...]  
Suspecte est l'amour des princes,  
Et de ces amours de court  
Souvent le bruit, qui en court  
Faict la fable des provinces (73-78, 85-88)

---

<sup>141</sup> If any poem in this collection is addressed to Diane, the most likely candidate seems to be number 37, “*Métamorphose d'une rose*,” which is addressed to a widow who turns into a beautiful rose in the garden of honor, protecting her chastity with thorns. She says that she will only open the door of her protected orchard to a lover who is the equivalent of Hercules. The poem is written in the first person, just as two unusual songs that Du Bellay is known to have written to Diane (see p. 274 of Chapter 3). I don't know of any poems to other women that Du Bellay wrote in their own voices--certainly none to Marguerite have surfaced to date. The reference to Hercules could be an allusion to the king, although Du Bellay also once referred to himself as the “Angevin Alcée.” Chamard says that this piece “fut écrite en des circonstances qui nous échappent entièrement” (182) and Joukovsky is silent about its possible origins, so neither of those editors offers any help on this question.

It seems unlikely that Du Bellay would openly cast doubt on the sincerity of the king's sentiments for Diane, even in jest. On the other hand, although Marguerite had been the object of pursuit for some time, she was not yet engaged to be married at the moment this poem was published. As sister to the king, she was a legitimate love interest for other European princes and kings, genuinely "digne de l'amour d'un Roy."<sup>142</sup> As she was still unattached, the comments about the insincerity of princely affections would not have targeted any one powerful individual, but could safely refer to the general lot of suitors that Marguerite had had and refused over the years.

Poem number 33, "Elegie amoureuse" contains an even higher density of elements that seem applicable to Marguerite, particularly if compared to sonnets in the *Regrets*. The lover in this piece opens by invoking the lady's "esprit:"

Si vostre esprit, qui de son origine  
Tesmoigne assez la nature divine  
Par les discours que faict divinement  
Vostre celeste et parfaict jugement (1-4)

In sonnet 176 of the *Regrets*, Marguerite is an "Esprit royal" associated with the divine. In sonnet 177 that follows, Du Bellay writes to Vineus to justify his writing to Marguerite:

Si sa vertu j'adore, et si d'affection  
Je parle si souvent de sa perfection (12-13)

This rhyme of "affection" and "perfection" returns in the "Elegie amoureuse":

Et par sur tout de ceste affection  
Qui vient d'aymer une perfection. (7-8)

---

<sup>142</sup>Jean-Claude Margolin cites Brantôme on the issue of Marguerite's potential marriages: "□Le roy Henry la voulust une fois maryer à feu M. de Vandosme premier prince du sang ; mais elle fist responce qu'elle n'espouseroit jamais le subject du roy son frère.' D'où son état prolongé de vierge--Pallas ou Minerve--jusqu'à son mariage politique avec le Duc de Savoie Emmanuel Philibert" (162). If the story related by Brantôme is accurate, and if Du Bellay knew that Marguerite refused to marry anyone who was a subject to her own brother, the quote "digne de l'amour d'un roy" takes on additional meaning, as it seems to represent Marguerite's own sentiments about her preferences in a husband.

Marguerite is consistently the perfect, divine object of Du Bellay's affection. The lover tells the lady that he hopes to express his sentiments

Naïvement, sans art et fiction,  
Comme sans art est mon affection. (19-20)

This is reminiscent of sonnet 180 of the *Regrets*, where Du Bellay tells Jodelle that Marguerite

[...] produict naïvement en moy  
Ce que par art contraint les autres y font naistre. (13-14)

Just as Du Bellay confides in sonnet 178 to Mellin de Saint Gelais that “en loüant ainsi sa royale haultesse,/Je craindrois d’offenser sa grande humilité,” the lover in the “Elegie” tells the lady that he is afraid to offend her with his praise:

Si ce n’estoit que je crains d’offenser  
En vous louant, le modeste penser  
Qui ne vous laisse ouir vostre mérite,  
Et vous faict plus que vous-mesmes petite (26-30)<sup>143</sup>

And just as Du Bellay tells Marguerite in sonnet 175 that she is admired “d’un chacun” not because of her lineage but because of “ce grand heur,” “ceste grace, et douceur” that are all her own, the lover in the “Elegie” tells his lady

Je ne dirois vostre race et grandeur,

---

<sup>143</sup> Marguerite's displeasure at being praised is also noted by Ronsard in his 1556 “Hynne de Calays et de Zethés” dedicated to Marguerite:

Je sçay que je devrois, Princesse Marguerite,  
D’un vers non trafiqué chanter vostre merite,  
Sans louer autre nom, et des Grecs estrangers  
N’emprunter desormais les discours mensongers.  
Le vostre est suffisant à quiconque desire  
Gagner le premier bruit de bien sonner la Lyre,  
Mais vous le desdaignez, et dites qu’il ne faut  
Sinon louer le Dieu qui habite là-haut,  
De qui la gloire doit tousjours estre chantée.  
Ainsi on vous desplaist quand vous estes vantée,  
Et tousjours rougissez, si d’un vers importun  
Quelcun bat vostre oreille en louant trop quelcun,  
Ou secouez la teste, ou, d’un œil venerable,  
Monstrez qu’un vil flatteur ne vous est agreable.  
Pource, illustre Princesse, au signe que j’ay veu,  
Il faut ne vous louer, ou vous louer bien peu ...  
(Cohen, 2:126)

Puis que le ciel vous a donné tant d'heur  
 Plus que cela, mais bien la bonne grace  
 Qu'on void reluire en vostre belle face,  
 Vostre douceur, vostre humble privauté,  
 Et vostre esprit plus beau que la beauté:  
 Perfections d'un chacun estimees,  
 Mais plus de moy que de tout autre aymeas,  
 Par un instinct naturel, qui me faict  
 Cognoistre en vous de vous le plus parfaict. (31-40)

Here the lover addresses a woman who is perfect independent of her lineage, and he claims to love her better than anyone else, which is how other poets have described Du Bellay's relationship with Marguerite.<sup>144</sup>

Like Du Bellay in sonnet 182 of the *Regrets*, who only desires that Marguerite “de la louer sa bonté me dispense,” this lover wants nothing in return from the lady except the possibility to continue loving and serving her:

Je ne pretens pour cela toutefois  
 (Bien que d'amour les équitables loix  
 Veillent qu'amour par amour on compense)  
 Vous obliger vers moy de recompense.  
 Ce que de vous je desire et pretens,  
 Pour l'amitié, pour la longueur du temps  
 Que j'ay tasché de vous faire service,  
 C'est seulement, Madame, que je puisse  
 (Si autre bien je ne puis desservir)  
 De vostre gré vous aymer et servir. (51-60)

The long service of the lover to the lady is mentioned, which at this point would be true of Du Bellay's nine-year attachment to the princess. The lover then addresses his lady as “Madame” and “Deesse”--terms that Du Bellay frequently used for Marguerite:

Vous pouvez bien, Madame, et ma Deesse,  
 Vous pouvez bien commander que je cesse  
 De vous hanter, de vous parler et voir,  
 Mais vous n'avez, et je n'ay le pouvoir  
 De commander à mes desirs en sorte  
 Que mon amour ne soit tousjours plus forte. (61-66)

---

<sup>144</sup> See Jean Dorat's poem at the beginning of the first edition of *L'Olive*, page 28 of Chapter 1.

The lover then concludes by saying that if the lady does not give him permission to proclaim his love, then she might as well condemn him to death. While Marguerite is not named in this elegy, so many elements are shared with sonnets from the *Regrets* that it seems plausible that it is directed at her. If this is the case, the elegy goes the furthest of any poem in describing the poet's relationship to Marguerite as a love relationship in the courtly tradition, of a sort reminiscent of Marot (Galand-Halland 84). Du Bellay portrays himself as a lover in pursuit, alternately happy in the presence of his lady and frozen in a private, hermetic hell when separated from her. He will not go so far as to importune the lady, however: he is prepared to retire to the woods alone, a hermit, or crawl under his tombstone if she doesn't acknowledge him. He dreams of winning her like Hercules wins the Princess Deianeira. In the end, however, he is not Hercules but a poet, and it is this *persona* that closes the collection.

Du Bellay addresses the last poem, "Hymne de la Surdit  ," to Ronsard. He opens modestly, saying that he would never dare to compare himself to his friend "Je ne suis pas, Ronsard, si pauvre de raison, / De vouloir faire    toy de moy comparaison." (1-2). If other people have considered them to be equals, Du Bellay claims that he does not:

Au reste, quoy que ceulx qui trop me favorisent,  
 Au pair de tes chansons les miennes autorisent,  
 Disant, comme tu s  ais, pour me mettre en avant,  
 Que l'un est plus facile et l'autre plus s  avant,  
 Si ma facilit   semble avoir quelque grace,  
 Si ne sois-je pourtant enfl   de telle audace,  
 De la contre-peser avec ta gravit  ,  
 Qui s  ait    la douceur mesler l'utilit  . (15-22)

It is possible that Marguerite is one of "ceulx qui trop me favorisent," since in sonnet 7 of the *Regrets* Du Bellay wrote about "la soeur du Roy, l'unique Marguerite, / Me faisant plus d'honneur que n'estoit mon merite, / De son bel   il divin mes vers favorisoit." In this case, she would have contributed to the opinion cited in the

“Hymne” that Du Bellay was Ronsard’s equal, but with a style both lighter and easier than Ronsard’s learned one. Du Bellay seems to embrace this characterization of himself as a lighter poet than Ronsard--perhaps the judgement of Marguerite herself, known as an arbiter of literary value--by writing a playful encomium of deafness, quite different from Ronsard’s more serious *Hymnes*.<sup>145</sup> Ronsard’s 1556 volume of these was dedicated to Marguerite and contained two pieces addressed to her--“Hymne de l’éternité” and “Hymne de Calays et de Zethés” (Py 33)--both laden with references to philosophy and classical mythology and much weightier to read than Du Bellay’s “Hymne de la surdité”.<sup>146</sup> The two poets nevertheless share some basic characteristics, as Du Bellay tells Ronsard:

Cette sainte fureur qui, pour suyvre tes pas,  
M’a tousjours tenu loing du populaire bas,  
Loing de l’ambition, et loing de l’avarice,  
Et loing d’oysiveté, des vices la nourrice,  
Aussi peu familiere aux soldats de Pallas,  
Comme elle est domestique aux prestres et prelatz. (9-14)

The closing *persona* of the collection depicts Du Bellay not as Hercules, but as a physically frail human and faithful soldier to “Pallas.” As proof of this fidelity, he includes at least five poems that are likely to refer to Marguerite in the thirty-eight poems of the *Jeux rustiques*. Before leaving for Rome she was his pillar of support, his “colonne seure/Où humblement s’asseure/Mon couraige et ma voix” (*Recueil*, “A tresillustre Princesse Madame Marguerite,” 16-18). Returning to court in 1558, she remains centrally important to his collections, dominating the ecstatic end of the *Regrets* and playfully, gallantly hidden in poems scattered throughout the middle of

---

<sup>145</sup> Michel de L’Hospital comments on Marguerite’s habit of listening to poetry and issuing judgements afterwards, as does Ronsard in his 1559 “Chant Pastoral A Tres-illustre et Vertueuse Princesse Madame Marguerite de France, Duchesse de Savoye” in which he laments Marguerite’s departure from France and wonders in her absence “Qui jugera de leurs chansons Françoises? / Qui donnera le prix aux mieux disans, / Et sauvera leurs vers des mesdisans?” (Cohen, 1:971).

<sup>146</sup> Py notes that the 1555 *Hymnes* were originally dedicated to Odet de Chatillon, but were later re-dedicated to Marguerite as well (34).

the *Jeux rustiques*. She is no longer hidden in the Latin *Poemata*, which open with a dedication to her and which contain several pieces in which she is explicitly named.

### *Poemata*<sup>147</sup>

In this collection, Du Bellay's Latin muse makes its offering to Marguerite, complementing the Italian form of his poems to her in the *Regrets* and the courtly French inspiration of the ones found in the *Jeux Rustiques*. It has been much remarked upon that Du Bellay, author of the 1549 *Déffence* and passionate promoter of the French language, eventually adopted Latin in a seeming rupture with the ideals he had expressed a decade earlier. Perrine Galand Hallyn offers a good summary of the critical discussion of this tension between Du Bellay's use of French and Latin (*Génie* 8) before asserting that in fact "une relecture de certains passages de la *Déffense* consacrés à la notion de "genie" poétique [...] permettra de suggérer que le passage au latin relève finalement d'un processus logique" (*Génie* 9). In addition to the poetic motivations for writing in Latin identified by Galand-Hallyn, there are political and pragmatic ones as well: writing in Latin would allow Du Bellay to reach a wider audience in Rome and possibly beyond, and it allowed him to carve a space in which he could shine unrivalled by Ronsard, who did not write in Latin (*Belle Romaine* 23, *Poemata* 23, "Jeux Intertextuels" 75). Unlike Galand-Hallyn, Demerson insists, however, on Du Bellay's nervousness about writing in Latin, his possible doubts about the quality of his Latin verse, and his anxiety about Ronsard's reaction to his abandonment of French (*Belle Romaine* 13-32). It is this nervousness that contributed, perhaps, to an unusually heavy protective apparatus at the beginning of the collection.

---

<sup>147</sup> All citations from the *Poemata* are taken from Genevieve Demerson's French translation of the Latin original in volume 7 of the STFM edition.

The *Poemata* opens with a reprint of a letter written in Latin by former chancellor François Olivier, followed by a dedicatory poem to Princess Marguerite. The letter is dated September 4, 1558 and is addressed to Du Bellay's close friend, the humanist Jean de Morel. It celebrates Du Bellay's poetry and asserts the sincere hope that the poet will be rewarded by fortune:

Je goûte de plus en plus les poèmes de du Bellay que j'ai relus trois ou quatre fois après ton départ. [...] Par un je ne sais quoi, l'auteur l'emporte peut-être même sur les Grecs et le Latins : de ceux qui écrivent dans le même genre, je n'en connais aucun que du Bellay ne surpasse, dont l'érudition soit aussi riche et variée, le goût aussi délicat. En effet, ceux qui promettent ou qui réalisent de semblables travaux n'ont pas encore réussi jusqu'à présent à offrir au lecteur cet éclat exceptionnel du style et cette grâce sans faiblesse de la langue française. Tu salueras bien l'auteur en mon nom. Je souhaite à un homme de ce talent une Fortune digne de lui, et assurément il deviendra célèbre même si elle ne s'y prête pas. Et s'il n'obtient rien de la Fortune, c'est elle qui se déconsidérera ou même se déshonorera aux yeux des hommes les plus éminents. (Translation Bellenger, *Ses 'Regrets' qu'il fit dans Rome*, 328)

Publishing this high praise at the beginning of the collection seems like a calculated effort to shape the reception of the four books of Latin poems that follow (*Elegiae*, *Varia Epigrammata*, *Amores*, *Tumuli*). The fact that the letter is written in Latin also serves as a reminder that the great humanist preferred to use Latin himself. Olivier asserts that Du Bellay equals or even bests Greek and Latin poets, and that his French style is exceptional. The closing comments on fortune and Du Bellay's merit of recognition implicitly criticize any eminent figures who do not reward the poet and extend him proper respect. The pressure on the reader to receive the collection as a masterpiece is reinforced by the fact that Jean de Morel, a distinguished humanist and friend of Marguerite, had shared this private letter from Olivier with Du Bellay and then made it publicly available as a prologue for the printed collection. That he did so

meant that he must have shared Olivier's enthusiastic opinion, and Morel thus serves in effect as a second endorser of the quality of Du Bellay's work.

After invoking the approval of these two powerful men--one a politician, one an intellectual--Du Bellay dedicates the collection to Marguerite in terms reminiscent of sonnet 7 of the *Regrets*:

Avoir plu à des princes est bien le comble de l'honneur : la première gloire de la lyre latine l'a dit dans ses vers. Moi j'ai quitté naguère les rivages de ma patrie et je tente le voyage d'Ausonie sans aucune assurance, mais si mes Camènes peu raffinées pouvaient te plaire, ô divinité, j'oserais croire que j'ai plu aux dieux du ciel. (32)

Although Horace may have asserted that writing for princes was "le comble de l'honneur," Du Bellay positions himself as a traveler, someone who has left his prince and his country to test his fortune. As such, he writes to a higher power than a prince, a "divinité," in hopes of pleasing her, just as he was able to impress both François Olivier and Jean de Morel. Although it was likely that the dedication was written after Rome when he was back in Paris, Du Bellay uses the present tense "je tente le voyage," to create the sense that he is beginning his exploration of "Ausonie." The full narration of the trip will follow. It is commonly observed that the *Regrets* are organized as an odyssey or travel narrative, exploring Rome, then relating the trip back to France, and finally describing Paris and the French court once Du Bellay returns. Olivier Millet has observed the same movement from Italy to France in the *Epigrammata*, and Galand-Hallyn notes that it is repeated in the *Elegiae* as well ("Jeux intertextuels" 92-93). Presenting the whole collection of *Poemata* (rather than one or two of its books) as a voyage in progress, beginning in the dedication, captures not only the specific trip that he took to Rome, but also the metaphorical voyage of Du Bellay's career--from France to Italy, from French to Latin, from Prince to Princess. His ambition to move beyond France and his native language was inspired

by his trip to Rome but would last beyond the four-year trip since he continued to write verses in Latin after his return to Paris. As Du Bellay was always prone to self-doubt and a reluctance to aim too high, he sought powerful support for his newfound ambition to widen his audience beyond the French court. While in the *Regrets* Du Bellay claimed that he wanted nothing in exchange for his poems except dispensation to praise the Princess, and in the *Jeux rustiques* he created a selfless persona who only wished to serve his lady, in this collection he will seek Marguerite's approval and protection more explicitly, undoubtedly due to the additional insecurities about writing in Latin identified by Genevieve Demerson.<sup>148</sup> Marguerite accordingly is referred to in three of the four sections that make up the *Poemata*, only absent from the *Amores*.

### Elegiae

The very first of the *Élégies* is addressed to Marguerite, titled "Pourquoi il a renoncé au français pour écrire en latin." The title suggests that the justification for the entire collection is addressed to her, a continuation of the conversation on language begun with ode number four in the 1549 *Recueil*, titled "A Madame Marguerite, d'écrire en sa langue." Opening the collection with this linguistic justification underscores Marguerite's role as a privileged interlocutor on literary topics. In the elegy, Marguerite is once more a "divinité" as she was in the dedication. She also becomes confused with France itself, and Du Bellay describes how she inspired him before setting out for Italy:

La France! Bien que nos rames abandonnent maintenant ses calmes  
eaux et affrontent les courants profonds de la mer latine, ce n'est pas de  
mon gré que mon bateau a glissé jusqu'ici sous le vent, ô ma divinité:

---

<sup>148</sup> For a discussion of these anxieties, see Demerson's chapter "Les obsessions linguistiques de Joachim Du Bellay" (13-19) in her 1996 collection *Joachim Du Bellay et la belle romaine*.

tu es pour mon génie et le port et la brise. Mais, tant que tes yeux  
semblables aux flammes des astres, tes yeux plus brillants que le  
flambeau d'Amycles, guidaient ma course sur l'azur des mers de ma  
patrie, tant que la funeste tempête ne secouait pas notre esquif [...]  
j'allais à pleine voile en toute sûreté (34)

The poem is written as if Du Bellay were in the middle of his trip to Rome, he seems to miss France already and claims that he didn't embark on the trip of his own volition. He is a passive traveler, almost unwilling, who is now facing deep, stormy challenges. He then compares his writing career to a sea voyage as well; Marguerite both protects and propels the ship of his inspiration, serving both as "le port et la brise." She was also a starry guide who helped him navigate his career: as long as he was close to her his writing progressed smoothly, confidently.

He contrasts this past productivity with his current position: "un astre hostile et des vents dévorants" have carried him abroad. He is beset with "monstres marins." There is no question of writing during this virtual shipwreck. He closes the elegy with a sailor's prayer:

Que s'il m'était permis de contempler encore en un ciel serein les  
astres qui, un temps, ont protégé mes voiles, alors, seulement,  
j'abandonnerais les flots et les vents d'Ausonie, je regagnerais les  
rivages des mers de la patrie : je les connais. Sauvé, je m'acquitterais  
de ce que j'ai promis, suspendant l'ex-voto consacré dans ton temple,  
divine Marguerite. (34)

Here he vows that if he could once again see Marguerite, he would leave Italy and return to France, presumably abandon Latin and return to writing in French. "Saved" from the stormy seas, he would make an offering to Marguerite, hang a portrait at her altar. Here once again we have the altar imagery used in the *Recueil*, the second *Olive*, and in the *Jeux*, with Marguerite serving as the poet's patron saint. As this elegy is written from the perspective of Italy, it is possible to wonder whether the seventeen sonnets at the end of the *Regrets*, written after the return to France, represent this "ex-voto" that Du Bellay promises. Strikingly, however, the content of the elegy does not

completely live up to its title: there is no concrete explanation of why Du Bellay began writing in Latin, even though this is what the title promises. The change in language is suggested to be the result of the shipwreck his life has become, a reaction to circumstances beyond his control that took him to Italy. The poet's persona is endowed with little if any agency, whereas Marguerite is granted divine powers of inspiration and protection.<sup>149</sup> A fuller explanation of the decision to write in Latin only comes later in Elegy 7, "Regret de la patrie," which is not addressed to any individual. It comes after two elegies to friends in Paris--Jean de Morel and Ronsard--in which Du Bellay imagines them to live in enviably supportive settings quite different from Du Bellay's own. Not coincidentally, Du Bellay wrote sonnets to each of them in the *Regrets* that alluded to his choice to write in Latin, and the conversation is continued here.

The first of the two elegies to friends, number 5, is titled "Recommandation de la vie calme. A Jean Morel d'Embrun." Its content can be compared to assertions that Du Bellay made about Morel's family life in the preface to the 1552 *Oeuvres*. The first lines recall those of the famous sonnet 31 of the *Regrets*:<sup>150</sup>

Heureux celui qui vit satisfait du lopin paternel, et qui ne recherche pas toujours avidement les richesses qui font trembler. (1-3)

This person is clearly equated with Morel, who is described in the following lines as having "les mains pures," guided by "sagesse," and whose "règle de vie est de ne jamais te confier au hazard douteux, de ne pas remettre à la Fortune la direction de tes affaires." The implication of this portrait is that Du Bellay's lot is quite different: unlike the Morel figure, he has left his homeland, entered into secretarial and worldly

---

<sup>149</sup> These roles are similar to those assigned in sonnet 180 of the *Regrets* where Marguerite is a virile presence who inspires a passive Du Bellay to action. See discussion pp.127-28 of this chapter.

<sup>150</sup> The first quatrain of Sonnet 31 contains the following lines: "Heureux qui, comme Ulysse, a fait un beau voyage [...] Et puis est retourné [...] Vivre entre ses parents le reste de son aage!"

functions, and thrown himself to Fortune. In contrast to this, Morel is in a position of relative stability:

Exactement comme celui qui, du calme de la côte, regarde de loin une poupe ballotée sur toute la surface de l'Océan, ou celui qui, en toute sûreté, regarde la flamme du haut d'une guette, ou la course de l'eau furieuse du sommet d'un rocher. (23-27)

Du Bellay's life is once again suggested to be dangerous or stormy--attacked by a raging fire or overcome by white water rapids. As in the 1552 preface, he wistfully alludes to Morel's charming children and virtuous wife, then to his house, which in fact harbors more than the nuclear family unit:

De fait ta maison est largement ouverte aux Muses : il en témoigne lui-même celui qui, sur sa lyre d'or, rythme ses savants poèmes, Dorat, dont, les camènes latines – et aussi bien les grecques – égalent notre temps à l'antiquité. Il est de même du grave Ronsard (un grand protecteur lui donne la sécurité et, enfin, l'aide à se dégager d'une jalousie invétérée). (31-36)

Morel is surrounded both by family and a literary coterie that includes Du Bellay's former teacher, Dorat, and poets such as Ronsard. Explicit mention is made of Dorat's Latin and Greek verse. The matter of fact tone makes it seem natural that Dorat would write in those languages, although Du Bellay apparently feels the need to apologize and explain when he himself writes in Latin, undoubtedly because he had so vehemently promoted the use of French rather than Latin in the *Deffence et Illustration*. In sonnet 18 of the *Regrets*, for example, Du Bellay imagines Morel's reaction to his life in Rome and his decision to write in Latin:

Mon Dieu (ce diras tu) quel miracle est-ce cy,  
Que de veoir, Dubellay se mesler du mesnage,  
Et composer des vers en un autre langage!  
Les loups, et les aigneaux s'accordent tout ainsi. (48)

The lack of drama surrounding Dorat's choice to write in Greek and Latin is perhaps what Du Bellay would wish in his own case--that his friends and mentors could accept

his Latin verse as a natural part of his poetic production. He then lists Ronsard as a frequent visitor to Morel's household and says that he has a powerful protector, one whom Demerson identifies as Michel de l'Hospital. The fact that Ronsard has a powerful protector seems to have little to do with the topic at hand, which is the literary coterie that frequents Morel's house, except that L'Hospital also was known for his Latin poetry and was a member of Marguerite's household as well. Perhaps alluding to him here, after mentioning Dorat's poetry in Greek and Latin, is a way to reinforce the message that powerful men--both intellectuals and politicians to whom Ronsard and his generation are in debt--had chosen to write in Latin long before Du Bellay did.<sup>151</sup> This aligns Du Bellay with them and justifies his use of a language other than French, although it brings him no feeling of comfort while in Rome. He closes by insisting on how Morel's good fortune in family and friends contrasts with his own misery:

[...] comme les dieux t'ont donné ce qui peut suffire à un homme sage et sain, personne ne te jalouse, et toi, qui plais aux hommes de rang élevé et aux humbles, tu peux être l'égal des rois. (58)

Morel is both wise and happy, fully integrated into society both grand and humble, making him "l'égal des rois." Du Bellay on the other hand presents his own situation in a much different light as he closes by lamenting "Pauvre de moi! Dans mon exil je suis maintenant poussé loin des rivages de mon pays, et il m'est toujours refusé de jouir d'une vie si douce" (58). He is once again passive--exiled and prevented from happiness just as in the first elegy to Marguerite it was not "de mon gré que mon bateau a glissé jusqu'ici sous le vent." He is buffeted by ill fortune, apparently with few resources at his disposal.

---

<sup>151</sup> The Latin letter from François Olivier that opens the collection (see page 167) underscores this message as well.

In the next elegy “A P. de Ronsard, prince de la lyre française,” Du Bellay draws the same contrast between Ronsard’s fortune and his own. Morel was the equal of kings, and here Ronsard is the prince of poetry, titles that Du Bellay uses to create an alternate court of poets and scholars from which he is apparently just as excluded as from the court of the king of France. He acknowledges Ronsard’s status, but speaks of their friendship in the past tense:

Ronsard, toi qui occupes – et c’est raison – la plus grande place dans la troupe d’Aonie, toi qui naguère étais la moitié de mon âme [...] maintenant, la mère des Muses, maintenant ton prince invincible te retiennent : en ce lieu la bouche du savant Carle, ton ami, fait retentir tes vers [...]. C’est lui qui te concilie les grands et notre puissant roi: la dévorante envie ne blesse plus tes vers. (58)

The two friends, who used to be as close as two halves of the same person, are no longer equals. They no longer have the same relation to the king: Ronsard has pride of possession, writing for “[s]on prince,” whereas in the *Regrets* Du Bellay claimed that the king belonged to them both when he wrote that Ronsard enjoyed “la sainte faveur de ton Prince et du mien” (s. 8). Ronsard enjoys the favor of another powerful courtier as well, Carle, who is said to facilitate his career at court.<sup>152</sup> While Ronsard enjoys this privileged status, Du Bellay’s own condition is quite different: “Nous, malheureux, pendant ce temps, ballotté dans les Austers dévorant [...] nous fuyons la pauvreté, mais nous n’échappons pas au souci qui, de jour et de nuit, nous suit sur terre et nous poursuit sur mer” (60). The constant race against poverty inhibits his writing: “Maintenant, je ne sais quel marasme engourdit mon esprit, et une torpeur léthéenne accable mes yeux” (60). Ronsard, on the other hand, is able to write successfully in many different styles:

Que tu composes des rythmes bacchiques ou des vers rustiques, la Grâce est toujours sur les lèvres de Ronsard. Je parle des petites

---

<sup>152</sup> Aris and Joukovsky offer this note on Carle: “Lancelot de Carle, prélat et poète français (1500-1568). Cet érudit a fait des traductions d’Homère et d’Héliodore, et composé des poèmes sacrés (1561-1562). Il a protégé les poètes de la Pléiade (2: 341).”

choses, mais déjà toute la Cour, dans la joie, fait sonner le nom de ton Francus, toute la France chante Francus. Ici aussi [...] retentit l'orgueilleuse renommée de ta Franciade. (62)

News of Ronsard's never-to-be-completed epic has already reached Rome, where it is celebrated just as it is at the French court. Where in the *Regrets* Du Bellay occasionally seems to tease Ronsard about the fanfare his "Franciade" received long before any verses were even published, here he simply praises the intent of the project and humbly moves on.

After two elegies in which he paints himself as a victim of misfortune in comparison to Morel and Ronsard, he clarifies the exact nature of his distress in elegy 7, "Regret de la patrie." Many scholars, particularly Richard Cooper, have questioned whether Du Bellay was really as poor as the persona he created in his poetry. In this elegy, he acknowledges that his position is in fact relatively privileged, and that it is the distance from home that causes the worst of his suffering:

Mais dira-t-on, qu'y a-t-il de plus brillant que la Cour de Rome, et quel lieu au monde est plus beau? Rome est la patrie du monde, et celui qui demeure dans les remparts de l'altière Rome passe sa vie, lui aussi, sur un sol qui lui appartient. Peut-être il m'est doux, à moi aussi, de vivre à Rome (ce n'est pas, d'ordinaire, le lot de n'importe quel étranger): mon oncle paternel tient une place importante dans le chœur aonien. Il a la bonté de faire valoir mes Camènes, de veiller sur elles, et d'écarter de notre foyer la pauvreté. Mais quand il me souvient que j'ai abandonné mes études d'autrefois, mes compagnons d'autrefois, et ma chère maison [...] alors, chaque fois, l'image de la patrie s'impose à moi ; alors chaque fois, les soucis se renouvellent pour me torturer. Rien ne nous manque? Tout pourtant, nous manque, et notre malheur est de ne pouvoir jouir d'un monde familier [...]. (64)

Du Bellay admits that in fact he enjoys a decent standard of living in Rome, under the protection of his uncle who supports both his poetry and his livelihood. His distress is psychological, not material: he misses the community he had in France, his friends, his studies. What he envies Morel is his tight family and literary coterie that includes friends like Dorat and Ronsard. What he envies Ronsard is his complete insertion in a

familiar milieu where he benefits from the “bienveillance des peuples et des rois”

(60). This milieu used to be Du Bellay’s own, and he returns to the imagery used in sonnet 7 of the *Regrets* when he waxes nostalgic:

Quand nos ouvrages circulaient dans la foule des courtisans, et que nos poésies s’usaient entre leurs mains, et quand la sœur du roi, elle, elle, cette vierge illustre, donnait à nos modestes vers une sainte inspiration, Marguerite, la sœur de notre invincible roi, elle qui, par sa vertu d’or, est déesse au milieu des mortels, alors il m’a été permis d’accueillir totalement Phébus, qui fécondait mon esprit [...]. (66)

These are sentiments that Du Bellay has expressed elsewhere; he misses having an established audience for his poetry, and despite his uncle’s patronage he particularly misses the inspiration that Marguerite provided him. He writes at more length about the choice to adopt Latin while in Rome, comparing himself to Ovid:

Maintenant, nous sommes misérablement ballotés, en aveugle, sur des ondes inconnues, et nous confions notre voile aux flots latins. Le Latium le demande, c’est là le service dû à la langue romaine, lui-même le Génie du lieu m’y a forcé. Ainsi, jadis, le poète qui donna les préceptes du tendre Amour, quand il vivait au loin, exilé du sol de sa patrie, composa – sans honte – des vers en langue barbare au son d’une cithare étrangère, les préférant aux Camènes latines. La poésie se réjouit de l’intérêt des princes et de l’applaudissement du théâtre : qui plaît à peu de gens se déplaît à soi-même. (69-80)

When Ovid was forced into exile, he wrote “without shame” in the local language.

Similarly overcome by the genius of his place of “exile,” Du Bellay defines poetry as a social act, built between a poet and his audience. The decision to write in Latin is associated with a change in place, a change in audience. He doesn’t write in Italian, however, and doesn’t seek a popular Roman audience. He writes rather for his uncle’s circle and educated international elites, for diplomats and Vatican officials. The explanation is similar to sonnet 10 of the *Regrets*, which addresses Ronsard:

Ce n’est le fleuve Thusque au superbe rivage,  
Ce n’est l’air des Latins ny le mont Palatin  
Qui ores (mon Ronsard) me fait parler Latin,  
Changeant à l’étranger mon naturel langage :

C'est l'ennuy de me voir trois ans et d'avantage,  
Ainsi qu'un Prométhé, cloué sur l'Aventin,  
Où l'espoir miserable et mon cruel destin,  
Non le joug amoureux ne detient en servage.

Et quoy (Ronsard) et quoy, si au bord estrange  
Ovide osa sa langue en barbare changer  
Afin d'estre entendu, qui me pourra reprendre

D'un change plus heureux? nul, puis que le François,  
Quoy qu'au Grec et Romain egalé tu te sois,  
Au rivage Latin ne se peult faire entendre.

In the sonnet form, Du Bellay is more spirited in his defense of the use of Latin, less passive than he is in the *Poemata*. Boredom, irritation, the desire to be understood, and the Ovidian model are given as irreproachable reasons for his choice. Although this explanation would have been natural to include in his first elegy to Marguerite “Pourquoi il a renoncé au français pour écrire en latin,” he there avoids mentioning any desire to seek an audience other than his “divinité,” and he makes it seem as if his use of Latin were something fateful, beyond his control. His helplessness there is in sharp contrast to the powers attributed to Marguerite. His persona in subsequent elegies to Morel and Ronsard is also one who has lost inspiration along with control over his life. He is quite simply lost and alone and in need of protection. Elegy 7 reads as a more honest correction of this portrait, acknowledging resources at his disposal and identifying his distress as psychological rather than material. In elegiac mode the poet's persona is nonetheless weaker than in sonnet mode; it is one that inspires pity rather than admiration. In either genre questions about language are linked to ongoing conversations with Marguerite, Ronsard, and Jean de Morel, and the choice to write in Latin brings into relief Du Bellay's understanding of poetry as a social medium that is dependent on human relationships and the ability to be “entendu”. He particularly wishes to be understood and appreciated by Marguerite, and towards this end he highlights his single status, stymied writing life and social isolation by contrasting

them to Morel's family life and house filled with literati, and to Ronsard's prolific pen and powerful allies at court. In the *Regrets*, invigorated by his return to France, Du Bellay went on the offensive in the concluding sequence to the *grands* and showed himself to be capable of writing multiple sonnets in honor of Marguerite. He confidently promised to write even more in sonnet 189. In the *Jeux rustiques*, he was similarly confident as he assumed the role of gallant lover, tease and faithful servant. In the Latin elegies, however, he is a shipwrecked sailor exploring new territory, desperately awaiting rescue from the princess. Just as her unexpected, nearly divine encouragement in 1549 inspired a younger Du Bellay to keep writing and publish the *Recueil*, Du Bellay seems to feel that her approval of his new venture into Latin would similarly keep him afloat and buoy his chances at court.

### *Epigrammata*

The tone becomes lighter in the following section of epigrams, a form from which, unlike the elegy, “le pathétique est [...] exclu” (Millet 570). The poet is no longer traveling; he seems to be writing after his return to France, which may explain the more confident mood. Marguerite appears in only two of the sixty-seven short pieces, and rather than linger on any one topic or dedicatee at length, Du Bellay employs “la plus grande diversité dans la manière de produire la variété” (Millet 583). Although she has a limited presence in this section, Marguerite is nonetheless credited with inspiring the book in epigram 6 “Sur son livre, qu’il va faire paraître sans le nom de l’auteur.” Here Du Bellay plays with the idea of name and renown, with the role of author and patron:

Va mon livre, va sans nom ; porte notre renom jusqu’aux astres, et  
grâce à notre renom fais-toi un nom. Un nom, tu en auras un à coup sûr  
si tu es digne de renom. Si ce n’est pas le cas, tu seras en sûreté si l’on

ignore ton nom. Du génie, des forces, la vierge royale t'en accorde ;  
elle qui t'a donné du génie, te donnera elle-même la garantie de son  
nom. (84)

At first Du Bellay seems modest, or fearful, about signing his name to the work and seems to want to launch it anonymously and let the quality of the poems speak for itself. But then he says that since Marguerite inspired it, she will guarantee its success with her own name--the "beau nom" that Du Bellay vowed to celebrate in the *Regrets*. This suggests that Marguerite has answered the distant appeals that Du Bellay sent from Rome in the "Elegiae," and that upon his return she has provided the protection he sought during his stormy travels, along with approval of his Latin verse.

After epigram 6, she appears once more in epigram 50, which can be compared to sonnet 174 of the *Regrets* (see earlier discussion of this poem beginning on page 114 of this chapter). Once again, Du Bellay describes his time in Rome as a hell in which he was deprived of a spiritual life, imprisoned in his body. Now that he is reunited with Marguerite he is enflamed by her radiance, which brings a "bonheur élyséen" analogous to that described in sonnet 174:

Enfermé, miserable, au fond de l'Orcus corporel (cet Orcus-là, c'était d'être longtemps privé de la lumière de ton soleil, ô déesse), dans une aveugle prison, tout au long de quatre ans, j'ai subi le châtement de toutes les malignités que les âmes, pauvrettes, se suscitent du fait du fardeau corporel de leurs membres.

Mais, maintenant, je suis libéré d'une aussi pénible prison : la lumière de ton soleil ô déesse, ce feu de l'éther est tout ce qui me reste après que le fardeau de mon corps a été dès longtemps consumé, et que je l'ai enfin déposé, avec le secours des dieux. Ainsi, maintenant, je jouis d'un bonheur élyséen sous tes auspices : puisse-je en jouir toujours et n'avoir aucune idée de sortir d'ici. (1-15)

Du Bellay says that he has been liberated from the prison of his body, relieved of its burden. In an earlier epigram to his friend Gordes he described this burden in terms of poor health and the resulting physical changes that prevented him from enjoying the pleasure of drink or love: "Voilà la cause de mes cheveux blancs et de ma vieillesse

premature” (ép. 34:104). He also wrote to Jean de Morel about his deafness and the buzzing in his ears, comparing himself to a mountain where the wind whistles around the heights. The epigrams thus are more physical than the sonnets of the *Regrets*, and the body and its failings are here an acceptable topic. In this context, it is possible to understand Du Bellay’s description of being released from the burdens of his body as a decision to embrace and accept his inability to experience physical enjoyment-- whether auditory, gustatory, or sexual. He is left with his ideals, the glow of Marguerite’s sun “ce feu de l’*éther*.” This is suggested to be a greater good, a happiness that exists on a higher plane than any enjoyments that might speak to the body. Du Bellay nonetheless retains the anxiety he expressed in the *Regrets* about being forgotten or ignored. He closes by soliciting continued attention from the princess:

Mais toi, de peur que je ne reste assoupi, submergé au fond du fleuve élyséen, souviens-toi de ton poète, je t’en prie, ô déesse, de peur que l’amour de l’autre époque ne lui revienne, et qu’il ne veuille être à nouveau enfermé, misérable, au fond de l’Orcus corporel. (16-20)

This idea was expressed in mythological terms in the *Regrets*, where Marguerite was Lethe, goddess of the underworld, and Du Bellay worried that she would make his “esprit” drink from the river of forgetting:

Donques, de l’eau d’oubly ne l’abbeuvez Madame,  
De peur qu’en la beuvant nouveau desir l’enflamme,  
De retourner encor dans l’enfer de son corps. (s.174, 12-14)

The *Regrets* were written in a higher register: the *Epigrammata* are more familiar, direct, and down to earth.<sup>153</sup> Marguerite is still a goddess, but the myth is less explicit and the poet’s body is more present than his “esprit,” even if only mentioned as a

---

<sup>153</sup> Perrine Galand-Hallyn notes that “[...] la tonalité des pièces latines se révèle souvent plus libre, plus détaillée, plus intime que celle des œuvres françaises. [...] En effet, la poésie latine de l’humanisme européen, comme l’a montré Paul van Tieghem, se caractérise par sa proximité avec la réalité quotidienne, son lyrisme familier, sa tendance à l’autobiographie, à la composition de circonstances” (*Génie* 12-13).

burden of the past. The occasional, direct nature of the epigrams makes them an unlikely form for Du Bellay to use with high royalty such as the king and Marguerite. Perhaps for this reason he adapts sonnets written for the royal siblings in the *Regrets* into epigrams.<sup>154</sup> Since he cannot use the same familiar tone that he uses with Morel and Gordes in their epigrams (nor the openly caustic tone he adopts in epigram 31 to Ronsard, where he complains of Ronsard's silence during his time in Rome, nor the heavy negativity of epigram 61 to Dorat, in which he complains about the lawsuits that awaited him in France and the difficult time he has had since his return), he adapts the more refined content of sonnets to epigrams and includes Marguerite and the king as markers of his desired connection to them, perhaps for their own entertainment, or as a means to control the reception of the collection, to protect it from criticism. They may even have a component of Queneau's *Exercices de Style*, showing the poet's virtuosity at treating the same topic in different forms. The inclusion of epigrams to Marguerite in this collection suggests that she does participate in Du Bellay's daily reality along with figures like Morel, Ronsard, and Gordes, but as a respected patron and not as a confidante for his physical or legal troubles. At least in writing, Du Bellay's personal tribulations and jokes at the expense of other people are topics reserved for other dedicatees.

### **Tumuli**

Further evidence of the role that Marguerite played in Du Bellay's life can be found in the *Tumuli*, the fourth and last book of the *Poemata*. She does not figure at all in the third book, the *Amores*, in which Du Bellay relates his supposed love affair with the

---

<sup>154</sup> Bellenger notes that the sonnet and epigram were frequently seen to be related in the sixteenth-century, and she cites Thomas Sébillet's *Art poétique François*: "Sonnet n'est autre chose que le parfait epigramme de l'Italien, comme le dizain du François. [...] La matière de l'epigramme et la matière du Sonnet sont toutes unes, fort que la matière facécieuse est repugnante à la gravité du sonnet, qui reçoit plus proprement affections et passions graves" ("Du Bellay Satirique" 47).

Roman woman Faustina.<sup>155</sup> The *Tumuli*, a collection of epitaphs that are mostly organized chronologically, contains two pieces in remembrance of “La très noble dame de Brissac” who had served as “gouvernante” to the children of François 1er.

Marguerite apparently commissioned the poems in her grief:

Elle, la royale Marguerite, ne manquait pas de l’honorer comme une mère et de l’appeler mère, et maintenant elle gémit comme si une mère lui avait été enlevée. Ainsi donc, c’est comme à la meilleure des mères qu’elle a voué ce tombeau, ce mémorial de son chagrin, puisque rien d’autre n’est permis, puisqu’elle ne peut s’acquitter par rien de mieux envers la défunte, et elle, la meilleure des princesses, cette vierge illustre, pleure sur sa chère Madame de Brissac. (Tum. 35 a, 212)

The commission of a burial poem is said to be the best memorial possible for a loved one who has died.<sup>156</sup> Marguerite loved her governess as a mother, having lost her own very early. The choice of Du Bellay to write commemorative poems for someone so close to the Princess indicates the regard that she had for him and proof of their contact after his return from Rome. He follows the epitaph to Madame de Brissac with a short one titled “La même:”

Grande mere, puissante dame, elle est un nouvel ornement au ciel, Madame de Brissac qui est ensevelie ici dans la terre. Heureuse est-elle : son destin a été d’être la mère de Brissac et de susciter par sa mort les gémissements de Marguerite elle-même ! (212)

Du Bellay stops short of calling Madame de Brissac an “astre,” as he described Marguerite de Navarre in his epitaph to her and as he frequently describes Marguerite. It is glory enough for her to be mourned by the princess, sign of an enviable intimacy for the poet.

---

<sup>155</sup> I have not found any evidence that could link Faustina to Marguerite.

<sup>156</sup> This depiction of the relationship between Marguerite and Madame de Brissac is confirmed by Michel de L’Hospital, who wrote an elegy for the latter after her death. He wrote “Chargée d’abord de veiller sur une princesse auguste, elle devint ensuite sa compagne fidèle et inséparable; elle fut la confidente de ses peines secrètes, de ses chagrins, et l’avis de la gouvernante précéda constamment les résolutions de l’élève. [...] Aussi son abord grave et affable la faisait appeler la *seconde mère de nos princes*” (*Poésies complètes* 238). L’Hospital does not mention whether Marguerite commissioned the elegy that he wrote for Madame de Brissac.

Du Bellay closes the *Tumuli* with his own epitaph, in which he stresses his family name, his identity as a poet, and his own basic goodness:

Né d'une illustre race, d'une antique maison (mon nom peut suffire à te le montrer), je suis enseveli dans cette urne, passant. Je suis Du Bellay, un poète. Déjà tu me connais suffisamment, selon moi. Si j'ai été un bon poète, cela, mes vers auront suffi à te le révéler. Voici tout ce que je pourrais dire, passant, à mon sujet : j'ai été un homme de bien, et je n'ai pas blessé les hommes de bien. Si toi-même tu es un homme de bien, garde-toi de blesser mes mânes. (218)

As Geneviève Demerson notes, Du Bellay “était fier de sa race” (340), and insists here on his connection to an illustrious family even if he is from a lesser branch. The epitaph makes no allusion to his training as a lawyer, even though it is this training that may have led to his employment by Cardinal Du Bellay in Rome. He certainly continued to draw on this training after his return to France, when he became embroiled in legal battles with his cousin Eustache. Yet the epitaph makes no mention of these administrative and legal competencies that occupied so much of his life: he is described simply as a poet and he considers that his verses can stand for themselves.

Du Bellay has already referred to himself as a ghost in sonnet 174 of the *Regrets* and the similar epigram 50. As he described it, his time in Rome was a descent into hell, at which point some part of him died. Upon his return to France he is the happiest of “esprits,” and considers that he has ascended to the elysian fields under Marguerite’s auspices. Considering that in his first Latin elegy, the first poem of the whole collection, he promised that he would abandon Latin poetry for French if he were granted the chance to join Marguerite again in his homeland, this epitaph seems to make good on that promise and bury Du Bellay’s Latin self within the volume, perhaps along with his entire earlier career. After publishing four volumes quickly and staging his 1558 return to court, Du Bellay seems ready to draw a line on the past and start fresh in 1559. The 1558 collections contained many new impulses at

once, of which Marguerite was a unifying element. The *Regrets* were an entirely new sort of sonnet sequence, and they closed with impressive encomia to Marguerite. The *Jeux rustiques* presented unusually playful poems designed to entertain a courtly audience, many of which appear to celebrate Marguerite's effect on the poet as a coming of spring, a new lease on life. The *Poemata* experiment with Latin forms and place Marguerite at the beginning of the collection as a protector: his most faithful patron since 1549 shepherds a collection that seeks new audiences beyond the French court. She is in fact portrayed as the source of his new poetry: in epigram 6 she is credited as the "genie" behind the book, and in the *Tumuli* Du Bellay shows that she commissions important poems from him in Latin. She is simultaneously the "brise" behind his sails, commissioning and inspiring new verse, and his "port" after a long voyage, sheltering him from the difficulties of these endeavors and potential criticism from other poets, courtiers, and a reading public.

When the epitaph proclaims the author to be not only a noble poet but "un homme de bien," Demerson says "il parle de la pureté de son âme, indispensable, du reste, au vrai poète" (340). His goodness contributes to his poetry, and he also claims that he has never sought to harm any other person of quality. He closes with a warning, however, to any reader--any good person passing by his grave--that they be careful not to anger his immortal soul. This defensive statement does not specify the consequence for the person who dares to "blesser mes mânes," but one possibility can be inferred from epigram 31 to Ronsard, in which Du Bellay complains bitterly that Ronsard has not written to him during his years in Rome. He concludes:

Est-ce ainsi que se souvient de nous le bon compagnon qui m'aimait plus que mes yeux, ou que toute chose qu'on puisse aimer plus que ses yeux ? Mais à lui, puisqu'il s'obstine à se taire et ne se souvient plus de son compagnon, emportez de ma part ce message : désormais, plus d'hendécasyllabes de moi, mais qu'il attende plutôt – car ma Muse est furieuse – des vers plus cruels que ceux d'Archiloque. (100)

The intent is clear: celebratory “hendécasyllabes” will be traded for satire in the style of Archilochus. The same satiric weapon may be turned on all others who dare disturb the “mânes” of this “esprit” who has returned to court. Despite his insecurities, his complaints of having aged and his fears of being forgotten, he simultaneously seems newly invulnerable after the staged protections of the *Poemata*. He portrays himself as a flaming ether with something to say and someone to publish it (Fédéric Morel), and a princess to protect him along the way.<sup>157</sup> The poems threading through the *Regrets*, the *Jeux* and the *Poemata* form a garland to decorate Marguerite’s altar and celebrate Du Bellay’s return to his poetic origins. If in *L’Olive* Du Bellay offered Marguerite “poétiques fleurs” in “plus de cent couleurs,” here he seems to offer them in thousands of colors and inspirations, a true cornucopia of diverse genres and traditions: Italian, French, and Latin. In the *Regrets* he promised to write even more poems for her, and he fulfills this promise in the following year.

### **1559 Poems to Marguerite**

Du Bellay must have promised further poems well before Marguerite’s marriage to Emmanuel-Philibert of Savoy was arranged in the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis.<sup>158</sup> If he had known in 1558 that in 1559 he would be writing verse in honor of a union that would take Marguerite far from the French court, he would not have sounded so exultant: a letter to Jean de Morel after Marguerite’s wedding documents Du Bellay’s deep depression at her departure from France in late 1559.<sup>159</sup> Leading up to this event, Du Bellay wrote “Inscriptions” for a tournament that was organized in June 1559 to honor the double wedding that resulted from the treaty.<sup>160</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup> See Florence Bonifay’s recent article “Du Bellay et la publication de ses oeuvres” for a discussion of his relationship with publisher Fédéric Morel.

<sup>158</sup> Henri Chamard says that this negotiation occurred in February or March of 1559 (5: 399).

<sup>159</sup> See pages 197-198 for discussion of this letter.

<sup>160</sup> Marguerite to Emmanuel-Philibert and Elisabeth, daughter of Henri II, to Philip II, king of Spain.

Du Bellay also wrote a wedding poem titled “Epithalame” that was to be performed at Marguerite’s wedding feast in July. The feast was cancelled due to Henri II’s fatal injury in the preceding tournament, but the poem and the inscriptions both were published later in 1559. These commissioned pieces reflect Du Bellay’s privileged relationship to Marguerite and paint a consistent portrait of a woman who is wise, beautiful, humble and sweet but at the same time a fierce judge, somewhat frighteningly chaste and virtuous. Du Bellay’s emotion at the marriage is also apparent in these pieces, but in more controlled terms than in the personal letter he would later write to Morel. Both the “Inscriptions” and the “Epithalame” offer evidence of Du Bellay’s new ties to court in 1559 and his ambition to impress this audience: the royal family and the increasingly powerful Guise clan have an extensive presence. Rather than being the center of these pieces, Marguerite is only one figure among many powerful people at court. In this sense Du Bellay shows himself to be a careful poet for public occasions, aware of the political implications of the festive activities and the broad representational requirements of such an event.

**Inscriptions**<sup>161</sup>

Du Bellay wrote twelve emblems or “inscriptions” for the June 15 tournament—eleven are to individuals, and the twelfth is addressed to two brothers together: François, duc de Guise, and Charles, cardinal de Lorraine. Each of the twelve inscriptions is composed of three individual quatrains of ten syllables each with the same rhyme scheme: two lines that end in a feminine rhyme embrace two lines that have a masculine rhyme. Each quatrain is numbered and could stand alone, with the result that each person effectively receives three separate mottos. They are ordered by

---

<sup>161</sup> All citations from the *Inscriptions* are taken from Du Bellay: Œuvres poétiques, ed. Henri Chamard, vol. 6 (Paris : Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1931).

status: the first addressee is Henry II, followed by Catherine de Médicis, Phillippe II of Spain and his new bride Elisabeth of France, the future François II and his wife Marie Stuart, and then Emmanuel-Philibert of Savoy and Marguerite. They are followed by the Duke of Lorraine and his wife Claude, daughter of Henri II, then Charles' widowed mother, and then Charles' two brothers in the final inscription already mentioned. In this configuration, the Guise family is clearly the second most powerful after the Valois clan.<sup>162</sup>

As a point of comparison, it is helpful to examine inscriptions written by Ronsard for the same event. He wrote to all the same people with the exception of Elisabeth of France, the new wife of Philip II, whom he seems to have forgotten. Besides leaving out this one member of the family, Ronsard also wrote varying numbers of quatrains for different people: Henri II and Catherine only received one quatrain each, whereas Philip II and the *dauphin* François received two quatrains each and Marguerite and Marie Stuart each received three. The rhyme schemes also differed from piece to piece. In contrast to Ronsard's irregular distribution of verses and seemingly careless omission of any emblem for Elisabeth of France, Du Bellay once again displays a cautious and egalitarian sensibility. He is careful to give each person his or her due: each spouse in a couple is symmetrically acknowledged, and each person receives exactly the same number of verses, written with the same rhyme scheme.

There is some expression of individuality in the characteristics cited in each of the poems: Henri II is celebrated for bringing peace to France via the treaty of Cateau

---

<sup>162</sup> Yvonne Bellenger says that in the pieces that Du Bellay writes at the end of his life "ce seront les Guises qui seront ouvertement courtisés" ("Les Dernières années" 207-08). Their circle includes their niece Marie Stuart and their ally Jean d'Avanson, and it excludes the disgraced Cardinal Du Bellay and Anne de Montmorency, who at this time also had rancorous relations with Du Bellay due to his attempt to appropriate the poet's family property.

Cambrésis whereas Catherine is celebrated for her fertility and numerous offspring. Philip II did not seem to suggest much to Du Bellay, who only says that he is a fitting son to Charles Quint. Elisabeth is praised for bringing peace to France through her marriage, François II is distinguished by his lineage, and Marie Stuart by her beauty.

The three inscriptions for the Duke of Savoy immediately precede those for Marguerite. There is an allusion to his military victories and the restoration of his Savoy properties that had been lost to his family before the treaty, but he is mostly celebrated for his marriage to Marguerite. The first quatrain says that this marriage is the most just and illustrious reward that the Duke could procure for his prowess on the battlefield.<sup>163</sup> The second quatrain suggests what each spouse brings to the union and that the combination assures the Duke's immortal reputation:

Mars l'a nourry au milieu des allarmes,  
Pallas en elle a monsté son sçavoir.  
Celuy qui veult gloire immortelle avoir,  
Doit assembler les lettres & les armes. (5-8)

Emmanuel-Philibert received a military education in battle, whereas Marguerite, "Pallas," has a calm and calculated wisdom. These two characteristics are a powerful combination. Du Bellay suggests that they are what allowed the Duke to reclaim his territory, just as Ulysses was able to regain his homeland with the help of Pallas

Athena:

Ainsi après une cruelle guerre,  
Le sage Grec par les flots estrangers,  
Ayant Pallas pour guide en ses dangers,  
Recouvre en fin sa paternelle terre. (9-12)

---

<sup>163</sup> The first quatrain reads "Pour son renom rendre cler & insigne, / Il n'eust sceu mieux sa valeur esprouver, / Et si n'eust peu, au ciel mesme, trouver / De sa vertu recompense plus digne." Where Du Bellay speaks of a "digne recompense," Ronsard describes the marriage as a rich win, or a bestowing of treasure on Emmanuel-Philibert: "Alcide acquist loüange non petite / D'avoir gagné les riches pommes d'or: / Ayant acquis la belle MARGUERITE, / Tu as tout seul du monde le tresor" (Cohen 2: 871).

This description of Emmanuel-Philibert as Ulysses returning to his home port thanks to the goddess' guidance is strikingly similar to the way that Du Bellay described his return to France after Rome: Marguerite was his "port," his sheltering goddess whose protection allowed him to reenter France with the promise to abandon Latin verse once and for all. Du Bellay seems to imagine Emmanuel Philibert's relation to Marguerite in terms of his own relation to her.<sup>164</sup>

In the "Inscription" dedicated to the princess herself, she is portrayed as the goddess Pallas Athena, whose fierce shield of honor protects an interior sweetness:

L'honneur luy sert de Gorgonne effroyable  
Contre le vice & la sagesse encor'  
Garde en son cœur un precieux thresor  
D'humilité & douceur incroyable. (1-4)

This combination of honor, wisdom, humility and sweetness is a rare one and a great boon to Emmanuel-Philibert:

Le Prince n'a, tant soit grand son merite,  
De s'esjouir peu de cause & raison,  
Qui, retourné, trouve dans sa maison  
Une si rare & belle Marguerite. (5-8)

If the Duke of Savoy is particularly fortunate in his marriage, Marguerite is depicted in the last quatrain as eager for the union herself:

Celle de qui ce feu, qui tout enflamme,  
N'avoit onq'sçeu eschauffer la froideur,  
Sent maintenant une nouvelle ardeur  
Et ne desdeigne une si belle flamme. (9-14)

---

<sup>164</sup> This could be seen as evidence of the nature of Du Bellay's feelings for Marguerite. His attitude towards Marguerite's husband is ambiguous. In the *Tumbeau* that he wrote after Henri II's death, Du Bellay praises the deceased king for having arranged his sister's marriage, for having found a "digne mary" for a woman "qui un Dieu pour espoux meritoit" (Chamard 6: 87, v. 87-88). He stops short of ever saying that Emmanuel Philibert is a god, however, and he does not include the Duke of Savoy in his 1559 *Xenia*, or *étrennes* for the New Year.

This imagery of cold and hot is an important indicator of the public perception of Marguerite, who was marrying at the relatively late age of thirty-six.<sup>165</sup> Before the proposed marriage with Emmanuel-Philibert, she lived in a state of impenetrable “froideur,” but is now enflamed with sentiment. Ronsard echoes this portrait of a women who long preferred to be celibate in his 1559 “Discours a tresillustre et vertueux Prince, Philibert, Duc de Savoye et de Piemont.” He addresses the Duke of Savoy on the occasion of his wedding:

Tu as aussi comme par destinée  
 La Sœur du Roy pour espouse emmenée  
 La Marguerite, en qui toute bonté,  
 Honneur, vertu, douceur et majesté,  
 Toute noblesse et toute courtoisie  
 Ont dans son cœur leur demeure choisie.  
 Et bien que mille et mille grans Seigneurs,  
 Riches de biens, de peuples et d’honneurs,  
 La Marguerite en femme eussent requise,  
 La Destinée à toy l’avoit promise  
 Pour jouir seul de ce bien désiré,  
 Pour qui maint Prince avoit tant souspiré.  
 Or ceste vierge, en vertus consommée,  
 D’un cœur treshaut, desdeignoit d’estre aimée,  
 Et comme un roc qui repousse la mer,  
 Hors de son cœur pousoit le feu d’aimer.  
 [...]

Mais plus son cœur elle addonnoit au livre,  
 A la science, à ce qui fait revivre  
 L’homme au tombeau, et les doctes mestiers  
 De Calliope exerçoit volontiers,  
 En attendant que Fortune propice  
 Eust ramené toy, son futur Ulysse;  
 Seule en sa chambre au logis t’attendoit,  
 Et des amans, chaste, se defendoit.  
 Mais quand tu vis auteler la fumée  
 De ton païs, elle, in-accoustumée  
 Du feu d’aimer, par un trait tout nouveau,  
 Receut d’Amour tout le premier flambeau,  
 Qui deglaça sa froidure endormie,  
 Et de farouche il la rendit amie,  
 Flechit son cœur, lequel avoit appris  
 D’avoir Venus et ses jeux à mespris;

---

<sup>165</sup> See note 142 on page 161, for Brantôme’s representation of Marguerite’s lofty requirements for a husband.

Et comme on voit une glace endurcie  
Sous un Printemps s'escouler addoucie,  
Ainsi le froid de son cœur s'escoula,  
Et en sa place un Amour y vola,  
Voyant celuy auquel, ains qu'estre née,  
Pour femme estoit par destin ordonnée. (Cohen 1: 849-50)

At greater length than Du Bellay, Ronsard depicts a woman who cloistered herself in her room reading, and actively resisted the advances of many suitors until Emmanuel-Philibert presented himself in 1559.<sup>166</sup> She was “chaste,” “une glace endurcie,” in a “froidure endormie.” This vocabulary of hot and cold, ice, stone and fire is unique to Marguerite in Du Bellay’s “Inscriptions.”<sup>167</sup> The other women are celebrated for their illustrious parents and their role in furthering the lineage, but not for their sentiments towards their husbands, their chastity or their “flames.” Perhaps this is to be expected in the depictions of women who are already married. Du Bellay does not make any predictions here about Marguerite’s chances of producing an heir for her husband: he confines himself to listing her virtues and insisting on her new-found passion for her husband. Rather than maternal, she is frighteningly virtuous, protected by the “gorgonne effroyable” of her resolute honor. Only a seasoned warrior such as Emmanuel Philibert could confront these obstacles and become the desired spouse for such a fierce woman. In the “Epithalame,” however, Du Bellay does imagine Marguerite as a mother of numerous children, comparing her to Catherine de Médicis. The poem in fact compares the Princess to many royal women who would have been present at the wedding dinner, and at the end Du Bellay also celebrates the diplomats and courtiers who brought about the treaty and ensuing peace that made the wedding

---

<sup>166</sup> Many thanks to Colette Winn for pointing out that this image may bring to mind Catherine des Roches, a sixteenth-century writer who organized an early literary salon and who was known to have refused marriage in order to devote herself entirely to literary pursuits.

<sup>167</sup> Du Bellay does allow, however, that in marrying Philip II Madame Elisabeth “ne pouvoit encor’ en plus hault lieu/Ny en plus seur sa flamme estre allumee” (Chamard 6:56, v.7-8).

possible. The poem thus celebrates Marguerite and her marriage in the social context of her connections to the court and the wider politics of Europe.

**Epithalame**<sup>168</sup>

The “Epithalame” in honor of Marguerite’s wedding was written to be sung by four of Jean de Morel’s children and the son of one of Morel’s friends (Chamard 5: 230). Morel was of course one of Du Bellay’s closest friends, particularly since his return from Rome, and the humanist was also a member of Marguerite’s household. She is likely to have known his children, and having them perform at her wedding dinner is both a sign of intimacy and an endorsement of the learning and values embodied by the Morel family. In his introduction to the “Epithalame,” Du Bellay identifies the parents as a “couple non moins docte que vertueux” (202), two adjectives frequently applied to Marguerite. He praises the education the daughters have received “si bien instituees es langues Grecque & Latine, & en toutes sortes de bonne lettres,” which makes them younger versions of Marguerite herself and deliberately showcases female, humanist learning. In fact, Du Bellay apologizes for the fact that his wedding song does not display all of the girls’ learned talents, fearing “beaucoup plus de les avoir faict parler peu que trop doctement: en quoy j’ay eu esgard non à ce que je sçay veritablement de leur erudition, mais à ce que j’ay pensé devoir estre le plus vraysemblable” (202). He apparently constructed the roles to correspond with the audience’s expectations for characters played by young women. Perhaps thinking at the same time about the distracting context of a large festive dinner and the varying levels of erudition among the guests, Du Bellay chose a simple

---

<sup>168</sup> All citations from the *Epithalame* are taken from *Du Bellay: Œuvres poétiques*, ed. Henri Chamard, vol. 5 (Paris : Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1931).

form that would have been easy for the children to perform and for guests to listen to: the poem is organized in stanzas of six short lines of six syllables each. Refrains sung by the three girls also help organize the song.

Du Bellay inserts himself as one of the performers: Jean de Morel's son is "le poete" who opens the song and narrates the story of three nymphs, played by the three Morel sisters, who were raised especially to sing the praises of Marguerite on her wedding day.<sup>169</sup> The first nymph, Diane, describes Marguerite's physical beauty and laments that the princess is now leaving their virgin ranks, just as Marie Stuart, Claude and Elisabeth de France had done earlier on the occasion of their marriages. After this nod to other recently-wed princesses, Du Bellay suggests that Marguerite's marriage will distance her from literary circles and poets:

Adieu lyre doree  
De Phoebus adree,  
Tes chansons & tes vers,  
Puis que nostre Princesse  
En chapeau de Duchesse  
Change noz lauriers verds. (221-226)

Marguerite was already a duchess in her own right, but she is now going to "perdre son nom" (v.33)--the "beau nom" that Du Bellay celebrated in the *Regrets*--in exchange for that of her husband. Du Bellay portrays this development as incompatible with the life of the muses, but it is more an expression of his sense of loss than the reality of Marguerite's own future: as Duchess of Savoy she continued to be a patron to poets, but the identity of her protégés shifted to those writing in the Piedmont and she was no longer so closely associated with those at the French court.<sup>170</sup>

---

<sup>169</sup> Du Bellay was present by analogy in the "inscription" to Emmanuel-Philibert, in which the Duke was described in terms that could have been used for Du Bellay himself.

<sup>170</sup> Ronsard expressed the same sense of loss, the same certainty that poetry could no longer be written in France without Marguerite, in his 1559 "Chant pastoral":

Morel's second daughter, Lucrèce, then sings happy predictions about the couple, their wedding night, and their future children before the third daughter, Camille, celebrates the rigorous characters of the bridal couple in terms analogous to those used in the "Inscriptions." Marguerite is a virtuous warrior goddess:

Telle contre les vices  
 Au milieu des delices  
 Porte le chef vainqueur  
 Ceste Minerve forte,  
 Qui sur sa face porte  
 Une chaste rigueur.  
 [...]  
 L'honneur est son pennache,  
 La chasteté, sa hache :  
 Et l'amour vertueux  
 Est sa Meduse enorme  
 Qui en pierre transforme  
 Le vice monstrueux. (341-45, 349-54)

Camille then pays homage to Jeanne d'Albret and Anne d'Este, saying that they are "Deux Minerves nouvelles / Non moins doctes que belles" (361-62) of the same lineage as Marguerite.<sup>171</sup> These women may have been in the audience as well, and

---

A ton depart les gentiles Naiades,  
 Faunes, Sylvains, Satyres et Dryades,  
 Pans, Deitez de ces antres reclus,  
 Sont disparus, et n'apparoissent plus.  
 [...]  
 Plus les rochers, ny les antres rustiques

Ne seront pleins de fureurs poëtiques ;  
 Echo se taist, et veut plus parler,  
 Tant a regret de te voir en-aller.  
 [...]  
 Qui fera plus d'un annuel office  
 Parmi les bois aux Muses sacrifice ?  
 Qui plus de fleurs les ruisseaux semera ?  
 Qui plus le nom de Palés nommera  
 Parmi les champs ? et qui plus aura cure  
 De nos troupeaux et de nostre pasture ?  
 Qui plus à Pan daignera presenter  
 Les partoureaux pour les faire chanter ?  
 Qui de leur flute appaisera les noises ?  
 Qui jugera de leurs chansons Françaises ?  
 Qui donner le prix aux mieux disans,  
 Et sauvera leurs vers des mesdisans ? (Cohen 1: 970-71)

<sup>171</sup> Anne d'Este (1537-1607) was the daughter of Renée de France and Hercule d'Este, Duke of Ferrara. In 1548 she married François de Lorraine, who became the second Duke of Guise in 1550. After the Duke's assassination in 1563, she married Jacques de Savoie, the Duke of Nemours in 1566. For more

Du Bellay may have had hopes that they would fill the void he anticipates at Marguerite's departure. It would be difficult to replace her however:

Mainte Princesse encore  
Par les lettres decore  
Son sexe & son renom:  
Mais nostre Marguerite  
Sur toute autre merite  
De Minerve le nom. (373-78)

This portrait of a battle-ready Minerva, armed with her virtues, is designed to match the bellicose qualities that her husband projects. His portrait follows hers, and it depicts a "second Mars:"

Ce Prince tant adextre,  
Que Bellonne fit naistre  
Au milieu des soldars.  
[...]  
Sa virile jeunesse  
N'a suivy la mollesse  
Des lascifz courtisans:  
Il n'a parmy les Dames,  
Les plaisirs & les flammes,  
Perdu ses jeunes ans.  
[...]  
Mais il a sur la dure,  
Et soubz la couverture  
Des pavillons, appris  
Qu'en la poudreuse plaine  
C'est avecques la peine  
Qu'on emporte le pris.  
[...]  
Dessoubz ce grand Auguste [Charles Quint]  
Il a poussé robuste  
Ses vertuz en avant,  
Il a pris sa doctrine  
Dessoubz la discipline  
D'un maistre bien sçavant. (384-410)

The rigor of Marguerite's virtue is matched by her husband's discipline and ability to endure hardship, born "au milieu des soldars." He is not the first soldier to be associated with Marguerite, however, since the "Hymne de la surdit " (*Jeux*

---

information, see Penny Richard's entry on the Duchess in SIEFAR's *Dictionnaire des femmes de l'Ancien R gime*. Web. 29 Oct. 2010.  
[http://www.siefar.org/dictionnaire/fr/Anne\\_d%27Este#Notice\\_de\\_Penny\\_Richards.2C\\_2004](http://www.siefar.org/dictionnaire/fr/Anne_d%27Este#Notice_de_Penny_Richards.2C_2004).

*rustiques*) refers to Ronsard, Du Bellay, and other poets as “soldats de Pallas.” Insisting on the representation of their protector and patron as a fierce goddess of war, and on their own identities as soldiers in her battalion, clearly attempts to lend poetry a virile quality that equals military art and its practitioners. It also balances Marguerite against her brother the king, who although he remains in France is never represented as offering any consolation to the poets who so lament Marguerite’s impending absence.

The king is acknowledged in the following final section of the poem where the figure of Mercury, played by the son of Morel’s friends, enters to praise the marriage as an instrument of peace, organized by “deux grands Princes” whose alliance implies world domination:

Ilz partiront le monde  
De la terre & de l’onde,  
Estans seuls gouverneurs (469-71)

Homage is also paid to three French plenipotentiaries (Anne de Montmorency, Jacques d’Albon, Charles de Lorraine) and three Spanish ones who served similar functions in relation to Philip II. The glory of the peace between France and Spain, symbolized in Marguerite’s marriage, redounds on all these high figures who were likely to have been present at the wedding feast if it had taken place. The song then ends with the figure of the poet announcing the blessing of Phoebus Apollo on the new couple. The god of poetry thus closes the performance by sounding the propitious sign of thunder and lightning.

The printed version of the “Epithalame” is followed by a sonnet in which Du Bellay evokes the emotion that Marguerite’s wedding inspires in him and explains that he cannot write more on the topic because he is choked with a feeling he calls “plaisir.” Considering that he compares himself to a narrow vase that is filled so full

of water that it prevents the liquid from being easily poured out, it is unclear whether the emotion he feels can be entirely described as pleasure:

Comme d'un vase ayant estroicte bouche,  
Lequel est d'eau remply jusques au bord,  
L'eau goutte à goutte & à grand'peine sort,  
Et son passage elle mesme se bouêche:

Ainsi chantant ceste Royale couche,  
L'ayse qui faict de sortir son effort,  
Pour en sortir ne se trouve assez fort,  
Et d'un seul vers ma Muse à peine accouche.

Donques ceux-là qui ont plus de sçavoir  
Que de plaisir, feront mieux leur devoir  
De celebrer cest heureux mariage:

Il me suffist, si l'effect au desir  
Ne satisfait, monstret que le plaisir  
Ne me permet d'en dire d'avantage. (226-27)

Although Du Bellay signals positive emotion by twice repeating the term “plaisir,” the image of a vase stopped with water conjures images of being choked with tears. His inability to write is of course exaggerated, since he produced 528 lines to be sung in the “Epithalame,” but if the length of this poem is compared to Ronsard’s much longer two poems, the “Discours” to Emmanuel-Philibert and the “Chant Pastoral” that he wrote to Marguerite on the occasion of her marriage, Du Bellay’s muse would seem to spill with less ease. Months after the wedding he writes to Jean de Morel about how he experiences Marguerite’s departure as a personal disaster: unlike the wedding sonnet where emotion and expression are checked, here he describes his tears as flowing freely and he sees little point in writing now that Marguerite has left the court:

Ce désastre avec le partement de madicte Dame [...] m’a tellement estonné et faict perdre le cœur, que je suis délibéré de jamais plus ne retenter la fortune [...] Et qui seroit si fol de ce vouloir doresnavant travailler l’esprit pour faire quelque chose de bon, ayant perdu la faveur d’ung si bon prince, et la présence d’une telle princesse, qui depuis la mort de ce grand Roy François, père et instaurateur des bonnes lectres,

estoit demeurée l'unique support et refuge de la vertu et de ceulx qui en font profession ? Je ne puis continuer plus longuement ce propoz sans larmes, je dy les plus vrayes larmes que je pleuray jamais. Et vous pryem'excuser si je me suis laissé transporter si avant en mes passions, qui me sont (comme je m'asseur) communes avecques vous et tous ceulx qui sont comme nous admirateurs de ceste bonne et vertueuse Princesse, et qui véritablement se ressentent du regret que son absence doit apporter à tous amateurs de la vertu et des bonnes lectres. (Nolhac 37-38)

Du Bellay died weeks after writing this letter, so it is impossible to know what directions his writing would have taken in Marguerite's absence.<sup>172</sup> His emotion in response to her marriage and departure is documented, however, in terms of lost hope and ruined ambition. He tells Morel that he has adopted a new Latin motto: "Spes et fortuna valet," fortune and hope farewell (Nolhac 38).

### Xenia<sup>173</sup>

Among the last poems that Du Bellay wrote to Marguerite is an *étrenne* collected with 59 others to poets and members of the court. They apparently were meant to be given as gifts on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1560, the day when *étrennes* are traditionally exchanged. As he died on this day, they may not have been distributed to their dedicatees, and they were not published until 1568, by his friend Charles Utenhove, and then one year later in a different edition by Frédéric Morel. They are likely to have been written over an extended period of time, however, since they include a piece to Henri II, who had died already in July 1559.<sup>174</sup> In these short pieces Du Bellay creates playful etymologies of the dedicatees' names; in Marguerite's case he plays once

---

<sup>172</sup> The death of Henri II is also described as a blow in this letter, but more in terms of regime change and disorientation rather than in terms of the personal loss that Du Bellay felt when Marguerite moved away.

<sup>173</sup> All citations of the *Xenia* are taken from Geneviève Demerson's French translation of the Latin original in volume 8 of the STFM edition.

<sup>174</sup> It is of course possible that the poem to Henri II was written after his death and included in the collection in order to curry favor with his devastated and powerful widow, Catherine de Médicis--perhaps equally with Marguerite who always gave evidence of being a devoted sister.

again on the Latin meaning of her first name, “pearl,” and says that she is “plus brillante que les gemmes et plus précieuse que l’or fauve: Marguerite de France vainc les richesses de l’Orient” (66). What is most interesting about the piece is its placement: third in the collection after epigrams to Henri II and Catherine de Médicis. On the 1569 edition Demerson writes:

[...] l’ordre paraît donc bien être le fait du poète lui-même. Morel dut le respecter: les morts (Montmorency), les absents (Marguerite, Marie Stuart), ceux qui avaient perdu leur crédit (Diane) n’ont pas été “déclassés.” (166)

If this is the case and the published *xenia* follow an order intended by Du Bellay, Marguerite’s importance to the poet is marked by her early appearance after the king and the queen. In the “Inscriptions” and the “Epithalame” Marguerite and her husband were celebrated among other members of the court, and despite the fact that it was their wedding being celebrated they were not first or even second in order. Here though, as Du Bellay wrote to people in his thoughts, people with whom he wished to connect at the holidays, Marguerite is placed immediately after the king and his wife, and before the *dauphin* and Marie Stuart. Madame Elisabeth and Philip II, who figured prominently in the “Inscriptions” and “Epithalame” receive no *étrenne*, nor does Emmanuel-Philibert, Marguerite’s new husband. Their presence in the wedding poems must have been due to the occasion, but Du Bellay seems to expect no relationship to them and doesn’t think, or doesn’t wish, to send them a sign of his sentiments at the new year. He writes first to the Valois family and the Guise clan, then to powerful men in service to the king and the church, the members of the Paris parliament, humanists, poets, and printers. These represent the circle of his ambitions at the end of his life, and Marguerite remains foremost in his mind despite her move to Savoy.

The 1569 *Xenia* were published with the long Latin poem “Élégie à Jean Morel d’Embrun, son Pylade,” in which Du Bellay reflects stoically on his life and defends himself against the accusations of his cousin Eustache. In retrospect it is clear that this must have been one of the last poems written before his death, which gives the elegy the posthumous character of a final analysis, an autobiographical summing up of Du Bellay’s life. Its tone is calmer than that of any of the 1558 collections or letters written in French during 1559. In fact, some aspects of the elegy contradict Du Bellay’s claims of losing inspiration once Marguerite left France. Here, Du Bellay admits to success at court and seems to acknowledge that his publications after his return to France have been well-received. He is happy to have been close to Henri II and Marguerite, and while he is yet unknown to the new king he seems confident about his relationship to Catherine de Médicis and the Guise family--already cultivated in the 1559 wedding poems and *Xenia*:

Nos vers coulent d’une veine facile, et la foule nous lit, la Cour nous lit, assidûment. Nous écrivons pour les gens sans culture et, tout aussi bien, pour les gens cultivés. Nous traitons des sujets sérieux, où nous mêlons le charme de la plaisanterie. Et nous nous jouons tantôt des rythmes d’ici, tantôt de ceux de là-bas, soit que je choisisse le français, soit que je choisisse le latin. J’étais connu du roi Henri et de la sœur du roi : non seulement j’en étais connu, mais j’en étais aimé. Pour François je suis un inconnu, mais je ne suis pas un inconnu, je suis un hôte pour toi, Catherine, et pour toi, Lorraine. Enfin, tout homme qui aime Phébus et les sœurs de Phébus me cultive en mon absence : il use mon livre en le lisant. Pour ces raisons, il me semble que je suis un roi, que j’ai pris place à la table des dieux et que, déjà de mon vivant, je jouis de l’avenir qui m’attend. (106-108).

Du Bellay is unusually optimistic and satisfied with his lot in this elegy: his only complaint, which he then issues at length, is against the accusations that his cousin has falsely alleged. The use of Latin and calm tone may indicate that Du Bellay expected this elegy to be published and widely read, and that he wanted to create an impressively invulnerable public persona. The figure of a successful court poet, loved

by the previous king and his sister Marguerite, well-known to the powerful dowager queen and her allies the Guise, claims more authority, more legitimacy in his legal battles than the persona of poor, ignored poet that he so frequented constructed in other collections. At the same time that this Latin elegy was composed, Du Bellay's cousin Eustache wrote a letter to Cardinal Du Bellay in Rome in which he described the poet's compromised health in an apparent attempt to discredit his relative:

[...] Et fault, Monseigneur, que je vous die que, davant mon parlement de Paris, il estoit du tout sourd, comme il est de ceste heure, sans quasi aulcune espérance de guérison. Scripto est agendum et loquendum cum illo. Et, au temps qui court, il est besoing avoir gens cler voyant et oyant mesmes pour le fait de la religion, et en l'estat qu'il est, ce luy est chose impossible d'y vacquer. (Nolhac 83-84)

In order to counter this image of himself as weak, deaf, potentially dysfunctional, Du Bellay produced the self-portrait of a philosopher poet of great popularity and reputation, supported by powerful connections. Not surprisingly, the *Xenia* contained an *étrenne* for Cardinal du Bellay, but none for other relatives and certainly none for Eustache, who was Bishop of Paris at the time. This 1569 collection thus lends insight into the circles with which Du Bellay wished to connect at the end of his life: his alienation from most of his family, his continued affection for Marguerite after her departure, and his loyalty to figures such as Henri II, Montmorency and Diane de Poitiers--even after their death or disgrace. He seems clear-headed about the change of regime and aware of the new power centers at court. This is in stark contrast to the 1549 *Vers Liriques*, in which he only addressed poems to friends, neighbors, and relatives in Anjou. His ten-year publishing career saw him rise from a provincial nobleman with a law degree and mostly male circle of intimates to a court poet with access to the most powerful inner circles, particularly that of Marguerite and her entourage.

### **“Épithaphe du passereau de Madame Marguerite”**

The posthumous 1669 Aubert edition of Du Bellay’s collected works contained this *épitaphe* which had never been published in any previous collection. It seemingly was written as an individual piece for Marguerite, very likely before spring 1559.<sup>175</sup> The piece is modeled on two poems by Catullus devoted to Lesbia’s sparrow, but it associates Marguerite with an austere honor and cloistered virtue that are consistent with her representation in previously analyzed poems by Ronsard and Du Bellay. Here, Cupid is angry with Marguerite because she bars him from her room and only admits her pet birds and ladies in waiting. Cupid takes his revenge by killing her favorite sparrow:

Ce petit enfant Amour  
Ne volete point autour  
De Marguerite, & ne touche,  
Folastre, à sa chaste couche:  
Et son traict qui les cœurs poingt  
La vierge ne blesse point.  
Loingt de son lict la pucelle  
Le chasse [...]  
Mais Cupido meurt de honte,  
Que de luy lon ne tient compte,  
Et de fureur qui le mord,  
Prenant le traict de la mort,  
A du Passereau la vie  
Malheureusement ravie,  
Du Passereau tant chery,  
Sur tous le plus favory.  
[...]  
Mais, cruel, ta felonnie  
Ne demourra impunie.  
Tu en seras bien puny,  
Car comme ennemy, banny  
Tu seras de la demeure

---

<sup>175</sup> This poem is analysed last because its date of publication is unknown, although Chamard situates it before the announcement of Marguerite’s wedding. He writes “La donnée même du sujet suffit à témoigner qu’elle est antérieure au mariage de Madame Marguerite avec Philibert-Emmanuel, du de Savoie (9 juillet 1559), et même aux conférences de Cateau-Cambrésis (février-mars 1559) où ce mariage fut décidé” (5: 399). All citations from are taken from *Du Bellay: Œuvres poétiques*, ed. Henri Chamard, vol. 5 (Paris : Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1931).

Où Marguerite demeure,  
Et des belles, dont les yeulx  
Semblent aux flammes des cieux. (1-8, 19-26, 31-38)

Cupid will be punished for killing the sparrow, by being permanently shut out of Marguerite's chamber, and prevented access to any of her female entourage. The closing lines suggest that the ladies in waiting lament their fate, now that Marguerite's quarrel with Cupid will deny them access to love:

Plorez, belles, plorez donques,  
Plorez, si plorastes onques,  
Le Passereau regrettant,  
Que Marguerite ay moit tant. (39-42)

Mention of the ladies in waiting suggests that the poem would have been read aloud in their presence, or circulated among them. Depicting Marguerite as a chaste virgin, "enemy of love," in a poem that would be performed for her intimate entourage has a slightly different valence than the same depiction in the wedding poem which was to be performed in front of a wider audience that included her husband. An assertion of a bride's chastity before marriage might be read as a generic formality in a wedding poem, while in a courtly poem for an intimate circle it may play more with the subject's commonly accepted persona. It aligns with Du Bellay's repeated allusions to Marguerite as an "esprit," and perhaps explains his claim that his time in Rome was a physical hell where he was trapped in his body, but that the return to France represents the death of his body and a reconnection to a higher, abstract ideal represented by Marguerite. It also creates a certain symmetry between the poet in the last two years of his life, sequestered alone in his room due to his hearing loss and generally weakened state, and Marguerite, chastely locked in her room with her books. Even as a young man Du Bellay wrote that true poets would need to spend long hours isolated in their rooms:

Qui veut voler par les mains & bouches des hommes doit longuement demeurer en sa chambre : & qui désire vivre en la mémoire de la postérité, doit comme mort en soy mesmes suer et trembler maintes fois, & autant que notz poètes courtizans boyvent, mangent, & dorment à leur oyse, endurer de faim, de soif, & de longues vigiles. (Monferran *Deffence* 129)

Marguerite is depicted as having the same stamina for the cloistered concentration recommended for true poets. Du Bellay often wrote enviously of Jean de Morel's married state and happy homelife. Marguerite's single status, combined with her preference for calm seclusion in the company of her books, appears to have resonated with Du Bellay at a personal level, reminded him of his own isolation and dispositions, and created a connection that went deeper than mere gratitude for her patronage. Marguerite's biographer Winifred Stephens even describes their relationship as a "romance," but the most impressive fact of their connection seems to be that more than any other figure, more than close friends Ronsard and Morel, more than the desired patron Henri II, Marguerite provided a consistent source of inspiration and support for the ten years that Du Bellay published before his untimely death. Her influence, predilections and opinions undoubtedly inflect the final form that his publications assumed.

### **1559 Amours**<sup>176</sup>

The 1568 posthumous edition by Aubert of Du Bellay's collected works contained a series of 29 sonnets titled "Amours" which Chamard claims were written in 1559 (2: vii), presumably because many of them refer to the poet's deafness and his advanced age. Chamard does not speculate on the identity of any dedicatee, only saying that it is a "retour assez fâcheux à l'inspiration de l'*Olive*" (2, vii). Since the

---

<sup>176</sup> All citations from the *Amours* are taken from *Du Bellay: Œuvres poétiques*, ed. Henri Chamard, vol. 2 (Paris : Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1931).

*Olive* was dedicated to Marguerite, it is possible to wonder whether these 29 sonnets might also be dedicated to her. R.V. Merrill thought not: in 1935 he argued that the sequence was written to Diane de France, the illegitimate daughter of Henri II (“Considerations on ‘Les Amours de I. du Bellay’”). Saulnier did not find this theory convincing; nor do I. While Saulnier says that sonnet 11 could well be addressed to Marguerite, the disparate qualities of the collection lead him to conclude that the 1568 editors assembled a jumble of loose sonnets, probably addressed to different, unnamed *dedicataires*, into one whole. Saulnier is perhaps correct that the “Amours” are a loose jumble of love sonnets: of the 29 sonnets I find that four (9, 11, 19, 23) contain a high density of elements that Du Bellay often included in his poems to Marguerite, and I think it likely that they were destined for the princess. Other poems contain a few elements that could relate to her; yet others, however, do not resemble anything that Du Bellay explicitly wrote for Marguerite and may be destined for someone else.

Without being absolutely certain, Charles Béné is more convinced than Saulnier that the *Amours* were written for Marguerite, mostly due to sonnet 9 (“Marguerite de France et l’oeuvre de Du Bellay” 235-36). The time frame mentioned in this sonnet seems to refer to the publication of the *Olive* ten years earlier:

Cinq & cinq ans sont ja coulez derriere,  
 Que de l’amour argument je n’ay pris,  
 Et que du tout au cours de telz escripts  
 Jusques icy j’ay fermé la barriere.

Et revoicy qu’en la mesme carriere,  
 Sans y penser, je me trouve surpris,  
 Non moins ardent d’y gagner quelque pris  
 Qu’en la fureur de ma course premiere.

Il est bien vray que l’âge & les ennuy  
 Et les travaux dont chargé je me suis,  
 Ne tardoient lors mes deux plantes isnelles :

Mais de bon cœur j'ay fait un tel recueil,  
Que seulement la faveur d'un bon œil  
A mes talons adjousteroit des ailes.

Du Bellay says that he has not written explicit love poetry for ten years. Although he did write some love poems in the *Jeux rustiques*, his one collection that was entirely composed of love sonnets was the *Olive*, written in 1549 and dedicated to Marguerite in the second edition released in 1550. Du Bellay here says that he is resuming the “mesme carriere,” surprised to find himself feeling the same ambitions as ten years before. This may refer to a renewed period of optimism and creativity following Du Bellay’s return from Rome. In the *Regrets* Du Bellay attributes to Marguerite his feelings of rebirth, or reconnection with an earlier, productive writing self. Here he acknowledges that his younger self was not encumbered by “âge & les ennuy / Et les travaux dont chargé je me suis.” Nonetheless, Du Bellay undertakes to write a collection of love poems again, and the only thing he needs for success is the “faveur d’un bon œil.” In sonnet 7 of the *Regrets* Du Bellay had been nostalgic for Marguerite, who “De son bel œil divin mes vers favorisoit:” a “bel œil” or “bon œil” for Du Bellay usually represents Marguerite’s favor.

Sonnet 11 was linked to Marguerite by both Saulnier and Charles Béné (237-38) for clear reasons. It opens by stressing the lady’s love of poetry and erudite company, and the fact that she inherited this appreciation from her ancestors:

Que d’Apollon vous aymiez les douceurs,  
Et ceux ausquels nom de sçavans on donne,  
Il ne fault point que cela nous estonne,  
Vous le tenez de voz predecesseurs.

Lesquels, combien qu’il fussent possesseurs  
D’un grand estat, n’ont tant suivy Bellonne,  
Que sur l’armet ils n’ayent mis la couronne  
Qui ceint le front des neuf sçavantes Sœurs.

Et vous, suivant le trac de voz Ayeux,  
Ne desdaignez les sons melodieux

Que nous apprend ceste troupe sçavante.

Marguerite has consistently been portrayed as a supporter of poets and poetry, often by her representation as Minerva or Pallas Athena. The illustrious predecessor who pursued the muses as much as war is likely to be Marguerite's father, François Ier. We have already seen that Du Bellay frequently shows Marguerite to be the true inheritor of François' cultural legacy, unlike her brother. In Sonnet 190 of the *Regrets*, Du Bellay explicitly criticized Henri for valuing military power over the arts, and he wrote that only Marguerite could protect the cultural initiatives that François had established. This sonnet seems to convey the same message.

Two pieces that other scholars have not previously linked to Marguerite are sonnets 19 and 23. Sonnet 19 seems to engage with imagery that Du Bellay used in the "Épitaphe du passereau de Madame Marguerite." The sonnet corrects, or softens the depiction of Marguerite as so rigorously virtuous that she snubs Cupid, who killed her sparrow in revenge:

Non, je ne croy qu'Amour se soit vengé de vous,  
Pource que de rigueur vous soyez trop armee,  
Les dieux ne vous ont point si parfaicte formee  
Pour armer de rigueur un visage si doux.

Mais je croy que l'Amour vous cache ainsi de nous,  
Pource qu'une beauté si digne d'estre aymee  
Avecques trop de soing ne peult estre enfermee,  
Et que de vous, Madame, il est mesme jaloux.

Il est jaloux de vous, ou vous veut faire entendre  
Cela qu'en liberté vous n'eussiez sceu comprendre,  
Combien est ennuyeuse une captivité :

A fin qu'esgallement & belle & pitoyable,  
Vous traictiez doucement un captif miserable,  
Qui a par voz beaux yeux perdu sa liberté.

The lady described here is sequestered, just like Marguerite in the "Épitaphe." In this sonnet, however, Du Bellay retracts an accusation of the lady's excessive rigor, and

says that she is too sweet, too perfect to be guilty of that particular excess. But “Amour” is still jealous of the lady, and he causes her to be hidden because of the love she would inevitably inspire in others, or perhaps because he wants her to experience the same feeling of captivity that those who love her are destined to feel. The poet apparently is one of these, “un captive miserable,” once again a lover in the manner of the *Jeux rustiques*.

Finally, sonnet 23 refers to a lady who was the “soleil” of the poet, as Du Bellay so frequently described Marguerite:

Ces deux beaux yeux dont mon cueur jouïssoit,  
Pourquoy de moy s’eslongne leur lumiere?  
Qui m’a privé de la clarté premiere  
Du Beau soleil, où mon œil le dressoit?

Où est ce front qui mon deuil appaisoit,  
Ce front serain? ceste honneste manière  
Qui retenoit mon ame prisonniere  
Et d’un doux feu saintement l’embrasoit?

O chastes yeux! ô soleil, dont mon ame,  
D’amour, de grace & de vertu s’enflamme!  
O front divin! ô gestes pleins d’honneur !

“Soleil” is used twice, and Du Bellay singles out other features that are usually attributed to Marguerite: a “front serain,” eyes that are “chastes”, a “vertu” that enflames the poet/lover, gestures “pleins d’honneur.”

Despite these four sonnets that seem plausibly connected to Marguerite, there are other sonnets that are more difficult to link to the princess. In Sonnet 16, for example, Du Bellay says that the lady is “inconstant & leger,” which are never terms that he associates with Marguerite. Sonnets 24-29 refer to his deafness, and in the Latin *Epigrammata* we saw that Du Bellay wrote to his friends about his physical ailments but avoided doing so to Marguerite. Without further information about the production of the posthumous 1568 edition and the manuscripts it was based on, it

seems impossible to say with certainty whether or not the 29 sonnets of the 1559 *Amours* were written--entirely or partially--for Marguerite.

### Conclusion

A sonnet by Charles Utenhove, printed at the very end of the 1559 “Epithalame,” finds Du Bellay to be Marguerite’s equal in terms of virtue, and for that reason he is said to be the ideal poet to write her wedding song:<sup>177</sup>

[...]  
Si la mesme Vertu espouse estoit menee  
A quelque Demidieu, Phoebus (comme je croy)  
N’eust sceu mieux celebrer sa nuptiale foy,  
Tant tu es bien disant, et elle fortunee.

La troppe des neuf Sœurs à tes vers cederà,  
De tous hommes vivans nul ne t’esgalera  
A chanter son bon heur, sa vertu, son merite.

Et qui pourroit (bon Dieux) assez louer son nom,  
Si ce n’est Dubellay, le second Apollon?  
Car la mesme Vertu est ceste Marguerite. (5-14)

Utenhove says overtly what Du Bellay strove to suggest more subtly throughout his career: that he and the Princess were two of a kind, a matched pair who shared the same devotion to poetry. Marguerite provided much of the inspiration, and was also the desired audience for Du Bellay’s finished works. She was in many ways the ideal poetic companion, because she did not write herself and was not a competitor to Du Bellay in the way that Ronsard or other poets were. Unlike other noble patrons, however, she was learned enough that her praise and encouragement carried weight and could be taken as a serious compliment by any poet with erudite ambitions.<sup>178</sup>

---

<sup>177</sup> Charles Utenhove was preceptor to Jean de Morel’s daughters.

<sup>178</sup> With regards to Marguerite’s written production, biographer Winifred Stephens writes “While producing no original literary work like her aunt and her niece, the second Margaret was of the three by far the most scholarly and, in a century of *femmes savants*, perhaps the most learned of women. Instead of talking and writing perpetually like her aunt, Margaret of Savoy was content to follow diligently a course of profound studies not surpassed by any of the greatest professors of the day” (xxxvi). Another biographer, Roger Peyre, writes about Marguerite’s youthful attempts to write “Ayant deviné que la

Early in Du Bellay's career she clearly opened his eyes to the possibility of female patronage. She provided his first access to courtly circles, and her encouragement led him to believe that one day he might receive the king's endorsement as well, which was desirable for symbolic reasons even if the king himself was not highly literate. Du Bellay represented Marguerite, rather than Henri, as the true inheritor of her father's cultural ambitions: as such, she received more poems, in as many genres, as her brother. The steady, cornucopian variety of works dedicated to her over ten years testifies to a lasting, permanent relationship different from other ones in Du Bellay's life: Cardinal Du Bellay was an early patron, but over the course of his career Du Bellay represented him far less frequently than other friends and mentors, and correspondence documents a final rift between the two of them after the publication of the *Regrets*. Du Bellay's relationship with Ronsard was initially inspiring but quickly grew complicated and competitive, even if it remained an indelible influence and a fruitful point of reference throughout his career. Jean de Morel was a good friend and admirer, but is more present in poems at the end of Du Bellay's life than at the beginning of his career. Diane de Poitiers appears to have become a patron after Du Bellay's return from Rome in 1557, but his poems to her were limited in number and genre. Only Marguerite is consistently, frequently mentioned throughout all ten years of Du Bellay's career, and there is no indication that they ever had a falling out. While Du Bellay often experimented in collections dedicated to Marguerite, trying new content, forms, and languages (Latin) when writing for the princess, his poems to Diane use forms and content that do not venture into new territory, with one exception. The posthumous 1569 collection of Du Bellay's works includes two poems

---

reine de Navarre composait des nouvelles, Catherine de Médicis et Marguerite de France se mirent aussi à en écrire en cachette. Plus tard, ayant lu celles de leur tante, elle brûlèrent leurs essais, tant ils leur parurent médiocres par la comparaison. Mais on regrette avec Brantôme qu'elles aient cru devoir faire ce sacrifice, et l'on peut penser qu'elles se sont trop sévèrement jugées" (6).

written in Diane's voice, something that Du Bellay appears never to have done for any other patron male or female.<sup>179</sup> Given the important role that Marguerite played in Du Bellay's career, it is possible to ask why he never wrote any such piece for Marguerite. Was the princess too self-effacing to wish to be represented in the first person? Did Du Bellay only respond to a specific request from Diane? His poems in her voice represent her devotion to the king, a public airing of her private feelings. He never wrote of Marguerite's private feelings or emotional life, however, until after her engagement to Emmanuel-Philibert. Even then, he was discrete and wrote in the third person. For the most part, he represented Marguerite as a disembodied ideal, a goddess who did not live and breathe like other mortals. She was Minerva, Pallas Athena, the sun. She did not speak: she radiated.

---

<sup>179</sup> These two poems, and all others that Du Bellay wrote to Diane de Poitiers, are analyzed in the following chapter.

## **Songs: Du Bellay's Poems to Diane de Poitiers**

### **Introduction**

Margeurite was Du Bellay's most significant female patron. He nonetheless wrote to other important women at the Valois court, although with less frequency than to Marguerite. The most powerful of the other women for whom he wrote was Diane de Poitiers and his poems to her provide a helpful counter-example to his writing for Marguerite. Whereas Du Bellay produced a cornucopic variety of poetic offerings for the Duchesse de Savoie, he chose a restricted number of genres when writing to Diane. For her--with the exception of one sonnet and a variant--he tended to write odes or songs. This deliberately limited choice of forms is calibrated both to Diane's position at court and to Du Bellay's own relationship to her. In order to understand why Du Bellay focused on songs and odes, I will first examine the history of the ode form in renaissance France. I will then turn to the figure of Diane herself and the poems that other poets wrote to her, before examining Du Bellay's own poems. Analyzing the encomiastic style of of his contemporaries creates a context for Du Bellay's own poems to Diane and reveals the individual, carefully constructed quality of his occasional aesthetics.

### **The Ode in Sixteenth-Century France**

#### **Classical Origins: Pindar**

In tracing the origins of the ode form in sixteenth-century France, François Rouget signals the importance of renaissance editions of the classical writers Pindar, Anacreon, and Horace (*L'Apothéose* 13-19). Before Italian editions in 1513 (Alde and Asulani, Venice) and 1515 (Callierges, Rome), Pindar was familiar to a very restricted audience of specialists who knew his work from incomplete and often faulty

manuscripts. These Italian editions were followed by Swiss ones in 1526 (Cratander, Basel) and 1528 (Ceporinus, Zurich). The first French edition was an incomplete one by C. Wechel in 1535; G. Morel published the first complete French edition in 1558. The Pléiade poets came into contact with Pindar's work through the humanist Jean Dorat, who read and commented on Pindar's odes and taught them to students such as Ronsard, Baïf, and others at the Collège de Coqueret in Paris.

### **Anacreon and Horace**

There were relatively few editions of Anacreon published, and single editions of his complete works were published only after 1554 in France. His odes were widely included in anthologies of Greek poetry, however, published as early as 1491 by Lascaris (Rouget, *L'Apothéose* 17). Horace, on the other hand--an admirer of Anacreon--saw numerous editions published: too many to list, but it can be noted that eleven appeared in Paris alone between 1501 and 1530.

Horace proved to be more of an influence on the production of French odes than Pindar. The tripartite structure of the Pindaric ode (*strophe, antistrophe, epode*) and its lofty history celebrating the victories of athletic heroes at the Olympic games did not translate well into the French court setting. Du Bellay attempted one or two Pindaric odes, but only Ronsard wrote any quantity of them, and these appeared mostly in his first volume of odes published in 1550. Although Ronsard considered the Pindaric odes to be the finest part of the collection, they were poorly received. Following Du Bellay's lead, in the mid 1550's Ronsard subsequently turned from the high Pindaric style to a simpler one inspired by Anacreon and Horace. These both were gracious, courtly poets who had written light odes in honor of patrons as well as

on the topics of love and drinking. Their model, rather than Pindar's, resonated more immediately with sixteenth-century court society.

### **Neo-latin influences**

Editions of classical poets were not the only influences on French poets: neo-latin poets such as the Italian Pontano and the Dutch Jean Second were influential, as was the French poet Salmon Macrin, who published three volumes between 1528 and 1537. Georges Soubeille claims that Macrin was one of the first to Latinize the Greek word for ode and to make it a synonym of *Carmen* (13). Soubeille credits Macrin for introducing Horatian odes in France (16), and also believes that Macrin's odes were written to be sung, rather than read and that this reassociation of poetry and music is one of his major contributions to poetry of the time (18). While Macrin was the most influential of the neo-latinists, Rouget reminds us that at least 150 poets wrote in Latin, and that all the Pléiade poets attempted Latin verse with the exception of Ronsard (20).

### **Mid-sixteenth-century definitions of the ode**

Although other traditions contributed to the production of odes in the sixteenth century, the classical and neo-latin influences mentioned above are the most important--or at least the most commonly acknowledged--for Pléiade poets and the common project that Du Bellay announced in his 1549 *Deffence*.<sup>180</sup> Henri Chamard defines Du Bellay's conception of the ode in this historic manifesto:

Sujet héroïques et mythologiques, sujets philosophiques et moraux,  
sujets érotiques et bachiques, tel est le domaine de l'ode : pas un  
instant du Bellay ne songe à se demander si le lyrisme n'est point avant

---

<sup>180</sup> Other influences include the following: Italian poetry such as *canzoni* by Petrarch and odes and hymns written by authors such as Tasso, Alamanni, Del Bene, among many others. Rouget also mentions the influence of paraphrases of psalms, written by both Italian authors and French ones that include Macrin and Clément Marot (24-29).

tout l'expression poétique de sentiments personnels. Et cette ode, qu'il conçoit toute antique, il la veut aussi très relevé de forme, écrite en beau style, éclatante de figures et d'images : "Sur toutes choses, prends garde que ce genre de poème soit éloigné de vulgaire, enrichy et illustré de motz propres et epithetes non oysifz, orné de graves sentences, et varié de toutes manières de couleurs et ornementz poétiques." Il ne l'imagine pas sans imitations ou réminiscences de Pindare et Horace : "Qu'il n'y ait vers, où n'apparoisse quelque vestige de rare et antique érudition." (195)

Du Bellay thus conceives of the ode as a classical form, written in an elevated style that offered the poet a certain freedom or variety of "manieres de couleurs et ornementz poétiques." It should be noted that Du Bellay's subsequent practice sometimes deviated from this vision that he presents in the *Deffence*, since he rarely attempted to reach Pindaric heights of style and tone.

Ronsard echoes Du Bellay's ideas in the preface to his 1550 collection of odes, and this high, classical conception of the ode form distinguished the Pléiade from other theorists of the time. For example, in his 1548 treatise, Sébillet associated the ode with other forms that are not fixed and that are intimately associated with music: *cantiques*, *chants lyriques*, and *chansons*. Jean-Charles Montferran explains that Sébillet tried to show the relationship between the *chanson* form and Horatian odes by citing the example of Mellin de Saint-Gelais, a court poet who had never actually titled any of his poems odes. Like the neo-Latin poet Macrin, Saint-Gelais was known as a musician and he sang his poems while accompanying himself on the lute. He published little: he was closely attached to the courts of both François Ier and Henri II and most of his poetry was occasional in nature. The majority of his pieces were either performed live or circulated in manuscript form among a discrete courtly audience. Du Bellay and Ronsard were precisely trying to define themselves against Saint-Gelais and his generation, so they rejected Sébillet's treatment of the ode and

the analogy that he tried to build between the musicality of classical poets and the potential for the same in sixteenth-century France, as exemplified by Saint-Gelais's work. For Du Bellay and Ronsard, Saint Gelais shared nothing with classical poets. Ironically, fewer differences exist between Du Bellay and Sébillet than might be imagined: both define the ode as a flexible form that should take Horace as a model. At this early stage in his career, however, Du Bellay was unwilling to see any association between the ode form and the French tradition of *chansons* that would have been represented by Saint-Gelais and Clément Marot.<sup>181</sup>

Du Bellay describes the works of Saint-Gelais as “mieux dignes d'estre nommez chansons vulgaires qu'odes ou vers liriques” (Rouget, *L'Apothéose* 30), but although he dismisses contemporary “chansons vulgaires,” he and Ronsard are nonetheless keenly interested in the musical origins of the ode in Greece. Throughout his collections, Du Bellay frequently refers to his “chant” and his “lyre,” although in metaphorical rather than concrete terms. Ronsard himself owned a collection of instruments (Zecher 8) and famously asserted that the verses of lyrical poetry should be “mesurés à la lyre,” meaning that they should alternate masculine and feminine rhymes and be organized in regular stanzas--both qualities that would facilitate setting the poems to music and singing them.

Montferran points out that this restrictive definition excludes the irregular forms of the earliest Pléiade odes, and seems to be Ronsard's attempt to intervene and make his mark on literary history--perhaps in compensation for the fact that Du Bellay, his friend and rival, had published two collections of odes months before he did (46). Du Bellay published 29 odes in the *Vers Lyriques* of 1549--a collection that

---

<sup>181</sup>In his article “L'Esthétique de l'ode et de la chanson de la pléiade (1550-1560),” François Rouget has shown that despite some shared features, there are in fact concrete thematic, rhetorical, and prosodic differences between the ode form and the *chanson*.

Chamard considers inferior to Ronsard's 1550 *Odes*, but which nevertheless was the first unified collection of odes to be published.<sup>182</sup> The poems show great metric diversity, but Du Bellay does not pay careful attention to rhyme or stanzaic regularity. By December 1549 when he published a second volume titled *Recueil de Poésie*, he seems to have been persuaded by Ronsard's stricter formal standards because his odes to important figures at court are regular in form and alternate masculine and feminine rhymes. Ronsard himself wrote many irregular odes, but he later removed them from the main section of the 1550 *Odes* and placed them in a separate section inserted at the end and titled *Bocage*. Following Ronsard, Peletier du Mans also insists on the alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes in his 1555 *Art Poétique*, and this becomes one of the defining features of the genre, even if Ronsard and Du Bellay occasionally felt free to ignore the recommendation.

### **The Ode form and music**

If Ronsard recommended the regular form of stanzas and the alternation of rhymes in order to facilitate the musical performance of odes, one might assume that many would have been set to music and sung. This, however, is not the case. Isabelle His has shown that musicians preferred to set Ronsard's sonnets to music rather than his odes (85), and she attributes this to the content of Ronsard's odes rather than the form. His early odes were lofty, complicated Pindaric pieces for which it was difficult to imagine music and which offered little entertainment value (Desan and Van Orden 478). His sonnets, however, were organized around themes of love, followed the same regular rhyme patterns that he had recommended for odes, and were limited in length

---

<sup>182</sup> Rouget alludes to Ronsard's discomfort and anxiety about publishing his collection in the wake of Du Bellay's. The preface of Ronsard's 1550 collection stresses that his work is original and does not imitate any other contemporary poets ("Présences" 37-38).

(Brooks 71). The topic, brevity, and regularity of the sonnets lent themselves well to musical settings. Ronsard's 1552 collection of the *Amours* contained a supplement of music that proposed several musical templates to which most of the sonnets could be sung. This experiment in publishing poetry and music together, however, does not seem to have become popular in the 1550's. Hardly any other poets or composers followed Ronsard's example, and later editions of the *Amours* were published without the supplement.

In his collections published in 1555 (*Meslanges*) and 1556 (*Continuation des Amours*) Ronsard abandoned the elevated Pindaric model and adopted the simpler form of ode inspired by Anacreon and Horace. Some of these poems were also set to music, but after 1556 Ronsard wrote very few odes, or any other poetry that was appropriate for musical accompaniment, with the exception of *mascarades* and other occasional pieces for court life for which the music has been lost. Thus, the period of his career in which he wrote odes and poems appropriate for music is mostly confined to the years between 1550 and 1556.

In comparison to Ronsard, relatively fewer of Du Bellay's poems were set to music. In total, 25 of Du Bellay's poems are known to have been set to music. This is less than Ronsard, Marot, and Saint-Gelais, similar in number to Baïf, and more than Belleau, Tyard and Magny (Dobbins 598). Frank Dobbins shows that one sonnet from the 1549 collection *L'Olive* was set to music, and then nothing further until 1557 when a Parisian firm published music for his "Dialogue d'un amoureux et echo."<sup>183</sup> In 1558 Du Bellay published *Divers Jeux Rustiques*, which contained easy and charming poems--none titled *ode*--but several titled *chant* or *chanson*. This 1558 collection

---

<sup>183</sup> This musical setting happened despite Barthélemy Aneau's assertion that Du Bellay's sonnets are inappropriate for singing (Brooks 73).

inspired most of the music written for any of Du Bellay's poems, and it included his most popular piece: "Villanelle" for which there were at least three musical versions created. The Villanelle was potentially written for Marguerite, Duchesse de Berry, just as his 1559 "Epithalame" for her marriage to Philippe Emmanuel de Savoie. This wedding poem was designed to be sung and performed by Jean de Morel's three daughters. Finally, part of a *Chanson* from this collection was also set to music (see page 152 of Chapter 2).

Despite the fact that many of their poems were set to music, the Pléiade poets saw music and the playing of instruments less as a concrete practice to be pursued than an ideal analogy, a rich metaphor for their writing (Zecher 3, Desan and Van Orden 479). For them, language was all important, the sacred substance of the poet's prophetic work, and they may have been reluctant to distract attention from their verses by combining them with melody. They also were increasingly aware of the power of publication to reach greater audiences, and the ephemeral performances of poems set to music must have seemed less appealing than the permanence of print collections. In the end, the ode prospered as a genre in the mid-sixteenth century not for its association with music, but rather because of its freedom of form and the flexibility that it offered poets.

### **Nomenclature and the flexibility of the ode form**

The appealing flexibility of the ode was only limited by the poet's inspiration and arbitrary choices. Michel Jourde points out that this differentiates the ode form

not only from fixed forms like the sonnet, but from epic and tragic poetry as well. The sonnet imposes obvious constraints, but the epic or tragic poet is limited by content rather than form--by the story that he wishes to narrate and the length it takes to do so properly:

le poète lyrique commence et finit où il veut. “La loi” à laquelle il obéit n’a pas d’autre source que lui, mais elle ne se découvre que dans le temps de la composition du poème. Elle ne lui préexiste pas. L’ode, c’est le poète ; mais le poète est ce que l’ode le fait être. (Jourde 63)

The tremendous freedom inherent in the ode is mirrored by the idiosyncratic terminology used to define and title poems that did not follow a fixed form.<sup>184</sup>

François Rouget shows that while poets tended to assign the simple title of *ode* to a piece if it was included in an ensemble of similar poems (Du Bellay’s *Vers Lyriques*, Ronsard’s *Odes*), they also could assign a title that was more related to the content rather than the form of the poem if this were relatively more important to the author. During the period 1549-1552, when the Pléiade was most rigid about instilling its conception of poetry and the proper genres to use, the form of a poem was generally more important than the content when determining the title. Examining the entire corpus produced during the period 1549-1661, however, Rouget identifies other titles that could be associated with the ode:

Par ordre d’importance, on note *l’ode* (pastoral, en dialogue, etc.), les *vers lyriques*, le *chant lyrique* (mesuré, triomphal), la *chanson*, *l’odelette*, *l’hymne*, puis *l’épithalame*, le *cantique*, la *palinodie*, le *discours*, *l’épicede*, le *vœu*, la *complainte*, *l’épitaphe*, *l’élégie*, le *péan*, etc. Le nom ou plutôt le genre de l’ode emprunte ses titres à des formes voisines. (32)

---

<sup>184</sup> This freedom exists particularly in the Horatian tradition which invoked the trope of *copia* and deployed a variety of topics and meters. The Pindaric form was more fixed, with its structure of *stophes*, *antistophes*, and *epodes*.

This poetic practice tended to deviate from the literary theory of the time. In contrast to the (often contradictory) definitions that attempted to fix the formal aspect of odes in mid-century *Arts Poétiques*, Rouget notes that in practice

les poètes affublaient leurs odes de toutes sortes de dénominations selon l'idée qu'ils se faisaient de leurs pièces; le titre prenant alors en considération le contenu ou la fonction du poème (étrennes; louanges; invocation; hymne; discours...). (32)

While these titles reflect many diverse functions (poems in honor of important individuals, friends and enemies; the various events in their lives; religious sentiment and ceremony) the poems are linked by the social roles that they play.

### **Social Aspects of the French Renaissance ode**

From their Pindaric origins, odes were a social form. Their function was to celebrate victorious athletes at the Olympic and other games. They were performed by groups in front of an audience in the evenings after the games, in order to honor and memorialize great performances. Although the context was different in Renaissance France, Rouget maintains that French odes of the period retain the same preoccupation with praise (46-47), offered in a social setting. The poems retain elements of oral performance as well: Pindaric poems were sung to an audience and thus combined eloquent language with music. French Renaissance odes, even when not set to music, refer self-consciously to performance, song, singers, and the act of making music. It is a convivial form that mentions banquets and festivals, and that the Pléiade associates with eating and drinking and the Greek forms of "l'*encômion* (chant exécuté dans un banquet, mais aussi l'éloge), et le *skolion* (accompagné de la lyre et exécuté par chacun des convives)" (Rouget 57).

The Renaissance ode is thus quite different from Romantic lyric poetry. It does not celebrate an individual voice or offer an introspective perspective: it rather is concerned with public, social occasions and tends to include many voices. It seeks dialogue and seeks to influence others, both individuals and collective bodies, and frequently exemplifies Jakobsen's conative function, in place of or in addition to the emotive function.<sup>185</sup> The persona of the poet is present, usually with the insertion of the first person "je," but this persona does not dominate and is only found in specific sections of the ode. It reaches out to the addressee, and the addressee's family, friends, colleagues, and fellow citizens, both praising them and exhorting them to various actions. It thus seeks to engage the addressees and provoke a response, opening a dialogue that is inclusive and unfinished.<sup>186</sup> As mentioned above, this hospitable and open orientation towards others contributes to the fluidity and flexibility of the form and results in the variety of titles that are assigned to it.

As poetry circulated increasingly in print form, the ode tended to create a dialogue between writer and reader(s), rather than performer and audience. François Rouget suggests that the oral elements of many odes are due not only to the oral tradition that created the form, but also to the need to recreate the impression or effects of an oral form when it appeared in print. This accounts for the increasingly self-referential mention of the poet's lyre, his song, and his voice. Vocative and phatic expressions also contribute to the voiced and dialogic quality of many French Renaissance odes.

---

<sup>185</sup> For an explanation of the conative function, see Bizer, *Lettres romaines*, note 6, page 238.

<sup>186</sup> Du Bellay's sonnets begin to assume these qualities in the second edition of the *Olive*. See discussion and note on pages 52 and 53 of Chapter 1.

### **Publication history of odes in the mid sixteenth century**

François Rouget has identified three phases of publication of mid-century odes. The first poem written in French and titled *ode* was probably Ronsard's single piece in Peletier du Mans's 1547 *Vers Lyriques*. Rouget says that the first wave of odes follows this collection from 1549-1552 and coincides with Ronsard's first works and his immediate imitators. A second phase occurred from 1553 to 1556, in which publications of odes proliferated, whether in collections solely composed of odes or mixed collections containing several genres. Finally, from 1557-1561 there is a later series of publications that Rouget interprets as a late eruption of a genre that Ronsard had abandoned and that was already falling out of fashion.

### **Du Bellay and the Ode**

Du Bellay's own publications of odes fall into the first and last periods that Rouget identifies. This particular publishing history may have to do with competition between him and Ronsard and the influence that they had on each others' work. As many critics have noted, the two poets frequently refer to each other, write to each other, and each of their published volumes seems to respond to the other's work in a dialogue that is both collaborative and competitive. Du Bellay was the first Pléiade poet to publish a collection of odes, the *Vers Lyriques* in early 1549. The volume was not dedicated to any one person, but rather to his home region. The first ode was titled "Les Louanges d'Anjou/Au Fleuve de Loyre". By the end of the same year Du Bellay displayed more courtly tendencies: in December 1549 he published *Recueil de Poésie*, which was dedicated to *Princesse Madame Marguerite, Seur Unique du Roy*. The collection contained praise poems to powerful figures at court. His 1550 *La Musagnoemachie et Autres Oeuvres Poétiques* was more varied, as was his *Oeuvres*

*a l'invention de l'auteur* published in 1552. Praise poems represent only a portion of the total edition in each case. In 1553 Du Bellay published a second edition of the *Recueil de Poésie* before leaving for Rome. He did not publish any further odes until after his return to France, when the *Divers Jeux Rustiques* appeared in 1558.

Ronsard's publishing of odes started after Du Bellay's and ended earlier. Although he published a single ode in Peletier du Mans's 1547 *Vers Lyriques*, his first complete collection, *Quatre premiers livres des Odes* and the *Ensemble de Bocage*, appeared together in the same volume in 1550. This collection was followed by a collection of sonnets in 1552 titled *Les Amours*, which ended with a section titled *Ensemble le cinquième livre des Odes*. 1553 saw second, updated editions of each of these volumes. Collections published from 1554-1556 were all mixed in genre and contained odes among other forms, but after 1556 Ronsard's production of odes virtually ended.

The pattern that emerges in the publishing history of the two poets is one of influence and competition: Du Bellay published odes first, followed by Ronsard who attempted to establish control over the form by offering a stricter, more limiting definition ("vers mesurés à la lyre") and by producing a steady stream of examples up until the middle of the decade. He wrote twice as many odes as Du Bellay between 1549 and 1553 and never stopped repeating his claim to have been the first to write odes--a claim that Du Bellay never disputed. The claim was repeated often by other poets as well, and if Du Bellay wrote relatively fewer odes than Ronsard, and if other Pléiade poets like Baïf and Jodelle wrote hardly any at all, it may have been because Ronsard appropriated the form for himself and left little room for others to experiment with it (Dauvois 10). Du Bellay seemed to carve creative space for himself by adopting a different model and style than Ronsard, and by continuing to write in the

form once Ronsard had abandoned it: Ronsard first imitated Pindar and wrote on “sujets graves” before turning to “odelettes.” In contrast, Du Bellay tended toward the Horatian “sujets moyens” from the very first. Shortly after Ronsard stopped publishing odes, Du Bellay returned from Rome and published an entire collection in *Les Divers Jeux Rustiques* (this in 1558, the same year that he published his famous collections of innovative sonnets, *Les Regrets*, *Les Antiquités de Rome*, and the Latin poems *Poemata*). The Angevin poet thus has the last word at the end of the decade when he continues to produce a variety of odes both playful and encomiastic. This is a fertile period for Du Bellay, in contrast to Ronsard’s relatively slow production of lyric verse during the same years. In addition to Du Bellay’s printed edition, there were many unpublished odes that only became public in the 1569 Aubert edition of collected works. These include several written to Diane de Poitiers, mistress to Henri II. When addressing Diane, Du Bellay most frequently chooses the ode and its related form, the *chanson*. This formal decision was likely to have been a result of Du Bellay’s relationship to Diane, her position at court, and her own taste in literature.

## Du Bellay's Poems to Diane de Poitiers

### Introduction: Diane de Poitiers and patronage

Although difficult to say with certainty, it appears that Du Bellay sang the praises of Henri II's mistress, Diane de Poitiers, Duchesse de Valentinois (1499-1566), relatively late in his career. Diane had married the distinguished Louis de Brézé in 1515 and born two daughters before being widowed in 1531. Biographers speculate that her relationship with Henri began in the fall of 1536, when Diane was thirty-seven years old and Henri only seventeen.<sup>187</sup> It lasted until Henri's death in 1559. Diane's remarkable position at the French court was not only due to her status as Henri's favorite. She belonged to a powerful family both by birth and by marriage, and by all accounts she was ambitious and efficient, an able administrator of her family's extensive affairs, many properties and great wealth. She became the most powerful woman in France when Henri assumed the throne in 1547, and he is reported to have met with her daily to seek counsel on both public and private affairs. While many biographers mention that she was a great patron of arts, evidence for this is limited with regards to literature. Concerning architecture, painting and sculpture, she clearly commissioned many artists and artisans to design, construct, and ornament her famous chateau at Anet, as well as other properties.<sup>188</sup>

As for music, Howard Mayer Brown has said that the musical establishment prospered during the reign of Henri II, and that although Diane "pretended to great austerity as a widow, she was in fact keenly interested in music. She played the lute

---

<sup>187</sup> For this and other biographical information consult Erlanger, Cloulas, and Patricia Z. Thompson.

<sup>188</sup> See Françoise Bardon's *Diane de Poitiers et le mythe de Diane* as well as Sigrid Ruby "Diane de Poitiers : Veuve et Favorite" in Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier's *Patronnes et mécènes en France à la Renaissance*.

and keyboard and sang” (43). It was even said that Diane joined in the somewhat scandalous habit of singing psalms set to dance music (Maurette 441). Although three volumes of songs and motets published around 1552 have Diane’s stamp in them and may have been part of Diane’s library (Quentin-Bauchart 82-83), only three texts/songs published in 1559 are known to be dedicated to her and any documentation of patronage that Diane provided to musicians remains to be unearthed in archives (Tacaille 386-408).

In terms of literature, an ode published by Olivier de Magny in 1559 mentions that Diane likes to read, but does not mention the names of any specific authors:<sup>189</sup>

Vous lisez volontiers, & pour vostre lecture  
Vous ne prenez iamais une vaine esriture,  
Ains tousiours vous prenez un livre vertueux,  
Afin de tousiours faire un lire fructueux. (65-68)

Diane is known to have ordered rich book bindings, but a sale catalogue of the library at Anet, contains hardly any literary works written during her lifetime.<sup>190</sup> In his brief assessment of her collection, Anatole de Montaiglon asserts that Diane’s literary tastes were conservative and that she had little enthusiasm for contemporary works. This is confirmed by the 1724 sale catalogue. The sixteenth-century books and manuscripts listed in the catalogue are primarily either religious in nature (editions of the Bible or lives of Saints), or historical and biographical (chronicles, the lives of kings or important figures). As far as poetry, volumes of Ovid, Virgil, Dante, Petrarch, Bocaccio, and Guillaume de Lorris are listed. An unattributed volume is titled *De la Création du Monde en vers, avec d’autres Poësies Chrétiennes*, and there

---

<sup>189</sup> The first ode in book three of Magny’s odes, pp. 125-126 in the Slatkine reprint of his *Oeuvres*.

<sup>190</sup> For information on bindings, see Bushnell “Diane de Poitiers and her books,” Melchior-Bonnet (164) and W.L. Wiley (49). For the catalogue see *Catalogue des manuscrits trouvez après le décès de Madame LA PRINCESSE, dans son Château Royal d’Anet*. Paris : Pierre Gandouin, 1724. Microfilm at Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois.

are twelve unspecified volumes of “anciens Poètes.” There also are numerous volumes of medieval romances including *Amadis de Gaule*. If Diane had commissioned, purchased or received any volumes of mid-16<sup>th</sup>-century poetry or literature, they disappeared from the library at Anet before its sale in 1724.<sup>191</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, Ernest Quentin Bauchart assembled a list of books with Diane’s stamp in them that he had found in various libraries. Some of the works correspond to listings in the 1724 catalogue and others do not. Most notably, Quentin Bauchart found a richly bound volume in the Bibliothèque nationale titled *Poesies de Melin Saint-Gelais*. It does not bear Diane’s stamp but has this inscription in the front cover: “Livre de vers que le roy Henri second avoit donne à Diane de Poitiers, duchesse de Valentinois, sa maitresse” (82). While it is impossible to know whether this inscription is accurate, if it were true it would mean that Diane did in fact possess a volume by this sixteenth-century court poet, a generation older than the Pléiade and initially repudiated by them, who was nonetheless popular with both François 1er and his son Henri. It might confirm his success with Diane and explain why the tone of Du Bellay’s poems to Diane resemble that of Saint-Gelais’s poetry, even though Du Bellay had criticized him earlier in the *Deffence*. Du Bellay undoubtedly would have been happy to have a volume of his own verse added to the library at Anet and Saint-Gelais may have indicated the model to follow.

### **Other Poets and Diane de Poitiers**

Although the library at Anet seems to have contained few volumes of sixteenth-century poetry, a survey of poets in the mid-sixteenth century reveals that

---

<sup>191</sup> Melchior-Bonnet affirms the difficulty of establishing any definitive list of Diane’s books “La liste des ouvrages est difficile à établir avec précision, en raison des pertes et des ventes ultérieures, mais aussi parce que le chiffre de Diane se confond souvent avec celui du roi : double D barrés d’un H, arcs et carquois.” (164).

most wrote at least a few poems to Diane. In addition to Du Bellay, Clément Marot, François Habert, Peletier du Mans, Mellin de Saint Gelais, Gabriele Simeoni, Magny, Jodelle, and Ronsard all composed poems to Diane in a variety of genres. A chronological examination of these poems from 1538-1559 reveals a change in tone from the earliest playful or satirical poems written when Diane was the *dauphin's* new mistress, to later reverential ones that acknowledge Diane's increased stature as the virtual queen of France.

A few poets wrote about Diane before Henri assumed the throne in 1547. When Henri was still the *dauphin*, there was much rivalry between his coterie and the court of his father, the king François Ier. This rivalry was personified by the enmity that existed between François' mistress Anne de Pisseleu, Duchesse d'Etampes, and Diane de Poitiers. Edouard Bourciez alludes to some of the first known poems on Diane, indicating that as early as 1538--when Anne de Pisseleu was still secure in her power--Diane was the subject of satirical poems, particularly on her age:

Aux applaudissements des courtisans d'alors, et surtout de la duchesse d'Etampes, Jean Voulté lui reprochait, dans ses *Hendécasyllabes*, un visage fardé, des dents artificielles et une chevelure d'emprunt ; il comptait ses rides, et, grâce au latin qui "brave l'honnêteté," il entrait dans les détails plus intimes et plus scabreux, il la déshabillait d'une façon cynique. (97)<sup>192</sup>

A more delicate early verse to Diane is the five line *étrenne* written by Clément Marot on January 1, 1541 when Marot and the court were in residence at Fontainebleau, and later published in a collection called *Les estreines de Clement Marot*, better-known as *Les Etrennes aux Dames de la Court* (Mayer 468-470). C.A. Mayer reproduces *Étrenne XI, A Madame la grand'Seneschale* :

---

<sup>192</sup> Cloulas notes that Jean Voulté was a "poète champenois" who received a stipend from Diane's rival, the Duchesse d'Etampes (107). His Latin satire was titled *In Pictavium anum aulicam: Contre la Poitiers, la vieillard de cour*.

Que voulez, Diane bonne,  
Que vous donne?  
Vous n'eustes, comme j'entens,  
Jamais autant d'heur au printemps  
Qu'en Automne. (469)

The references to spring and autumn allude to the age difference between Diane and Henri, showing Marot's light touch to be more playful than satirical.

Several years later in 1545, François Habert wrote a friendlier poem to Diane, in which the Duchesse D'Etampes is portrayed as Venus, a goddess soon to be deposed by Diana:

Certes Venus n'est pas encore morte,  
Déesse elle est, grand honneur on luy porte :  
Que pleust à Dieu la voir en mer plongée,  
La République en serait bien vengée.  
Mais peu à peu Venus s'abolira,  
Et en son nom Diane on publiera,  
Que toute fable ha dict estre pudique,  
Contraire en tout au vouloir vénérique.  
Certainement dire bien je puis ores,  
En nostre temps que Venus vit encores :  
On luy faict feste, on érige trophées,  
Et en son nom pompes sont estofées [...].<sup>193</sup>

As Françoise Bardon notes, Habert uses the traditional opposition of Venus and Diana to contrast the reputed disorder of François Ier's court with the more austere atmosphere surrounding that of Henri II, organized around principles of chivalry and Spanish culture. The reference "on luy faict feste" may indicate that festivals and parties were already being organized in honor of Diane de Poitiers before Henri was crowned, although no record remains of any festivities (42). Habert is a clear partisan of the dauphin's court, happy to imagine Henri's ascension to the throne and the power it would bring Diane.

---

<sup>193</sup> "Déploration poétique de feu M. Antoine du Prat, en son vivant chancelier et légat de France, avec l'Exposition morale de la Fable des trois Déesses : Vénus, Juno et Pallas, par François HABERT d'Issouldun en Berry, Lyon, 1545" (Bardon 41).

The more prominent poet, Mellin de Saint-Gelais, had a long career writing for both François Ier and Henri II. He managed to escape alienating either coterie, and was very often present at the court of both kings. Thirty years older than Du Bellay, less ambitious than the Pléiade poets, he published little and preferred to circulate his work by manuscript. His numerous occasional verses leave a record of the rhythms of court life and amusements. Diane is included in many pieces that address the full court or Henri: sometime between 1545 and 1547 Saint-Gelais wrote a sonnet for the *dauphin* which alludes to Diane as “la belle Eglé” (1:194). A *mascarade* written in 1549 for the entry of Catherine de Medici into Paris contains a verse for Diane (1:23), as does the “Chanson des Astres” (2:315) which was written for women at the court of François Ier. In it, the mythical figures of Endymion and Diana represent the *dauphin* and his mistress:

Endimion, par fermeté,  
De bien aymer s’est aquité :  
Aussi la lune claire  
Cognoit bien qu’il ha merité  
Qu’on luy doive complaire.

Le discours d’elle va baissant  
Et l’amour de luy va croissant,  
Sans se pouvoir deffaire.  
S’il l’eust veue en son beau croissant,  
Pensez qu’il eust peu faire. (6-15)

In his biography of Mellin de Saint-Gelais, Molinier claims that these ten lines in the “Chanson des Astres” were the most recited of any at the time, and they became short-hand descriptions for Henri and Diane. Molinier imagines that courtiers repeated these verses to flatter Henri and Diane in various circumstances (431).

Saint-Gelais also wrote individual praise poems to both Diane and her two daughters. These tend to be short fixed forms--*dizains* or *onzains*--in which the poet

celebrates the beauty of Diane and Henri's love for her without asking for any particular favors. The following is representative:

Les deus beautés dont Venus est deesse  
Et sur qui rare est le commandement  
Furent tousjours, o illustre Duchesse,  
Vostre plus grand et plus riche ornement.  
L'un est au corps, l'autre à l'entendement.  
Mais le dernier tousjours vous fera vivre,  
En quoy vous veult Venus mesmes ensuivre,  
N'estimant plus un bien legier et court.  
Laissez-la donc, Madame, estre à delivre  
Et la souffres venir en cette cour. (2:176, 1-10)

Saint Gelais's verses are written from the perspective of a court intimate, confident and secure in his position. He does not beg favors--presumably because he does not need to. He merely flatters and amuses, teasing Diane to lighten her austere exterior and let love play a more open role at court.

Peletier du Mans, a less intimate member of the court circle, published his *Oeuvres Poétiques* in 1547. In addition to containing the first poems ever published by Ronsard (an ode, probably the first French poem to be titled *ode*) and Du Bellay (a *dizain* addressed to the city of Mans), the collection contains a ten-line epigram written by Peletier to "Madame la grand' Seneschalle." The poem declares Diane to be an object of national pride. Peletier warns Rome, Thebes, Greece and Egypt that Diane is equal to their heroines Lucrecia, Corinna, Penelope, Helen, and Cleopatra, and then concludes:

La France seule a tout cela & mieux,  
En quoy Diane a l'un des plus beaux lieux,  
Soit en vertu, beauté faveur, & race :  
Car si cela elle n'avoit des Cieux,  
D'un si grand Roy n'eust merité la grace. (6-10)

The king's love is thus proof of Diane's merit; a sovereign could not love an unworthy object. The king is usually the ultimate arbiter of value for Du Bellay as

well, and he will make the same argument in one of his own odes to Diane, probably written ten years later. This particular poem by Peletier is notable mostly because it appears in the first volume of poetry in which Du Bellay and Ronsard ever published, and it should have meant that they were aware of Diane as a powerful figure at court. They did not, however, follow the example of Peletier du Mans and include poems to Diane in their first collections of poetry, published soon after in 1549 and 1550.

One of the few documented patronage relationships that Diane had with a poet can be found in letters from the Italian poet Gabriel Symeon (1500-1575), who visited Anet in 1550, 1554, and 1557.<sup>194</sup> In 1550 Symeon had recently arrived in Paris and needed a source of income. He became acquainted with Diane's son-in law, who solicited Diane on his behalf. In a letter dated September 18, 1550 Symeon wrote to Robert de la Marck, husband of Diane de Poitiers's daughter Françoise de Brézé, to report that la Marck's appeal to Diane on the poet's behalf had been successful. Diane had spoken to the king, who gave Symeon permission for a position in Piedmont along with letters of introduction and a sum of money to travel to Turin and claim his post. In November, however, once Symeon arrived in Turin, he reported that all the places had already been distributed and that he had arrived too late to benefit from Henri's support. He wrote to Diane on November 10, 1550 to say that having found no position in Italy, he was "contrainct de revenir par delà [en France] à pourchasser et attendre en quelque autre endroict recompense du Roy" (Jusselin 6). Symeon wrote an epigram on "La Fontaine d'Anet" in 1550, later modified and re-published in 1558 along with an illustration of the fountain, a short narrative of a visit he had to Anet, and a series of three "Devises pour les basses galleries du jardin d'Anet," which would have decorated this walkway in the garden.

---

<sup>194</sup> See article by Maurice Jusselin, as well as Françoise Bardou (57-61).

In contrast to Symeon, Ronsard had little luck in receiving patronage from Diane, and in fact he did not even seek it until 1555, when he published an ode to the “Duchesse (Quand je voudrois celebrer ton renom)” in the third edition of the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes*, originally published in 1550. Ronsard is subject to more scholarship than any other poet of the period, and as a result his relationship to Diane is documented in more detail than for any other poet of the time, including Du Bellay. In his 1932 biography of Ronsard, Laumonier expresses surprise that Ronsard did not write to Diane until publishing this ode in 1555. Ronsard subsequently addressed two sonnets to Diane--one in 1556 and one in 1558--which he later removed from editions published after Diane’s death.

Laumonier’s puzzlement is resolved by a later Ronsard biographer, Michel Dassonville, who offers an explanation for the late and scant appearance of poems to Diane in Ronsard’s oeuvre: first, it seems that the members of the *brigade* counted too heavily on the patronage of François Ier when they began writing in the 1540’s, and his early death took them by surprise. They had neglected to court Henri II or his mistress and had few if any connections to their circles. After François’ death, they quickly began writing in honor of Henri II, but a second issue complicated Ronsard’s relationship with Diane: he was a close friend of Charles de Pisseleu, half-brother of Anne de Pisseleu, mistress of François Ier and Diane’s rival and enemy. After the death of François, Diane stripped Anne de Pisseleu of her lands and jewelry and banished her from the court. Many other former advisors to François Ier decided to leave Paris on their own accord and withdraw from the court to the countryside. One of these was Charles de Pisseleu. In March 1547 during the first months of the new regime, Ronsard followed Charles to his property in Condom in southwest France and remained with him for some time. This friendship with Pisseleu allied Ronsard with

the opposition from the very beginning of Henri II's reign, and his personal loyalty to the Pisseleu family may account for his initial refusal to write in honor of Diane.

Later in 1547 Ronsard compounded his difficult relation to Diane and Henri by writing a Pindaric ode to celebrate the victory of Guy de Chabot, seigneur de Jarnac and brother-in-law to Anne de Pisseleu, in a duel against François de la Châtaigneraie. Henri II had insulted Jarnac, who was unable to respond to the king's insult because it was illegal to challenge a "fils de France." François de la Châtaignerie offered himself as a substitute for Henri and was expected to win, but to the consternation of Henri and his court, this champion was killed by a deft blow from Jarnac. It was a victory for the Pisseleu faction, and their faithful friend Ronsard not only celebrated this success in 1547, but extended his offence to Diane by retaining the ode in his 1550 collection of odes.

After the publication of the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes* in 1550, Ronsard suffered a public insult at the Louvre from Mellin de Saint Gelais, one of Henri's favorite poets. Both Ronsard and Du Bellay had made frequent criticisms of Saint-Gelais in the *Deffence* and in prefaces to various collections, and it seems that Saint-Gelais wished to respond to their attacks, or was incited to do so by Diane, as Dassonville suggests:

Nous ne prétendons pas non plus rejeter sur Diane de Poitiers ... l'entière responsabilité des déboires de Ronsard à la cour quoique nous soupçonnions fortement qu'elle ne fut pas étrangère à la querelle du Louvre ni aux échecs répétés qu'il essuya dans ses tentatives pour obtenir un bénéfice substantiel, évêché ou abbaye. Le moins qu'on peut dire c'est qu'il avait fait preuve de maladresse en gardant un silence total sur Diane ... jusqu'en 1555. (215)

Henri's sister, Marguerite de France (Duchesse de Berry) and Michel de L'Hospital both rose to defend Ronsard against Saint-Gelais's insult on this occasion, and the incident inspired Ronsard's famous Pindaric piece *Ode a Michel de L'Hospital*.

Given Ronsard's personal antipathy to the Duchesse de Valentinois, one can wonder what motivated him finally to write in her honor. Laumonier explains that during the period from 1555-1560, Ronsard wrote mostly "practical" poems, because he wanted to be named the official poet at court and receive additional sinecures such as "eveschez, prieurez, abbayes" (179). The attempt to curry favor with Diane falls squarely in this period when Ronsard devoted all his energy to court poetry.

Laumonier says that Ronsard did not write in lyric forms during this time, meaning that he used ten syllable lines and alexandrines rather than shorter rhythmic lyric lines that required more time and attention. The ten and twelve syllable verses were closer to prose and thus easier to write. Ronsard's first ode to Diane de Poitiers was, for example, written in decasyllabic rhymed couplets.

This initial piece to Diane is half-hearted and written mostly in the conditional mood. It begins :

Quand je voudrois célèbre ton renom  
Je ne dirois que Diane est ton nom  
Car on feroit sans se travailler guiere  
De ton seul nom une Iliade entiere (Cohen 2 : 807)

He goes on to say that he would instead praise Diane's ancestors, which is a technique that he had once recommended to poets who wished to write a piece of encomia but who struggled to find qualities to praise in the object of their attention.<sup>195</sup> The poem runs for 34 lines and mentions Diane's ancestors and native region in mythological

---

<sup>195</sup> See Ronsard's preface to his 1550 *Odes*.

terms before anything concrete is said of Diane herself. At this point Ronsard compares her to Lucretia and Helen of Troy before saying:

Je chanterois encores ta bonté  
Ton port divin, ta grace, et ta beauté  
Comme toujours ta bien-heureuse vie  
A repoussé par sa vertu l'envie; (Cohen 2 : 808-09)

Ronsard continues to use the conditional, and says that after singing Diane's goodness, beauty and grace he would also celebrate her religious faith and other good traits for which the king loves her:

Comme tu es la parente du Roy  
Qui te chérit comme une Dame sage,  
De bon conseil, et de gentil courage,  
Grave, benigne, aimant les bons esprits,  
Et ne mettant les Muses à mespris. (Cohen 2 : 809)

After lauding Diane's positive qualities, including the hopeful detail that she does not discount the Muses, Ronsard then declares that he would also celebrate her chateau Anet and he gives an unornamented listing of the chateau's features:

Je chanterois d'Annet les edifices,  
Termes, piliers, chapiteaux, frontispieces,  
Voutes, lambris, canelures, et non,  
Comme plusieurs, les fables de ton nom ; (Cohen 2 : 809)

In the end, these promised praises of Diane's ancestors, personal qualities, and chateau seem targeted, however, to elicit favor from the king as much as Diane, as we read in the last lines of the ode:

Et te louant, je chanterois peut-estre  
Si hautement, que ce grand Roy mon maistre  
En ta faveur auroit l'ouvrage à gré  
Qu'en vœu j'aurois à tes pieds consacré. (Cohen 2 : 809)

The poem is so reserved in relation to Diane that it counts as faint praise, or rather the promise of praise, at most. Ronsard seems to realize this in the first sonnet that he publishes to Diane a year later:

Seray-je seul vivant en France de vostre âge,  
Sans chanter vostre nom si craint et si puissant?  
Diray-je point l'honneur de vostre beau croissant?  
Fera-je point pour vous quelque immortel ouvrage? (Cohen 2: 827)

It seems that these questions are destined to remain true, since Ronsard only writes one other piece to Diane, a second and final sonnet published in 1558. In the sonnet Ronsard says that he has not yet benefitted from any of Diane's largesse, and he exhorts her to support the poets who serve Henri II:

Ainsi nostre Soleil, vous ornant de ses rais,  
Vous fait par tout verser un bon heur en la France,  
Fors sur moy, qui ne sens encores l'abondance  
Que dessus un chacun dependent vos beaux trais.  
...  
Phoebus ayme les vers, comme Roy des poetes,  
Et Diane est sa sœur : donc, si sa sœur vous estes,  
Aymez les serviteurs de Phoebus vostre frere. (Cohen 2: 883)

Ronsard argues that Diane should give proof of nobility and largesse; if she is really of the same stature as the king she should champion the intellectual life of the nation in the same way that the king does. This sonnet, like the two other poems that Ronsard addresses to Diane, lacks enthusiasm and offers little concrete praise for the duchess--a likely reflection of Ronsard's continued antipathy for the king's mistress.

Guy Demerson has identified another undercurrent of hostility in his study of Ronsard's use of the mythological figure of Diana. He found that Ronsard rarely made use of this goddess in his poetry, but that when he did he transmitted the following personal interpretation of the deity:

[Ronsard] appréhende la personnalité de Diane avec sa sensibilité de poète, qui comporte un jugement esthétique spontané : le nom de la déesse n'est pas pour lui une métonymie rhétorique, une antonomase décorative. En face du rayonnement de Phébus-Apollon ou de Jupiter royal, des tendres Nymphes des eaux et des bois, des Muses porteuses de l'Esprit, Diane est une silhouette pâle, hostile et réfrigérante. (104)

Rather than focus on various traditional attributes of the goddess that include (not without contradiction) both fertility and virtuous chastity, Ronsard finds the virgin goddess to inhibit love, warmth, and light. Whether or not Ronsard had Diane de Poitiers in mind when these references to the mythical Diana appear, the visions of a “pale, hostile, and refrigerating” goddess cannot have had any charm for the Duchesse de Valentinois if she ever were an audience to the poems.

While Ronsard’s antipathy towards Diane de Poitiers may have limited his sources of patronage and impacted his career in the 1550’s, it seems to have earned the gratitude of Catherine de Médicis, as Dasonville explains : “son attachement indefectible à la dynastie des Valois lui vaudra quelques années plus tard la protection de Catherine de Médicis et la récompense qu’il avait si vainement sollicitée tant que Diane de Poitiers avait inspiré les décisions d’Henri II” (218).

The poet Olivier de Magny apparently had a more positive relationship to Diane, perhaps because Jean d’Avanson, his principal patron, was Diane’s ally. Magny visited Anet, probably in his function as secretary to d’Avanson. Magny addressed four odes to Diane in his 1559 collection *Odes*, two in praise of the Duchesse herself and two in praise of the gardens at Anet. Magny has no trouble generating verses on these topics: where Ronsard wrote only one ode of 62 lines and two sonnets--none of them particularly complimentary--Magny’s four odes contain 54, 96, 24, and 160 lines. They are filled with ample, easy praise of the woman herself and the gardens of her chateau. A common thread in all four poems is the hyperbolic

description Diane's *grandeur* and an insistence on her perfection, impossible for the poet to equal in his poetry:<sup>196</sup>

Si doncq' vous tenez tout, & si tout vous avez,  
Et si tout le plus beau vous pouvez & scavez,  
Sans que rien qui soit vous ayez iamais faulte,  
Dequoy puis i'estrener une dame si haulte ? (126)

The most that the humble poet can provide to such a perfect object are offerings of poetry and affection, freely submitted at the altar of the goddess.

Mais vous, Madame, ayant si bien sçeu prendre  
Le plus grand bien que vous pouviez attendre,  
Ore en repos, arc & flesches quittant,  
Vous n'estes rien à bon droit souhaitant. (89)

This is one of several instances in which Magny claims that Diane lacks for nothing, and thus desires nothing in her state of perfect completeness. In Magny's work Diane appears to be a self-sufficient force, independent of human foibles and desires. Unlike the poems that Ronsard and Du Bellay write to Diane, Magny only mentions the king obliquely. Henri must be the "plus grand bien" to which Magny refers above, but that is the only mention of him in the poem. Magny seems to write for Diane alone, and seems to seek her sole approval, as Saint-Gelais does. Other poets--Du Bellay included--often seem to use poems to Diane as a vehicle for seeking the king's patronage. Magny's expansive and seemingly disinterested praise was rewarded: whether a favor of Diane or the result of other supportive patrons, he was named "secrétaire du roi" in May 1559, an excellent position for a young poet (Magny 83).

---

<sup>196</sup> Bourciez is critical of these poems: "Sa pièce est un modèle de l'insignifiant bavardage où aboutissait la vieille poésie descriptive" (106). He goes on to acknowledge, however, that "de tels vers plaisaient à ceux pour qui le poète les composait. Je ne suis pas bien sûr que le roi et Diane de Poitiers ne les aient lus avec infiniment plus de complaisance que les sonnets de Ronsard, semés d'épithètes grecques et de néologismes. Je crois que, pendant tout le règne encore, les courtisans ont prêté volontiers l'oreille à ces plates élucubrations, par défaut de goût, sans doute, et par manque d'éducation, peut-être aussi par un attachement instinctif aux vieux tours de la langue, au train d'idées que la race avait depuis longtemps accoutumé" (107).

This survey of poems to Diane from 1538 to 1559 shows that poets wrote to her in a variety of genres depending on their relationship to her and her relative power at the time. Jean Voulte was openly satirical in 1538 before Diane's power was solidified, Marot and Mellin de Saint-Gelais, consummate court poets, wrote to her in a variety of light occasional forms that they also used for other members of court. Gabriel Symeon wrote *devises* for Diane's gardens which were explicitly commissioned after he approached her for work, whereas Ronsard wrote an ode and two sonnets--both forms that were recommended by the Pléiade, and which clearly were not commissioned by Diane herself nor motivated by any intimate connection to the duchess or knowledge of her daily life. Finally, Magny wrote four warmly encomiastic odes in his collection of 1559. One is thus moved to ask how Du Bellay's poems to Diane fit into this context.

### **Du Bellay and Diane de Poitiers**

Du Bellay composed eight poems in four genres either to Diane or about Diane: two sonnets, three encomiastic odes, two chansons written in Diane's voice, and one *xenia* (Latin epigram).<sup>197</sup> Only one of these--sonnet 159 in the *Regrets*--was published in the poet's lifetime. The second sonnet and all other poems (odes and chansons) were published posthumously, for the most part in 1569 editions by Aubert and Morel. Chamard claims that it is difficult to date these posthumous poems with any accuracy. It is equally difficult to know whether they circulated in manuscript, and to which potential readers. It is noticeable that no poems are dedicated to Diane in

---

<sup>197</sup> Chamard mentions a ninth poem, a *chanson* in the *Divers Jeux Rustiques*, that does not name Diane but which he believes to have been written to her. In his biography of Du Bellay, Chamard also mentions that the poet writes more poems to the royal mistress than to Catherine, the queen, and remarks "Je regrette pour du Bellay qu'il se soit montré si prodigue envers une femme qui l'était si peu" (444). Béné dismisses Chamard's suggestion that *Chanson XXII* was written for Diane: he believes it more likely to have been dedicated to Marguerite de Berry (234-35), as do I (see p. 159 of Chapter 2).

Du Bellay's earliest published collections of odes to powerful people (*Recueil de Poésie*, 1549, *Oeuvres de l'invention de l'auteur*, 1552).<sup>198</sup> This may indicate that the poems to Diane were written during Du Bellay's time in Rome and afterwards.

Initially, Du Bellay may have been influenced by Ronsard's early antipathy for Diane, or he may not have understood the relative location of power at court before he left for Italy. His political skills may then have improved after observing his powerful benefactor Jean Du Bellay during his four years in Rome. While abroad, Du Bellay also worked closely with Olivier de Magny, poet and secretary to Jean D'Avanson, who was an ally of Diane's. Magny may have orchestrated introductions. For whatever the reason, after his return to France, Du Bellay seemed to enjoy an improved, favorable status in court society before his death in 1560.<sup>199</sup>

---

<sup>198</sup> Du Bellay does seem to allude to Diane, however, at the end of a long occasional piece to the king titled *Chant Triumphal sur le Voyage de Boulogne*, published in October 1549 in *Recueil de Poésie* (see my discussion of this poem on page 35 of Chapter 1). In a passage inspired by Virgil, who wrote of building a temple to Augustus, Du Bellay writes that he will build a temple to Henry II in black and white marble (Aris and Joukovsky 1: 337). These are Diane's colors, and are not specified in the Virgilian original. Du Bellay then continues: *De ce beau lieu le superbe grandeur/Imitera du Croissant la rondeur, / Où seront peints de Diane honorée / Les arcs, les traicts, et la trousse dorée.* (Aris and Joukovsky 1: 134-35, v.177-79). The crescent moon, the bow, arrow, and quivers are all symbols of Diana the hunting goddess and were routinely associated with Diane de Poitiers at this time. Since the Virgilian temple was not dedicated to Diana, this is an innovation of Du Bellay's and it seems likely to be an oblique reference to Henry II's mistress. This section is immediately followed by four lines addressed to Catherine de Médicis, and four lines to Marguerite de Berry, the king's sister. While these women are explicitly praised, Diane is only represented implicitly as a goddess. We can only speculate on the motivations for Du Bellay's different treatment of these powerful women: the *Recueil* seems to have received strong input from Marguerite herself, and Du Bellay explicitly seeks the approval of Henry and Catherine early in the collection. In order to spare Catherine's feelings Marguerite may have suggested that any reference to Diane remain indirect, or Du Bellay may have chosen this approach himself. Finally, if he shared Ronsard's antipathy for Diane at this time, he may have wished to avoid praising her directly, yet as the king is the principal *destinataire* for this piece it may have seemed desirable to include his favorite in some way.

<sup>199</sup> Gadoffre writes "En 1559 Du Bellay, beaucoup plus conscient des voies et des moyens qu'on l'imagine, était au point où ses ambitions, sa philosophie, sa religion et son esthétique arrivaient à leur confluent" (*Sacré* 229). Magnien-Simonin adds that at this time in 1559 "Tout lui sourit ... Rentré d'Italie, il n'est pas resté le second. Mieux pourvu de bénéfiques ecclésiastiques que Ronsard, il rencontre aussi en ce printemps la faveur du public et des grands" (136).

The ode and chanson forms dominate his writing to Diane, and we can ask why Du Bellay would write as many as three odes and two or three chansons to Diane--more than to any other royal figure. He writes three odes to Marguerite, two to Henri II, and one to Catherine de Medici; he writes one villanelle to Marguerite and one chant to Henri, but in no other poems to important figures does Du Bellay ever adopt another person's voice as he does in the two *chansons* to Diane. I will return below to the question of his preference for the ode and chanson forms. I turn first to the two sonnets that Du Bellay is known to have written to Diane because in contrast to the odes and chansons, this form represents a minority of his writing to her.

### Sonnets

The two sonnets are similar and perhaps were even written at the same time; one was published in the *Regrets* and the other was not. I believe that the unpublished sonnet is a first or alternate draft of the sonnet that was eventually published.<sup>200</sup> The *Regrets* ends with a series of 33 sonnets addressed to the *grands* (sonnets 159-191) and the sonnet to Diane is the first of these tribute sonnets and thus is the pivotal poem between the final section and the preceding series of sonnets that discuss the art of writing (sonnets 151-158).<sup>201</sup> This placement will help explain why the published version was chosen for the collection over its variant. The published version is less obsequious and more celebratory and it also fits more gracefully into the published sequence of sonnets. While both versions begin with allusions to Diane's superb chateau, Anet, built by Philibert Delorme in 1548, they differ in that the published sonnet focuses more on the chateau itself and less on overt allusions to Diane's *gloire* and the poet's implied role in promoting it. The unpublished sonnet, however, moves

---

<sup>200</sup> To my knowledge, no other critic has treated this exact question.

<sup>201</sup> See Floyd Gray pp. 150-151.

quickly from praise of the chateau to concern about Diane's eternal reputation and poetry's potential to broadcast it far and wide. For this reason it may have seemed to beg patronage more explicitly and thus be less desirable for publication in the sequence. The first two quatrains of sonnet 159 in the *Regrets* list the admirable details of the chateau:

De vostre Dianet (de vostre nom j'appelle  
Vostre maison D'Anet) la belle architecture,  
Les marbres animez, la vivante peinture,  
Qui la font estimer des maisons la plus belle :

Les beaux lambriz dorez, la luisante chappelle,  
Les superbes dongeons, la riche couverture,  
Le jardin tapissé d'éternelle verdure,  
Et la vive fontaine à la source immortelle: (Aris and Joukovsky 1-8)

The repetition of *vostre Dianet, vostre nom, vostre maison*, in the first two lines rings an insistent, possessive echo that explicitly links the property to the person of Diane.

The following list of elements and the adjectives that describe them create an accumulated vision of wealth and perfection.<sup>202</sup> This contrasts with the first two quatrains of the unpublished sonnet, which offers a less vivid listing of architectural details. It makes learned and abstract references to a Greek mathematician, sculptor, and painter, then quickly suggests the future destruction of the chateau at the hands of time:

De vostre Dianet, des maisons la plus belle,  
Les bastiments, graveures & protraicts,  
Qui si au vif expriment les vieux traicts  
D'un Archimede & Lysippe & Apelle,

Contre les ans n'auront la force telle,  
Qu'un jour ne soient leurs ouvrages desfaits :  
Mais la mémoire & grandeur de voz faits

---

<sup>202</sup> Jean Balsamo in his article "Les poètes d'Anet" explains that the characteristics that Du Bellay mentions in the second quatrain are taken directly from the chapter on Anet that Jacques Gohory published in his 1554 translation of *Amadis de Gaule*. It is unclear whether Du Bellay ever visited Anet: Balsamo suggests that Du Bellay read the Gohory text while in Rome and composed the sonnet to Diane from that distance.

Contre la mort se rendra immortelle. (Chamard 2: 270, 1-8)

The choice to focus more carefully on the description of the chateau and its physical beauty in the published sonnet results in a more direct and concrete celebration of both the chateau and its owner, avoiding any potentially disturbing references to mortality or the passing of time. It is also likely to have been determined by the architectural topic of the two sonnets that immediately precede it in the *Regrets*: in these Du Bellay compares his writing to the work of the architect Pierre Lescot, seigneur de Clagny, who worked on the Louvre from 1546-1578.<sup>203</sup> In the first quatrain of poem 157 Du Bellay addresses Clagny and his work on the Louvre, only to insist in the second quatrain that he (the poet) is also building a house using different instruments and seeking different ends:

En-cependant (Clagny) que de mil argumens  
Variant le desseing du royal edifice,  
Tu vas renouvelant d'un hardy frontispice  
La superbe grandeur des plus vieux monuments,

Avec d'autres compaz & d'autres instrumens,  
Fuyant l'ambition, l'envie & l'avarice,  
Aux Muses je bastis, d'un nouvel artifice,  
Un palais magnifique à quatre appartements. (Aris and Joukovsky 1-8)

The poet's work is thus analogous to the architect's, but Du Bellay describes different patrons, or different inspirations for his literary construction: he builds for the muses

---

<sup>203</sup> It is worth noting, as Jean Balsamo does, that although Du Bellay writes about Pierre Lescot and praises his work on the Louvre, he does not mention Philibert de L'Orme, the architect of Anet, by name. De L'Orme did work for Du Bellay's relative, the Cardinal Jean du Bellay in Rome, and Balsamo mentions that the relationship was familiar but not necessarily warm, although there is no evidence that the relationship was as adversarial as the one that existed between Ronsard and De L'Orme. Balsamo contends that Du Bellay approved the classical inspiration of Anet's architecture, but found it "florid" in comparison to the "grave douceur" of the Louvre. In a separate article "Le Poète et L'architecte," Balsamo says that the sonnets 157-159 form a triptych intended for "le véritable destinataire de l'ensemble, le Roi, invoqué comme le mécène du poète, comme le patron de son ambition encomiastique" (61), before offering insightful analysis of the four architectural styles described in sonnet 158. Skenazi follows Balsamo in reading sonnet 159 to Diane as a tribute to the king: "l'évocation de la demeure de Diane de Poitiers exalte Henri II sous les traits de l'amant parfait pour suggérer les plaisirs de l'amour" (*Le Poète architecte* 242). This is couched in a larger argument about the metaphorical use of architecture to express poetry's service to a growing sense of France as a nation, represented by its increasingly powerful king.

rather than for royalty. While Du Bellay claims to write far from the court setting in which Clagny must work, sheltered from ambition and greed, the poet's art is a new one that can be compared to the architect's renewal of old monuments. In the tercets Du Bellay says that he will use four different styles for four different apartments: Doric style for a Latin apartment, Attic style for a Greek apartment, Ionian style for a French apartment and Corinthian for a Tuscan apartment.<sup>204</sup> His creation will thus combine old and new content with a mix of styles:

Les Latines auront un ouvrage Dorique  
Propre à leur gravité, le Greques un Attique  
Pour leur naïfvté, les Françaises auront

Pour leur grave douceur une œuvre Ionienne,  
D'ouvrage elabouré à la Corinthienne  
Sera le corps d'hostel ou les Thusques seront.  
(Aris and Joukovsky 9-14)

As is so frequently the case for Du Bellay, a sonnet seemingly written in honor of a specific recipient--in this case the architect Clagny--becomes a treatise on poetics, and here alludes to the classical and Italian traditions that he considers suitable foundations for contemporary French poetry.

The following sonnet 158, which appears immediately before the one to Diane, continues this theme and says that Du Bellay will build his edifice as a royal

---

<sup>204</sup> "Attic" is a more obscure term than the three others that Du Bellay uses. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it both as a literary style ("Having characteristics peculiarly Athenian; hence, of literary style, etc.: Marked by simple and refined elegance, pure, classical. Attic salt or Attic wit (Latin *sal Atticum*): refined, delicate, poignant wit") and as an architectural style ("Attic base in Archit.: a base used for Ionic, Corinthian, and occasionally for Doric columns, consisting of an upper and lower torus divided by a scotia and two fillets. Attic order: a square column of any of the five orders) ["Attic, adj. and n.1". OED Online. March 2011. Oxford University Press. 30 March 2011 <http://www.oed.com.libproxy.wustl.edu/view/Entry/12854?rskey=P5Sc7p&result=2&isAdvanced=false>].

palace, if the king is generous enough to provide the material for it. The ornaments of the palace will be the predecessors and ancestors of the king, along with images of Diane, his mistress:

De ce royal palais, que bastiront mes doigts,  
Si la bonté du Roy me fournit de matiere,  
Pour rendre sa grandeur & beauté plus entiere,  
Les ornemens seront de traicts & arcs turquois.

Là d'ordre flanc à flanc se voyront tous noz Rois,  
Là se voyra maint Faune & Nymphé passagere,  
Sur le portail sera la Vierge forestiere,  
Avec son croissant, son arc & son carquois. (Aris and Joukovsky 1-8)

The *Vierge forestiere* is Diana, the virgin huntress, who is consistently associated with Diane de Poitiers. The portal of Diane's chateau Anet was in fact decorated with a large Cellini sculpture of Diana the huntress, reclining in front of a stag. Du Bellay may have had Cellini's sculpture in mind when he described this possible portal for his literary palace. Many biographers mention how much Henri II loved Anet and refer to the extended amounts of time that he spent there, documented by the numerous edicts that were signed while he was in residence at the chateau.<sup>205</sup> Writing in praise of Anet and imagining the construction of a symbolically similar literary palace is a way for Du Bellay to flatter and approve the king's preference for this chateau while at the same time making a subtle appeal for a literary commission equal to Clagny's architectural one. The two poems that precede the sonnet to Diane are thus preoccupied with architecture and a comparison of writing to designing and building.

Returning now to sonnet 159 in the *Regrets* and Diane, we can see that after the two quatrains describing the beauty of Anet, Du Bellay applauds the classical inheritance of its architecture, the art and craft of its construction, and the expense

---

<sup>205</sup> See D'Orliac (203) and Cloulas : "Henri, en effet, considère Anet comme sa maison" (243).

contributed to building the chateau. Nonetheless, the last tercet insists that it is not this impressive chateau that renders Diane exemplary, but rather her sweetness, her nobility and wisdom:

Ces ouvrages (Madame) à qui bien les contemple,  
Rapportant de l'antiq' le plus parfait exemple,  
Monstrent un artifice & despense admirable.<sup>206</sup>

Mais ceste grand' douceur jointe à ceste haultesse,  
Et cest Astre benin joint à ceste sagesse,  
Trop plus que tout cela vous font émerveillable.  
(Aris and Joukovsky 9-14)

Here we read four praiseworthy characteristics of Diane (*douceur, haultesse, Astre benin, sagesse*) which, as in the quatrains analyzed earlier, render the tercets of this published sonnet more concrete than the tercets in the unpublished sonnet.<sup>207</sup> The unpublished version simply refers to Diane's *faiz* and *vertuz*, and asserts that other tools than the architect's (*ligne ou compas*) will be necessary to inscribe Diane's merits in eternal glory:

De voz vertus le bruit ne mourra pas,  
Ains d'autre outil, que de ligne ou compas,  
Se bastira une eternelle gloire :

Qui tout ainsi que vostre croissant luit  
Au plus serain d'une bien claire nuit,  
Laira tousjours au temple de Mémoire. (Chamard 2: 269, 9-14)

If this sonnet had been published in the *Regrets*, a reader may have understood the *autre outil* to be the writer's pen, which is clearly contrasted to the architect's *compas* & *autres instrumens* in the earlier sonnet 157 to Clagny. This would be an explicit and boastful reference to Du Bellay's desire to serve the court in an official capacity, just

---

<sup>206</sup> Katz sees this line as ironic, writing "in the macrotextual context 'artifice' and 'depense' become indeed loaded terms" (181). He does not add further analysis, however.

<sup>207</sup> In her mention of this sonnet, Bellenger remarks that Du Bellay does not praise Diane's beauty but rather her power and concludes "la puissance vaut bien la beauté" (*Ses "Regrets" qu'il fit dans Rome...* 147).

as Clagny does. In the end, however, Du Bellay decided against this more assertive choice and published a subtler sonnet to Diane from which he himself is almost entirely absent except for the first verse in which he alludes to his own familiar name for Anet (*de vostre nom j'appelle / Vostre maison d'Anet*). Otherwise, he does not refer to his literary project as he does in the two architectural sonnets that precede this one. Having just written eighteen poems on the art of writing (a sequence that ends with the architectural sonnets to Clagny), he may have wanted to mark a clear transition to the praise poems by eliminating specific references to writing.

The decision to leave out overt references to his status as poet, as well as his decision not to publish the sonnet version that included learned references to classical figures and allusions to age and passing time may also have been informed by Ronsard's attempts to write for Diane. At least two, and possibly all three of Ronsard's poems appeared before the publication of the *Regrets* and Du Bellay may well have read them. Ronsard's first ode spends 34 lines on tedious mythological references, and when he finally does mention Diane his offer of praise is conditional. Anet is present in the ode through a flat listing of architectural features, devoid of praise or embellishment. The end of the ode fishes for the king's endorsement. Ronsard's two sonnets that follow this ode make explicit and nervous reference to the poet's relationship to Diane; although miserly with poetic praise he claims entitlement to her own generosity and lectures her on the role she should adopt in aiding French poets.

Du Bellay avoids all of these unfortunate features of Ronsard's poems to Diane. He proves himself to be a generous and savvy admirer: Diane is the first *grande* to whom he dedicates a sonnet, perhaps because of the transitional topic of architecture and Diane's close association with her building project at Anet, but also

because of Diane's supreme power in 1557-58.<sup>208</sup> The last sonnet in the sequence to the *grands* is addressed to Henri II, and the illustrious couple thus serves to open and close the last series of thirty-three sonnets addressed to powerful people.<sup>209</sup>

If the sonnet to Diane avoids any suggestion of literary patronage, the next sonnet in the series to the *grands*--sonnet 160--immediately returns to the theme of patronage. It addresses Jean D'Avanson, an ally of Diane de Poitiers (Erlanger) and the ambassador to Rome during part of Du Bellay's time there, and also alludes to Diane's influence in political affairs and her ability to have her rivals or enemies removed from power in favor of her own allies. Du Bellay only addresses d'Avanson in the second quatrain: the first quatrain is reserved for praise of Jean Bertrand, first president of the Paris Parliament and Garde des Sceaux who replaced François Olivier after Diane de Poitiers's intervention (Erlanger 271).<sup>210</sup> Bertrand is applauded for having been a generous patron to the poet Hugues Salel:

Entre tous les honneurs dont en France est cognu  
Ce renommé Bertran, des moindres n'est celuy  
Que luy donne la Muse, & qu'on dise de luy  
Que par luy un Salel soit riche devenu. (s. 160, 1-4)

Diane's protégé is thus praised for enriching the poet Hugues Salel. In the second quatrain, Du Bellay addresses D'Avanson, saying that a beautiful property has been reserved for him in France and saying that he is one of the principal supporters of the arts in France:

Toy, donc, à qui la France a des-ja retenu  
L'un de ses plus beaux lieux, comme seul aujourd'hui  
Ou les arts on fondé leur principal appuy, (5-7)

---

<sup>208</sup> In the fall of 1557 "Une seule personne de la cour agit alors sur la pensée de Henri II, c'est Diane de Poitiers" (Erlanger 292).

<sup>209</sup> Bellenger gives a small table explaining the structure of the encomiastic sonnets (*Ses "Regrets" qu'il fit dans Rome...* 147).

<sup>210</sup> Bizer calls this sonnet "bien énigmatique" (173), and his analysis does not take into consideration the preceding sonnet to Diane de Poitiers, nor her relationship to D'Avanson, Bertrand, and Magny.

Du Bellay then exhorts D'Avanson to be generous with the poet Olivier Magny (D'Avanson's secretary in Rome), so that when Bertrand brags of Salel's poetry, D'Avanson will be able to do the same for Magny:

Fay que de ta grandeur ton Magny se resente  
A fin que si Bertran de son Salel se vante  
Tu te puisses aussi de ton Magny vanter. (9-11)

The possessives in these lines (ton Magny, son Salel) repeat the possessives in the preceding sonnet to Diane (vostre maison d'Anet) and suggest that literary patrons enjoy the privilege of ownership when they sponsor great art. Poetry and architecture are once again equated, although the patronage of poetry is made explicit, whereas the patronage involved in building the Louvre and Anet was more implied in the preceding sonnets.

The tercet also can be read as incitement to competition between patrons, urging them to outdo one another in their support of the arts. The fact that each of these patrons is a protégé of Diane de Poitiers is intended, perhaps, as a subtle suggestion of the sort of patronage that Diane could provide, or that she could incite the king to provide ("si la bonté du Roy me fournit de matiere," s. 158).

Finally, the last tercet implies that despite a few superficial similarities between the deceased Salel and Magny (stature and regional identity), Magny is the better poet:

Tous deux sont Quercinois, tous deux bas de stature,  
Et ne seroient pas moins semblables d'écriture,  
Si Salel avoit sceu plus doucement chanter. (12-14)

Magny was a friend of Du Bellay's in Rome, and like Du Bellay a secretary to a powerful political figure. One year after the *Regrets* appeared in print Magny

published his series of laudatory odes to Diane and was appointed “secrétaire du Roy.” Du Bellay manages to navigate the tight web of courtly connections in this poem by succinctly praising both his humble friend, and two powerful men who benefitted from the favor of Diane.

In conclusion, while the genre of these two sonnets was determined by their inclusion in a larger sonnet sequence, their content is likely to have been determined by Du Bellay’s desired relationship with Diane and the king. The care he took to avoid seeming obsequious or overly learned or abstract may have been informed by observations of Ronsard’s poor luck with the duchess. The choice to publish sonnet 159 rather than its variant, as well as its location in the overall structure of the collection, can be explained both in terms of the power held by Diane in 1557-58 and by the poems that immediately precede and follow it. As we have seen, the architectural theme established in sonnets 157 and 158 is likely to have contributed to the focus of several lines on her chateau Anet, a favorite of the king’s and the real center of power in France at that time. The symmetry of opening the sequence with Diane and closing it with Henri virtually crowns Diane as queen of France, true consort to the king. Catherine de Medici is not forgotten, but the sole sonnet to her is placed only twelfth in the sequence--close to the middle. Du Bellay links the sonnet to Catherine de Medici to that on Diane through the rhyme scheme: they are the only two sonnets in the sequence that both use feminine rhymes exclusively. Although they share a rhyme scheme, the two women clearly do not share a place in the hierarchy at court, nor in the king’s heart. Du Bellay thus constructs a subtle but clear endorsement of the king’s mistress, undoubtedly calculated to curry favor at the highest levels and solidify his position in France after returning from Rome.

## Odes<sup>211</sup>

In addition to these two sonnets, five other poems written by Du Bellay to Diane were published after his death, although they may have circulated in manuscript form during his life. In his 1569 edition of collected works, Aubert grouped these five poems together with the sonnet that was not included in the *Regrets*: Chamard combines them in volume 5 of his collected works but without the unpublished sonnet, since his edition is organized by genre. The poems share a voiced quality suggestive of oral performance.

The first three (21, 22, and 23) are Horatian odes. They are organized in regular stanzas that are unremarkable in length and rhythm, with the slight exception that they tend to contain fewer syllables per line than most odes written in this period.<sup>212</sup> This is one of the factors that contributes to their voiced quality, since longer lines tend more towards prose and written text than short ones. They also alternate masculine and feminine rhymes as recommended by Ronsard in order to increase the musicality of the verses.

Ode 22 is the most explicitly Horatian, as it names Horace within the poem and closely translates three stanzas from an Horatian Ode (*Carmina* I, 21).<sup>213</sup> This ode is a short one of four stanzas which invokes the twins Diana and Apollo. In Du Bellay's version, Apollo is clearly identified with Henri II and Diane is his Diana. Like the original Horatian model, more lines are devoted to Apollo/Henri than to

---

<sup>211</sup> All citations are taken from *Du Bellay: Œuvres poétiques*, ed. Henri Chamard, vol. 5 (Paris : Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1931).

<sup>212</sup> Rouget has shown that the majority of mid-century odes in France are organized in regular stanzas of six or four lines containing seven or eight syllables per verse (*L'Apothéose* 289, 309). Du Bellay only differs in that with Diane he often uses six syllable verses, which is the third most common form, but nonetheless far less common than the seven or eight syllable lines.

<sup>213</sup> To my knowledge, other scholars have not treated this poem.

Diana/Diane, and although dedicated to Diane, the poem is strangely impersonal, perhaps due to the intertextual constraints of translation and the attempt to identify the contemporary Diane with the mythical Diana.

The ode is composed of eight sestets of six syllables each. Sestets one and two are original to Du Bellay, as are sestets six, seven, and eight. The other three (sestets 3,4, and 5) are nearly exact translations from Horace. In the opening verse, Du Bellay addresses Diane directly and says that he will never stop singing her praises:

Jamais je n'auray close  
La bouche à vostre honneur,  
Mais plus que d'autre chose  
En seray le sonneur,  
Luy dressant un autel  
Pour le rendre immortel. (1-6)

Du Bellay the poet is present in the very first line in the poem. He promises to celebrate Diane's honor above all else, and to build an altar at which he will immortalize this honor. The poet's work is defined first as an open and oral act: the product of his mouth/voice. Similar to the architectural theme in the sonnet written to Diane, we see poetry adopt concrete form, first sung as a lyric (*la bouche*), then rung as a melody (by *le sonneur*), then built as an edifice or a sculpture (un autel). This immediately invokes the oral and musical heritage of the ode form, as well as its religious, Orphic associations (Rouget, *L'Apothéose* 37-38).

As an irrefutable reminder of how poetry can be the medium for immortality, Du Bellay next invokes Horace and his legacy:

Là des beaux vers d'Horace  
Imitant les doux sons,  
Pour donner plus de grace  
A mes humbles chansons,  
J'empliray l'univers  
Du doux bruit de ces vers. (7-12)

The Roman poet's continued appeal after so many centuries is proof of literature's ability to transcend time.<sup>214</sup> Once again, Du Bellay's offering at this altar to Diane is described in musical terms rather than writerly ones. He says he will imitate the sweet sounds of Horatian verse in order to give his humble *songs* more grace. As an example, the next three verses are a simple translation of the ode mentioned above, *Dianam tenerae*. In the original, these three verses urge young women and men to praise Diana and Apollo and their mother, although the majority of the verses are to Apollo and his victories rather than Diana. In the same way, the following verses of Du Bellay allude to Diane, but in fact refer more often and more specifically to the king (Apollo).

In sestet three Du Bellay translates the first stanza of Horace and follows it closely. In the fourth sestet, Du Bellay translates the same elements of nature that Horace provides, but with one interesting omission: unlike the original, he entirely leaves out mention of Diane:

Chantez du froid Algide  
Les haults crins verdissans,  
Ou sur la rive humide  
Les boys s'esjouissans,  
D'ombre Erymant couvert,  
Ou bien Crage le verd. (19-24)

W. G. Shepherd renders the same verse in English in the following way:

Girls, praise **her** who delights in the streams  
And the crests of the trees that stand out  
On cool Algidus or in the dark woods  
Of Erymanthus and verdant Cragus. (5-9)

Du Bellay neglects to place Diane's name or any pronoun referring to her in the stanza. After this stanza, he moves on to translate Horace's next verse about Apollo

---

<sup>214</sup> It is unclear whether Diane was familiar with the poetry of Horace: the sale catalogue for the library at Anet does not list any volume of his poetry, but it does make general note of 12 volumes of "Anciens poètes" and seven "tres anciennes Edit."

faithfully, including references to the bow, quiver and lyre that are traditional symbols associated with the deity, patron god of music and poetry.

Before translating the fourth and final stanza of Horace's Ode, Du Bellay inserts two sestets that anchor the ode more specifically in the contemporary period.

The first sestet refers to Diane by once again referencing her chateau:

Après ceulx-cy faut dire  
Le Paradis d'Anet,  
Mais pour bien le descrire  
Nommez-le Dianet,  
Chantez ces Palais d'or  
Et ses marbres encor'. (31-36)

Once again we observe an emphasis on *voicing* praise: "faut *dire* le Paradis d'Anet."

The paradise that is Anet is substituted for the person of Diane, as if the most enduring praiseworthy trait of this royal mistress were the beautiful palace she had constructed. It should also be noted, however, that it follows the spirit of the Horatian original, which refers to the natural environment (streams, woods) that the goddess Diana delights in. Anet is the natural environment, the favorite repair of this powerful French Diana. In Du Bellay's version, however, the chateau receives praise rather than the woman, whereas in Horace's version the goddess is the object of praise and not her natural habitats.

The next sestet added by Du Bellay refers to Saint Germain, Henri II's birthplace, and is a clear extension of Horace's poem:

Que saint Germain on vante,  
Ses ondes & et ses boys,  
Que sur tous on le chante,  
Car l'Apollon François  
Entrant premier au jour,  
Toucha ce beau sejour. (37-42)

Henri II is unambiguously the French Apollo and his birthplace is characterized by natural features (*ondes* and *boys*) rather than by the rich materials that distinguish Anet (*or* and *marbre*).

Du Bellay concludes with a sestet that closely follows the last Horatian stanza but that substitutes French enemies for the Augustan ones mentioned by Horace:

Luy à vostre priere  
La peste chassera,  
Et sa fureur guerriere  
Sur Charles poussera,  
Il envoyra la faim  
Au Flamant & Germain. (43-48)

Du Bellay's ode to Diane thus follows the model established by Horace: it ends by asserting that Apollo/Henri will banish famine, plague, and war from his realm and visit them instead on French enemies of the period: Charles Quint, the Flemish and the Germans.

In sum, Du Bellay adds a total of four stanzas to the original four of the Horatian model. The first two additions function as reminders of the poet's role in immortalizing powerful people, and the second two update the ode by referring to castles that are closely associated with both Diane and Henri II. This particular Horatian ode was undoubtedly an attractive model for Du Bellay due to the dual presence of Apollo and Diana. Artists and sculptors had already long associated the royal couple with these two mythical characters, and Diane herself promoted this identification (Bardon 50). The lengthy references to Apollo may indicate that although the ode is dedicated to Diane, the king may have been a targeted audience as well. It is possible to wonder whether the king or Diane would have been familiar enough with the Horatian original to recognize the reference and appreciate the work of imitation and adaptation, however.

Two other odes to Diane (21 and 23) are Horatian in inspiration but do not imitate any particular poem and thus contain more personal content. For example, Ode 23 (“Madame ne pensez pas”) explicitly alludes to a favor that Diane has done Du Bellay, although the nature of the favor remains unknown, and the poems attribute more specific, praiseworthy qualities to the living Diane. Analogous to the structure of praise poems written to other courtiers and servants, these odes first make clear that Diane is remarkable because she is favored by the king.

Ode 21 to Diane (“A Madame Diane de Poitiers”) contains thirty-six sestets of six syllable lines. It begins with one of Du Bellay’s common formulas: it describes the king as a god, and says that his intimates are special by virtue of the fact that the king has included them in his circle:

Les Rois sont oingts de Dieu,  
Disoit le grand Hebrieu.  
Heureux est celuy donques  
Qui peult approcher,  
Et plus heureux quiconques  
Leur est aymable & cher. (11-16)

These lines repeat the standard assertion of the divine nature of the king and the special status of his favorites. The poem now moves from a general discussion of favorites to Diane, the particular favorite whose beauty has won the king’s heart. Her attributes, like the king’s, are also God-given:

La vertueuse grace,  
Et l’honneur plus qu’humain  
Escript sur vostre face  
D’une divine main,  
De ce Roy tant exquis  
Le coeur vous ont acquis: (32-37)

This divine beauty is not only appreciated by the king; she is the jewel of the nation, according to Du Bellay. He writes:

La bienheureuse France

Jouissante du bien  
De sa longue esperance,  
Ne souhaite plus rien:  
Voyant tous ses souhaits  
En voz graces parfaits. (49-54)

Clearly, what is good for the king is good for the country. His needs, preferences, pleasures and desires are implied to be the same as those of the entire population. In this way the king can come to stand as the symbol of the country itself, an embodiment of the nation. The king's choice of mistress is a political event in and of itself and she merits the same noble lyric that sings of battles lost and won and other vagaries in the nation's fortunes.<sup>215</sup> The poem continues:

C'est pourquoy ceste lyre,  
Cest archet & ces doigts,  
Qui ont bien ozé dire  
Les louanges des Rois,  
Se viennent presenter,  
Pour les vostres chanter (55-60)

Du Bellay once again invokes a musical metaphor for his poetic project, constructing the image of a musician singing and accompanying himself on the lyre, just as the successful court poet Mellin de Saint Gelais was known to do. He also shows himself eager to affirm his pedigree as a poet to the king.<sup>216</sup> Just as the king is raised to the level of god or nation, here Diane is raised to the level of king. By repeating the fact that he has written poems for the king, Du Bellay equates Diane with his royal subject: she is equally worthy of his muse. She is far from the rude populace; rather, like the king and the poets, she is associated with enlightened learning:

---

<sup>215</sup> Ménager notes : "L'avènement d'un roi, les mariages princiers, la naissance d'un dauphin représentent, pour Ronsard et ses contemporains, des événements politiques aussi importants peut-être que le déclenchement de la première guerre civile. Ronsard et les poètes de la Pléiade ont vécu intensément la durée brève de la vie curiale, ponctuée par la naissance et la mort des princes, et scandées par les fêtes brillantes des Valois. La production politique d'une époque comme la Renaissance englobe donc la foule des écrits que suscitent les "circonstances royales" (2).

<sup>216</sup> Even if he is not THE poet to the king, as is Ronsard. "Ronsard possède le titre de poète du Roi depuis janvier 1554" (Ménager 3).

L'ignorant populaire  
Telle faveur n'attend,  
A qui rien ne peult plaire  
Si non ce qu'il entent,  
Et dont jamais les yeulx  
Ne s'elevent aux cieulx:

Où la chaste lumiere  
De vostre luisant front  
Ores se monstre entiere,  
Ores en demy rond,  
Soeur de l'autre flambeau  
Du monde le plus beau.

C'est le Soleil de France,  
Qui peult bien commander  
Que l'aveugle ignorance  
Se voise desbander:  
Redonnant liberté  
A la belle clarté. (91-108)

Once again, Henri and Diane are Apollo and Diane, the sun and the moon. Elsewhere Du Bellay uses the same imagery of light and the sun to describe the king.<sup>217</sup> The hierarchy created in this poem is typical of Du Bellay: the ignorant populace is inferior to the learned Diane and of course the king, portrayed as the center of the universe and source of all that is good and light in France.<sup>218</sup> The ignorant do not even raise their eyes to the heavens where these enlightened models are to be found. This hierarchical structure reflects humanist values, those of learning and wisdom that are not necessarily shared by a large constituency, or even by the nobles themselves. Du Bellay undoubtedly seeks to flatter Diane and to make it seem admirable and desirable to be learned in the way of Du Bellay and his peers in the Pléiade.

---

<sup>217</sup> For more information on the history of the use of the sun as a symbol associated with the king of France, see Anne-Marie Lecoq, *François Ier imaginaire* (Paris: Editions Macula, 1987). 51-52. In the previous ode we also saw the association of Diane with the moon goddess Diana, and Henri with Apollo, the sun god.

<sup>218</sup> In poems to Diane, the king tends to be portrayed in more assertively positive terms than in poems to Marguerite.

Diane's role in fostering a new learning becomes clearer later in the poem when Du Bellay beseeches her to stimulate the king's interest in poetry. Diane has the king's ear, and she can lobby him for whatever causes she endorses. This reinforces the impression (noted in earlier chapters) that the king is not a committed patron of the arts, and that he is not as fond of literature as his father was.<sup>219</sup> It is ultimately the king, however, "Qui peult bien commander / Que l'aveugle ignorance / Se voise desbander," and the poet will try to penetrate his disinterest as best he can, enlisting the help of those close to the king, such as his mistress.

Du Bellay then turns to battles and other political events, saying that now that Diane's virtues have inspired him to begin writing, he can turn his attention to other topics. Diane is thus credited as the muse for his writing, and as Rouget has pointed out, the ode is a loose, rangy form that usually contains heterogeneous topics. In this case, the ode is dedicated to Diane and sings her praises before mentioning French military victories in the following verses. This juxtaposition not only places Diane in a social/historical context: it establishes an equivalency between Diane and battles won, political intrigues and the king himself:

De Boulogne rendue,  
Des gardez Escossois,  
De Parme deffendue  
Par le soldat François,  
J'envoieray sur mes vers  
Le bruit par l'univers. (139-144)

Again, the poet's work is to broadcast great triumphs on a cosmic scale so that the evidence of France's superiority does not vanish unnoticed. Here he states his

---

<sup>219</sup> Skenazi alludes to the king's disinterest in literature when she writes "Le manque d'intérêt d'Henri II pour les lettres condamnait d'avance l'épopée de facture traditionnelle qui, précise le titre du chapitre V de la *Deffense et illustration de la langue françoise*, est par définition un *long poëme* (livre II)" (53-54). See chapters one and two for comparisons between Henri II and his sister Marguerite de France which show Marguerite to be the true inheritor of François 1<sup>er</sup>'s cultural legacy.

intention to immortalize military victories exacted by the French army. He then associates the king with these victories:

Je diray la victoire  
De la Royale main,  
Qui a semé sa gloire  
Sur le fleuve Germain,  
Plantant le lyz parmy  
Les champs de l'ennemy. (145-150)

In this stanza Du Bellay, repeats his vision of praise as a speech act: "je diray." He emphasizes the king's virile military strength, but with an agricultural metaphor. His victories abroad are expressed in terms of planting the lily of France on foreign soil. In addition to its association with fertility and plenty, this appeal to the old symbol of the lily reinforces yet again the rhetoric of nationhood and places Henri II in a tradition that goes back to the twelfth century.<sup>220</sup> Du Bellay goes on to associate Henri with even more distant history:

Je diray que d'Auguste  
Il rend le siècle heureux:  
Et que son bras robuste  
Sur tous chevalereux  
Anime d'un grand cœur  
Le françois belliqueux: (151-56)

Henri is associated with the emperor Augustus: Du Bellay stresses his ability to rouse French military passions and inspire men to fight. He makes another appeal to history in the following stanzas: France once again is named Gaul and her enemy is Caesar (Charles V):

Gravant l'honneur de Gaulle  
D'un burin rougissant  
Sur la fuyante espaule  
De César pallissant:  
De César odieux  
Aux hommes & aux Dieux. (157-62)

---

<sup>220</sup> See Colette Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and symbols of nation in Late-Medieval France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) pp. 201-225.

This Caesar is loathsome to God, unlike the king of France, who is always referred to as the child of God. In fact, as Colette Beaune notes, “By the end of the Middle Ages, both the king of France and the kingdom were ‘most christian’” (172): they were seen to hold a special place in the kingdom of God. The term “most christian” king goes back to Clovis and Charlemagne, kings who were linked to Christianity in France and who defended the Pope. Du Bellay thus constructs and reaffirms a national history by making mention of the Gauls, the christian nature of the king of France, and by invoking old symbols such as the lily of France. Henri II is seen to be the heir of this national history, his reign is the most recent chapter to be written, and it will celebrate the deeds of illustrious men of the moment:

La hardie entreprise  
 Et les cœurs indontez  
 De Vandosme & de Guyse  
 Y seront racontez,  
 Je n’oubliray aussi  
 Le grand Mommorancy: (163-68)

Du Bellay’s poetry will make these names of French military captains--Vandosme, de Guyse, Mommorancy--as well known as those of Achilles and Hector, for as he writes in the following stanzas, these names would have slumbered in obscurity had it not been for Homer:

La superbe proësse  
 Et d’Achille & d’Hector,  
 La sage hardiesse  
 D’Ulysse & de Nestor,  
 Et mille autres miliers  
 D’indontez Chevaliers.

Du mesme vase encores  
 Ou ils furent enclos,  
 Encloses seroient ores  
 Leurs cendres & leurs loz,  
 Si l’art des bien-disans  
 Neust surmonté les ans. (169-80)

The ode form's tendency towards metatextual reflections exerts its pull: Du Bellay cannot omit his customary defense of poetry, even from a poem which began as praise of the king's mistress. Ancient texts are the only proof needed that poetry is eternal, and that poets are consequently as vital as historians to any society that wishes to leave a record of itself. They are the "bien-disans" who know how to give voice to historical events. Moreover, poets are equal to the warriors who preserve the kingdom by means of their arms; Du Bellay and his peers battle an even more daunting foe than the Germans or the Italians. They are confident of conquering time itself with their verses, and are intent on preserving the kingdom of France into the future.

Du Bellay concludes the poem by asking Diane to make sure that the king read (or listen to) poetry. The poet asserts that he is not seeking payment, only an audience for his verses:

Faites, Diane sainte,  
Que ce Roy vertueux  
Après la force esteincte  
De Mars l'impetueux,  
Escoute quelquefois  
Des neuf Vierges la voix.

Les neuf Vierges honteuses  
L'or ne demandent pas,  
Et ne sont convoiteuses  
Des mendiez repas:  
Un bon oeil seulement  
Est leur contentement. (187-198)

These verses reinforce the impression that poetry is a sung or voiced medium, since it is a form to be *listened to*, rather than read. The impression is also reinforced that Henri II was not as fond of poetry as his father, and that he needed prodding to pay attention to arts and letters in his country. Olivier Pot has noted that Diane occupies a position that is "médiane et mediate" for Du Bellay (60-61) and that he tends to portray her as a mediating figure who can bring the king closer to his people. This

conception of her can also be found in the 1555 text *Le Fort Inexpugnable de L'Honneur du Sexe Feminin* by François de Billon. Billon refers to Diane in a section which praises women precisely for their naturally sweet and calm nature, which leads them to seek peace and attempt to resolve conflicts and injustices:

Laquelle Douceur speciallement, est cause es Femmes d'un si grand zele de Paix, (comme mediatrices de tout Accord ou elles ont faveur de s'en entremesler) qu'il est vraysemblable les grans Princes de la Terre avoir de tout temps acoutumé de leur donner favorable entrée en leurs Courtz royales, entre autres raisons, principalement pour celles que dessus. Veu qu'il est notoire, qu'un Roy ayant été irrité, ou bien qui est en quelque cas resolu de donner lieu au Glaive de sa iuste Fureur, ne peüt onc, et ne sauroit estre mieux adoucy, plus tost pacifié ny conduit a élargissement de Grace, que par le doux et oportun moyen d'une sage Princesse ou autre Dame, de luy tant soit peu familiere. Chose qui par plusieurs exemples de maintenant se pourroit facilement prouver en toute Court principale de la Chrestienté. Et specialement en celle de France : Ou la haute et tresprudente Duchesse de Vallentinois, Diane de Poitiers en à bien montré les preuves pres des deux Roys qui de leur temps ont en l'Europe si fort émeü le Lettres, les Armes et l'Empyre. Desquelz elle à eu tant d'heür et faveur, que non seullemen elle à sauvé la vie a plusieurs par le moyen de sa grace et douceur, mais aussi a plus que plusieurs a fait ottroyer grans Biens : tousiours se metant au devoir de recongnoistre par vif effait tout Homme luy portant servitude, dont elle fera remercyée et reverée sans fin, voire de ceux en qui la Reverence est d'honorable durée [...]. (169)

This text from 1555 clearly establishes Diane as a mediating figure to the king, but it also alludes to the favors that she grants those who serve her. The reputation for bestowing great gifts on her favorites undoubtedly encouraged Du Bellay to present her with verses and seek her protection, nonetheless adopting a stance of humble disinterest, as he does in his sonnets to her.

Ending the ode on this note, with an emphasis on the value of poetry and the services that the poet can provide to king and country, shifts the focus of the poem from Diane, the king, and French politics, to Du Bellay himself. It is clear what he feels his role in the country can be, and although he praises the king with comparisons

to Apollo and Augustus, the reader's overall impression is that he is less a man of action than a living symbol. He will take little initiative without being advised--or prodded--by his mistress. This is Diane's main virtue: she has influence on the king and thus might be persuaded to direct the monarch's choice of leisure and cultural activities.

The third and last ode to Diane (Ode 23) is titled "A Ladicte Dame." It is composed of 28 stanzas; each containing ten lines of seven syllables. This poem contains many of the elements mentioned in the previous poem, but also speaks of the role of the nobility in society and sketches a clear social hierarchy in France. Diane's virtues are elaborated at greater length than in previous poems, and her specific merits become clearer. Once again, however, the king enters the poem very early, and the poet concludes it.

The poem begins by praising Diane's beauty and virtue and "perfection" in general terms. It then quickly, and predictably, moves on to speak of the king, child of the gods.

Les Roys monstrent aux humains  
De Dieu l'exemple & l'image. (21-22)

Correcting the impression created by the last poem, this stanza then stresses the fact that God is the puppeteer behind the king, motivating his desires, and thus no mere mortal can sway the king's heart and mind:

Aussi dit on qu'en ses mains  
Dieu tient des Roys le courage:  
Dont il tourne à son plaisir  
Et l'amour & le desir:  
Et n'est pas en la puissance  
D'un humain entendement,  
D'esbranler tant seulement  
Un Royale constance. (23-30)

The king is no mere mortal, his actions and emotions, his loves and desires are driven by God and escape human understanding (or reproach). In keeping with his God-like stature, the king is described in superlatives:

On voit plusieurs grands vertus  
Reluire au monde, mais celles  
Dont les Roys sont revestus  
Sont les plus cleres & belles  
[...]  
Combien que ce Roy, qui tient  
La plus honorable place  
De tout ce qui appartient  
A Prince de telle race,  
Soit le plus chevalereux,  
Le plus sage & plus heureux,  
Qui onques porta couronne:  
La vertu d'estre constant,  
C'est ceste vertu pourtant  
Dont plus de gloire on luy donne. (31-34, 41-50)

This king, who is the most splendid of all monarchs ever, is said to be extraordinary above all for his constancy. The sixteenth century was a turbulent one, in which French society saw itself rent by many divisions and changes. Among these were wars with France, England, and Spain, the Catholic-Protestant divide, and the gulf between the humanists and the rest of the populace. Under such circumstances, a Prince who could project an image of stability amid the unrest would be a boon indeed to his country. The king's mistress, however, would also have an interest in the king's constancy in love. Brantôme describes Henri II as a discrete lover, and he is commonly described as remarkably faithful to Diane. Biographies of Diane document few dalliances on the part of the king during their long relationship.<sup>221</sup> The next two verses accordingly stress Henri's fidelity to Diane, at the same time a tribute to him as a lover and a tribute to Diane's lasting seductiveness. They are then followed by a verse about the reciprocal devotion that exists between the king and Montmorency,

---

<sup>221</sup> Erlanger, in his biography of Diane, makes the following statement about Henri: "Une fois accordés, son amour, sa confiance, son admiration, sa haine n'étaient jamais repris" (126).

one of his main advisors and captains, also mentioned in the previous ode. The king's relationships with his captain and his mistress serve as proof that this figure of solid constancy and virtue is a fitting ruler for his country:

O trois, voire quatre fois  
Bien-heureuse la Province,  
Laquelle est subjecte aux loix  
D'un si sage & vaillant Prince! (81-84)

The constancy of the king towards his faithful subjects parallels the constancy of the monarch as an ideal measure of value in much of Du Bellay's poetry. The poet will only dare to state that kings may be fallible in the *Discours* written after the death of Henri II, and in which he counsels a young François II that his predecessors may have erred in some policies.

In this poem, however, both the king and noblemen represent a standard of good that elevates them above the commonplace. They deserve the respect of the people and they must also repay this respect with service and protection to their inferiors.

Les Rois & Princes qui sont  
Comme dieux en leur provinces,  
Et les grands Seigneurs qui ont  
L'amour & faveur des Princes,  
Du peuple sont honorez,  
Du peuple ils sont adorez,  
S'il est permis de le dire,  
Ils ont l'oreille de Roy,  
Mais tel honneur apres soy  
Beaucoup de travail attire. (111-120)

The "grands seigneurs" are thus loved by the people because they are loved by the monarch and because they are close to him: "ils ont l'oreille du Roy." Notably, proximity and favor are expressed in terms of speaking and listening: the inner circle is close enough to address the king and be granted his attention--they speak and he hears them.

A social hierarchy is clearly sketched in this poem: early on the king is said to be the image and model of God, in these later verses the king and princes are said to be like Gods in their own domains, worshiped by the lords who obey them. These lords are in turn adored by the people. This distinction, however, brings about its own responsibilities: “Mais tel honneur apres soy / Beaucoup de travail attire.” While Du Bellay can hardly tell the king or his patrons how to behave in respect to those who serve them, he can make general pronouncements such as this one, with its intimations of *noblesse oblige*. If the general idea is that those who hold higher stations in life should be gracious and helpful to those beneath them, it surely extends to the relationship between the poet and his patrons.

Du Bellay refines this statement however, by making it clear that the lower classes have responsibilities of their own, and that to offend a nobleman is to offend God himself:

Car ilz tiennent ce haut lieu  
Dessus le bas populaire  
Comme ministres de Dieu  
Et serviteurs du vulgaire:  
Aussi le peuple à bon droit  
En recompense leur doit  
Tout honneur & reverence:  
Et qui ne leur porte honneur,  
Il n'offense leur grandeur,  
C'est Dieu mesme qu'il offense. (111-130)

Diane holds this high place in the social hierarchy and Du Bellay says that she has won the hearts of the French not only because she is faithful to the king and takes an interest in his children (85-90), but because she takes an interest in the French people in general and ministers to the poor and to the sick.<sup>222</sup>

Les pauvres alimentez,  
Et les maladies traictez

---

<sup>222</sup> Diane's extensive efforts to care for the king's children are documented in her biography by Ivan Cloulas (173-174), among others.

Avec' tant de soing & cure,  
Monstrent assez l'amitié,  
La candeur & la pitié  
Que vous avez de nature. (155-160)

These are the first concrete characteristics offered as evidence of Diane's greater virtue. Up to this point her main features have been her beauty, her nobility, her superb chateau at Anet, her fidelity and the sway she holds over the king. Du Bellay further suggests why a nobleman such as himself might respect Diane: he claims that she is a good judge of character and that she helps advance the careers of meritorious people at court, while those who are lazy fortune-seekers, gossips or sycophants are banished from her inner circle and refused access to the king. Once again, Diane serves a mediating role at court:

Car la France n'a point eu  
Qui plus les bons auctorise,  
Qui plus ayme la vertu,  
Qui plus le droit favorise.  
Entre tous vous advancez  
Ceux là que vous cognoissez  
Du Roy serviteurs fideles:  
Gardant ceux qui sont absens  
Comme ceux qui sont presens  
Dessous l'ombre de voz ailes. (141-150)

In contrast to Billon's text quoted above, which referred to the favors that Diane granted to those that served *her*, Du Bellay refers to the favors that she grants those who serve *the king*. He suggests that Diane and Henri function as a unit, that Diane is an extension of the monarch himself and that she rewards his favorites as she would reward her own. The reference to Diane's devotion to those who are absent may refer to the poet himself, who was unhappily absent from court for four years (1553-1557) while in Rome working for his uncle. He was very concerned that he be remembered by his friends and the court, and was dismayed to see his reputation wane as Ronsard's blossomed during the same period. Chamard asserts that it is impossible to

date this ode to Diane (5: 367), but the reference to being absent from court suggests that it was written during his period abroad or after his return.

After having summed up Diane's virtues and place in society, Du Bellay then turns to a troubling thought in lines that seem written to reassure Diane, but which also carry a threat. Du Bellay says that since her virtues have won the hearts of the king, the nobles and the people, what could she possibly fear? Supported by so much admiration and love, Diane should never fear any misfortune. He then alludes, however, to Diane's immortal reputation and hints at her death. Here is where the poet can make himself useful: Diane should not fear fading into obscurity, since he will insure that her name survives her brief stay on Earth:

Quant à l'injure des ans,  
Si France me daignoit mettre  
Au ranc de ses mieux disans,  
Je m'oserois bien promettre  
De bastir à votre nom  
un oeuvre de tel renom,  
Que vostre Anet admirable,  
Auquel se voit imité  
Tout l'art de l'antiquité  
Ne seroit point plus durable. (221-230)

Here Du Bellay draws attention to his place in French letters and seeks once again to solidify his reputation: "Si France me daignoit mettre / Au ranc de ses mieux disans / Je m'oserois bien promettre / De bastir à votre nom." Du Bellay's use of the imperfect and conditional tenses in these verses is notable and echoes sonnet 158 in the *Regrets*; it seems to solicit recognition from Diane and more especially the king, hidden behind the figure of *France*. The poet *would* dare to sing Diane's praises *if* France were to recognize him as one of its great men of letters.

As we have seen, Du Bellay often compares architecture and writing, and frequently concludes that writing produces the more durable monuments to human

achievement. He introduces this idea again here, suggesting that his poetry about Diane will outlast her famous chateau, Anet. The imagery and phrasing so closely match the sonnets in the *Regrets* that it seems safe to speculate that they were written around the same time.

Du Bellay also suggests that he has benefitted from Diane's protection and that he is devoted to her and indebted to her for unspecified kindnesses:

Vrayement ingrat je serois,  
Et pis, si pis se peult dire,  
Si vos vertus je taisois  
Dessus les nerfs de ma Lyre,  
Ayant receu tant d'honneur,  
Tant de grace & de faveur,  
De vous, qui sans mon merite,  
Mesme estant de vous bien loing,  
Avez daigné prendre soing  
De ma fortune petite. (241-250)

Yet again, praise is something to be *voiced*, and the poet says he would feel remiss if he swallowed/silenced "taisois" Diane's praiseworthy qualities. It seems that Du Bellay enjoyed more success than Ronsard in receiving patronage from Diane, but to what favor does he allude? Diane's biographers have described her interest in law and contemporary lawsuits, particularly concerning property (Erlanger 207). Du Bellay is known to have had many legal woes at the end of his life: did Diane intercede on his behalf and produce a verdict in his favor? Did she help find him a sinecure? It is impossible to know. But here once again, poetry is a medium of exchange, and not only the means to immortality. Du Bellay can acquit himself of debts by repaying them in poems, but only after one further favor is granted "si France me daignoit mettre / Au ranc de ses mieux disans." This exemplifies the dialogic nature of the ode form, its tendency to seek actions and responses from its addressees, and its promises of future songs and poems.

The poem ends with a sort of abbreviated *art poétique*, explaining the type of poetry that Du Bellay wants to write and making a claim for authenticity:

Si je voulois m’amuser  
Au nom dont on vous appelle,  
Ou si je voulois user  
D’autre invention nouvelle,  
D’arcz & traits j’enrichirois  
Cest oeuvre, & le remplirois  
De mainte & de mainte fable:  
Mais rien de vous je ne veux  
Tesmoigner à noz nepveux  
Qui tout ne soit veritable. (261-270)

Here, like Ronsard, Du Bellay rejects the tradition of the *quémandeurs* poets who played with names in intricate but inconsequential verse. His only intention is to write the truth about Diane, assuming the role of witness and chronicler. This written truth will be what is already commonly said to be true “en la bouche de tous:”

Je ne suis point inventeur  
D’un tas de fables frivoles,  
Et d’artifice menteur  
Ne farde point mes paroles.  
Cela que j’escriis de vous  
Est en la bouche de tous,  
Mais à la fin que d’âge en âge  
Cest vive verité  
Passe à la postérité,  
J’en porte icy tesmoignage. (271-280)

Du Bellay makes it clear that he does not value word games, fanciful arabesques of language or hyperbole. He makes a claim to authenticity: what he writes is true and unornamented. His work has been to record what has already been circulating orally, in order that it may pass into posterity. In this way the poet can escape being seen as a flatterer or a sycophant. His work is divested of personal interest, and he can claim higher motivations; repaying an older debt to Diane, but more importantly, chronicling the history of his country by writing of its most illustrious inhabitants.

We see once again that a poem written to a patron becomes a treatise on poetry and a vehicle for the poet. The final words, rather than elevating Diane, elevate Du Bellay's vision of poetry and his own work. This work is very nearly god-like in its own ambition to attain eternity and foil the ravages of time. It could also be said that the poet is king-like in his godliness, in his learning and in his constancy. He is no mere supplicant, begging for favors. He is a peer, or even better, an orphic force, that can offer Diane immortality itself. At the same time, the repeated references to orality and music conjure images of court poets--perhaps Saint-Gelais--entertainers and faithful servants to the powerful. These images temper what could be seen as outsized ambition by emphasizing the human transmission of the message, from mouth to ear, in an intimate setting.

### **Two poems in Diane's voice**

Unlike the two sonnets and three odes written to Diane that are analyzed above, two additional poems that Aubert, Marty-Laveaux, and Chamard group with the odes are difficult to categorize. Unusually, both are written in Diane's voice and both take for subject her love for the king: one is titled "En la personne de ladicte dame;" the second is titled "Chanson."<sup>223</sup> It is unclear whether one should say that these are written *to* Diane or *for* her, as she may have commissioned them. It is also unclear whether she or the poet would have performed them publicly in front of the king or another audience. Marty Laveaux makes no comment on them, and Chamard can only say that the "Chanson" was likely to have been inspired by the king's absence during his January 1558 visit to Calais.

---

<sup>223</sup> Cathy Yandell has written on an elegy by Ronsard and one by Tyard in each of which the poet adopts a female voice (and in each case the narrator happens to be lesbian). Yandell does not refer to other sixteenth-century French verse written by male poets in the female voice, and acknowledges "the rather uncommon literary practice of assuming female personae" (72).

Poem 24 (“En la personne de ladicte dame”) is composed of seven stanzas of six lines each. The first two lines of each stanza are rhymed couplets of masculine rhymes and have eight syllables. The last four lines of each stanza have seven syllables and feature a *rime embrassée* of a feminine rhyme enclosing a masculine one. The irregular line length is unusual, as the majority of Du Bellay’s odes are isometric.

In the first four stanzas of the poem, Diane asserts the perfect nature of her love for the king, describing “Le Dieu qui s’est fait de mon Coeur / Par moy-mesmes le seul vainqueur” (1-2). This love is human and gracious, rather than vicious or fickle. It is “tout bon, il est tout beau” (10), as perfect as the form of a circle. Her love is prey to no envy and does not cheat or fear cheating.

After this opening celebration of love, the last three stanzas feature veiled allusions to court life and potential rivals or threats, all of which are dismissed. Diane says that her love

...n’a soucy de la beauté  
Qui du vice est amie :  
Le temps ne luy peut faire tort,  
Encores moins le faux rapport  
D’une langue ennemie. (26-30)

After dismissing the power of false rumors spread by unnamed enemies, she then asserts that she has nothing to fear, because even if a cloud obscures the sun, the lustrous orb shines just as brightly from behind the cover:

Si donques mon amour est tel,  
Et mon subject est immortel,  
De qui me doy-je craindre ?  
La nuë s’oppose au Soleil,  
Mais son lustre est tousjours pareil,  
Et ne se peut esteindre. (31-36)

Does the cloud obscuring the sun represent an intermittent dalliance of the king's? If this poem were written after Du Bellay's return from Rome, it may have coincided with the brief affair that Henri had with Nicole de Savigny, who bore an illegitimate son in 1557. This was one of the few infidelities that Henri supposedly embarked on during his long relationship with Diane, the other being with Lady Jane Fleming, who also bore him a son in 1551.

In any event, Diane wishes to discount any potential threat. She continues in the last stanza to dismiss any naysayers and affirm that events have unfolded as they should:

Plusieurs me grondent de bien loing,  
Mais celuy qui de tout a soing  
Y a donné bon ordre :  
Ils sont comme chiens qui de nuit  
Abboyent la Lune qui luit,  
Et ne la peuvent mordre. (37-42)

The last three lines, according to Chamard, may refer to a popular saying about dogs barking at the moon, noisy but harmless. Du Bellay undoubtedly chose this comparison since Diane was so closely associated with the moon goddess Diana. She triumphs in the end, shining and unreachable far above the howling dogs below. The last lines seem both defiant and confident, designed either to reassure a private reader or communicate bravado before a live audience.

The second poem in Diane's voice is titled *Chanson*. It is comprised of 15 stanzas of eight lines. Each line has ten syllables: the first and last three lines of each stanza contain *rimes embrassées*, with a rhymed couplet in the middle. There are two refrains that are repeated in the final lines of the stanzas. The refrain and the ten-syllable lines suggest an earlier medieval tradition, which may have been intentional

given Diane and Henri II's passion for *Amadis de Gaule* and medieval jousting culture.<sup>224</sup>

The poem seems to have been written during a separation from the king, and, like the previous poem, it too describes the perfection of Diane's love in slightly defensive terms. It opens with Diane addressing her sighs "Tristes soupirs, messagers de mon ame" (v.1), which are her only mode of expression since the king's absence has rendered her speechless with emotion. Behind the extended apostrophe to her sighs, however, the real addressee seems to be the king or a small courtly audience. The third line introduces a conditional *si* clause that will be repeated in subsequent stanzas:

Si vostre ardeur vient d'une sainte flamme  
Et ne tient rien de l'amour vicieux (3-4)

If Diane's sighs and emotions are motivated by a pure love for the king, she asks that they return to her because she will then have found the will to continue living: "Tournez à moy, je ne veulx plus mourir" (8). This last line becomes a refrain that is repeated as the last line of stanzas 2-11 and then the final stanza 15. It establishes the theme of return which drives the whole piece: Diane wants the king to come back, either from a real absence due to travel, or an emotional absence due to personal conflict.

The following six stanzas celebrate the king's virtue and prowess, and the final two of these (stanzas six and seven) allude to events that may suggest a date for the poem. Diane refers repeatedly to the king's perfection. He is "la personne au monde plus parfaicte / et le plus grand qui se trouve aujourd'hui" (11-12). He is "vaillant,

---

<sup>224</sup> See Bourciez, pp.19-21.

sage & bien fortuné” (23), “le plus beau Prince / Qu’on veit jamais, & du plus doux maintien” (25-26). Diane compares him to great classical figures as well :

Si d’Alexandre il a la hardiesse  
Si d’Annibal la grand’ dexterité  
De Scipion la constance & sagesse,  
Et de Cesar la grand’ celerité  
[...]  
Tournez à moy, je ne veulx plus mourir. (33-36, 40)

She then goes on to mention that he has already spent fifteen years braving hardships in army camps, and he has accomplished more in ten years than other men do in their entire lives:

S’il s’est trouvé en tous les camps de France  
Depuis quinze ans ...  
Si en dix ans d’un bon heur se suivant  
Il a plus faict pour honneur conquerir,  
Qu’autre n’a faict durant tout son vivant,  
Tournay à moy, je ne veulx plus mourir. (41-42, 45-48)

According to Chamard, Henri first went to battle in 1542 when he commanded the Roussillon army. If this were fifteen years before the writing of the poem, the date of composition would fall around 1557, which is confirmed by the reference to ten years of accomplishments, since Henri ascended the throne in 1547.

The first two lines of the next stanza also give an allusion which may help place the date of this poem:

Si sa vertu a donté la fortune,  
S’il a repris aux cheveulx le bon heur, (49-50)

Chamard reads this as a sign that “la Chanson est postérieure au désastre de Saint-Quentin (août 1557) et qu’elle date de l’époque où nos armes connurent un retour de fortune (fin 1557 ou début de 1558)” (Chamard 5 : 393). Once again, it is impossible to determine the date with complete accuracy, but if this poem were written after Du Bellay’s return from Rome in 1557 or early 1558, it would have closely followed

Henri's affair with Nicole de Savigny and the birth of their son--a relationship that is likely to have posed a threat to Diane and caused a rift between her and the king.

Other members of court may have tried to exploit the situation for political advantage as well: earlier in the decade Montmorency had fostered the king's affair with Jane, Lady Fleming, in order to attenuate Diane's influence and increase his own hold on power. This 1551 attempt to drive a wedge between Diane and Henri backfired, but it did produce an illegitimate son that Henri later recognized.

A sense of threat begins to be felt in the following four stanzas when Diane defensively restates her pure and single-minded love for the king. She maintains that "l'amour & la foy / Sont les beautez qui ne peuvent perir" (61-62), in contrast of course to physical beauty and its vulnerability to time. Diane claims to be governed only by thoughts of the king's happiness, by "son plaisir seul" (63). She has always put his health and happiness first (65-68) and she would rather die than lose him:

S'il sçait qu'icy je ne desire vivre  
Que pour luy seul, & que l'ayant perdu,  
Je ne voudrois un seul jour le suivivre ...  
Si son retour si long temps attendu  
(Espoir qui seul me garde de perir)  
Doit rapporter mon bon heur pretendu,  
Tournez a moy, je ne veulx plus mourir. (81-83, 85-88)

Chamard has wondered whether the described absence refers to a period in January 1558 when the king travelled to Calais, because he could find no record of the king's travels in late 1557. The separation may be emotional rather than physical, however, since in the next three stanzas Diane describes obstacles to their relationship that are not geographic in nature.

These stanzas--13, 14, and 15--differ from the previous ones by describing court intrigues and jealousies. The refrain changes as well. In the new refrain, Diane

addresses her sighs and says that if any slander succeeds in alienating the king's affection for her, they should fly up to heaven and await her there, for she would soon die:

Mais si par mort, où par quelque disgrace,  
Par quelque envie, ou quelque faulx rapport,  
M'est denié l'heur de revoir sa face ...  
Montez au ciel, & la-hault m'attendez. (89-91, 96)

Gossip and plotting courtiers may not be the only threat to Diane's happiness; she also refers to younger, female rivals:

Si je dois craindre une beauté fragile,  
Un beau semblant tout autre que le cueur,  
Une jeunesse inconstante & mobile,  
Un faulx souspir, une feincte langueur ...  
Montez au ciel, & la-hault m'attendez. (105-108, 112)

Diane suggests that younger women offer fragile and immature affection, untested by time. She implies that her long love and commitment to Henri speak for themselves as proof of sincerity and feeling, and that no new love could be trusted with such absolute certainty as her own.

These verses are followed by the final stanza, in which both refrains return:

Diane says that if her love for the king isn't reciprocated, she will die and her sighs should await her in heaven. But on the other hand:

... si l'honneur, seul but ou vous tendez,  
Et la vertu vous doivent secourir,  
En attendant l'heur que vous pretendez,  
Tournez à moy, je ne veulx plus mourir. (117-120)

This chanson depicts an older, devoted lover who defends her honor and fidelity, and who counts on the virtue of her beloved to rescue ("secourir") her from false accusations and the temptation represented by ambitious younger rivals. The sheer number of stanzas devoted to praising the king suggests that he was a likely audience

for the work, and that it was designed to persuade him of the sincerity of her feelings, her continued admiration and affection, and her desire to be reunited.

These two poems in Diane's voice are unusual in Du Bellay's oeuvre because they make no mention of the poet or his work: he turns the poet's voice completely over to Diane and breathes life into the persona, granting her the power of expression. The metatextual musings that characterize Du Bellay's odes to powerful people would, of course, be inappropriate in a poem that Diane may have performed herself, since her *persona* would be unlikely to make any such comments. Does the gift of voice repay Diane for a past favor? Do these poems represent the settling of a debt that is referred to in the last ode above? To my knowledge, Du Bellay wrote no other verses in which he adopted the voice of a patron or friend, so they appear to be a unique effort.

Du Bellay would have had to have been an intimate of Diane's in order to portray her feelings with accuracy, and the familiarity with court events that these poems display is suggestive of Saint-Gelais's style, although the poems are longer than the short, fixed forms that the older poet usually wrote. As in his other poems to Diane, Du Bellay uses simple imagery and avoids complicated forms or mythological references that might not translate well in the court setting. It seems likely that he adopted conventions and concerns that appealed to Diane. Thematically, the *chanson* is similar to one of two poems that are known to have been written by Diane. Both of her pieces are addressed to the king: the first alludes to the day when Henri and Diane fell in love, and the second is a farewell poem that seems to have been written before a separation, possibly in 1552:

Adieu délices de mon cœur !  
Adieu mon maistre & mon seigneur!

Adieu vrai estocq de noblesse!  
 ... ..  
 Adieu plusieurs royaux bancquetz!  
 Adieu épicurieux mets!  
 Adieu magnifiques festins!  
 Adieu doux baisers coulombins!  
 Adieu ce qu'en secret faisons  
 Quand entre nous deulx nous jouons !  
 Adieu, adieu, qui mon cœur ayme !  
 Adieu lyesse souveraine!<sup>225</sup>

Here we find affirmations of love and a desire to acknowledge an impending absence. Du Bellay's poems contain the same, but from a more threatened perspective. It is possible to imagine that Diane commissioned Du Bellay to write these on her behalf: Henri II asked Mellin de Saint Gelais to write poems to Catherine de Medici in his own voice (Saint-Gelais 264-68), and it is likely that Diane would use poet/secretaries in the same way. She may not have trusted her own poetic arts with such an important message to her distant--or estranged--royal lover.

One aspect that unites the three odes that Du Bellay writes to Diane with the two poems in her voice is their very "spokenness" or voiced quality. François Rouget has shown the connection that the ode form traditionally has had with both music and voice, and with public performance. It is possible that the three odes would have been read aloud at a dinner or other social event. The same is true for the two pieces in Diane's voice, and she may even have sung or pronounced them herself. In this way Du Bellay seems to have chosen genres that would be appropriate for Diane's public life, pieces that could be shared with her intimates and members of the court.

---

<sup>225</sup>Guiffrey reprints this poem as a note to one that Henri wrote to Diane (228). In his poem Henri also mentions an absence of his – supposedly in 1552 as well. The couple may have had a habit of writing to each other on the occasion of separations, and Du Bellay's poems may fit into this pattern.

### **Xenia: Latin epigram to Diane**

Du Bellay wrote one final poem to Diane, an epigram that figures in the posthumously published collection of *Xenia*, or playful epigrams that offered fictitious etymologies of the names of friends and powerful people. This is a clear reversal of Du Bellay's position quoted in the last ode on page 90, when he says that he doesn't want to write light or insignificant poetry about Diane (*Si je voulois m'amuser / Au nom dont on vous appelle...*). Du Bellay worked on the *xenia* during the first half of 1559 before the death of Henri II. The epigram written to Diane appears sixth in the collection, after five members of the royal family (Henri II, Catherine, Marguerite, François le Dauphin and his wife Marie Stuart). Catherine Magnien-Simonin has noted the careful order of these epigrams, with a first section dedicated to eleven high personae (beginning with the king) who were likely to be patrons or supporters, followed by a section to the king's employees, whose order is equally careful according to Magnien-Simonin:

Savante disposition: Jean Du Bellay d'abord, puis partisans de la répression alternant avec modérés, protégés de Diane avec personae non gratae, les cardinaux avant les évêques. L'ordonnance de ce milieu bigarré de diplomates, de conseillers, et de savants découvre les ambitions de Joachim à ce moment : une carrière de même genre, une mitre. (138)

Magnien-Simonin thus reads the *Xenia* as a work of ambition and aspiration, aimed to cement Du Bellay's reputation and advance his career. She notes that once again Du Bellay was not content to simply imitate past models of epigrams written as *étrennes* (such as Marot's: see page 219 earlier in this chapter), or end of year gifts. Instead, Du Bellay innovates in this form, as in so many others:

Au lieu d'interpeller ses dédicataires pour leur proposer l'échange rituel d'argent ou d'offices contre ses vers, il les a impliqués dans ses

epigrammes, a fait d'eux la matière même de ses poèmes, par le moyen de l'allusion. (139)

Du Bellay is aware of this innovation and mentions it in the introduction that he wrote for the unpublished collection.

What motivated this innovation? In addition to a desire for creative independence, Magnien-Simonin says that Du Bellay might have been encouraged to use this form by his friends Charles Uytenhove, preceptor to Jean de Morel's daughters, or by Michel de L'Hospital and Jean de Morel himself. But in addition to this encouragement from friends, it should be noted that Du Bellay had a habit of writing series of poems to important people and publishing them in collections (*Recueil de Poésie, Oeuvres de l'invention de l'auteur, Regrets, Epigrammata, Inscriptions*). It seems that at the same time that he was writing the *inscriptions* for the wedding festivities of 1559 he wrote the *Xenia*. His free etymological play with the names of powerful people and friends might have been creative relief from the limitations of the circumstantial verse composed for the wedding ceremonies and associated tournaments. While writing these more explicit and elevated praise poems, Du Bellay may have wished for a more playful or natural way to connect with powerful members of the court without seeming overly obsequious. The *Xenia* may have been his solution.

Rather than playing on the etymology of Diane's name in his poem to her, Du Bellay invokes instead several versions of the myth of Diana, although he does not trade on the traditional portrait of a huntress. Instead, he stresses the qualities of beauty, virtue, and the goddess's association with the moon:

Toi qui désires connaître les trois visages de la vierge Diane , que la beauté de la déesse d'Anet soit connue de toi. Egal est l'honneur de sa beauté, égale la gloire de son front joyeux, égale la probité de ses

mœurs, égales sa pudeur et sa piété. C'est de nuit que brille le flambeau de la déesse, mais la femme brille de jour. La déesse brille d'une lumière d'emprunt; la femme brille, éclatante, de sa propre lumière. La déesse est emportée dans sa course vagabonde à travers les nuages du ciel, mais la femme est emportée sur la droite voie de la vertu. Enfin, Phébé n'est pas totalement lumineuse, toujours, mais notre Cynthie brille de tout son éclat, toujours. (Demerson 8: 68).

Du Bellay once again alludes to Diane's chateau, as she is described as the "déesse d'Anet." He insists strangely on her moral values: "la probité de ses mœurs ... sa pudeur et sa piété," insisting that these are equal to her famous beauty. As Henri II's long-standing mistress, Diane could hardly be portrayed as a virginal Diana.

Nonetheless, the poems that Du Bellay wrote in Diane's voice construct a persona who needs to broadcast and defend her own virtue, and Du Bellay seems to flatter that persona in this epigram. Diane is then compared to the moon, but in every case she is seen to be superior to the evening star: more constant, more steady. Du Bellay's high praise in this epigram does not seem to have convinced all readers, however:

Demerson notes that the piece was not included in the 1568 version of the *Xenia* published by Charles Uytenhove "peut-être en raison de la stricte moralité du Gantois" (8:169).

### **Conclusion**

Despite the difficulty of dating some of Du Bellay's poems to Diane, it appears that in all likelihood he addressed her only after his return from Rome, and primarily in the forms of odes and *chansons*, although he also wrote two sonnets and one epigram in her honor. He is generally acknowledged to have been more successful with Diane than his rival Ronsard: his attention to genre may indicate that he was a more sensitive composer of occasional verse and praise poems than his peer. Although the poems he wrote before and during his four years in Rome often complained about his low status and poverty as a poet and secretary, he seems to have

become more politically savvy and adept at ingratiating himself with the powerful during his Roman period. While in Italy he also expressed anxiety about being forgotten in France and about being surpassed by Ronsard. He may have returned home determined to be successful, even at the cost of adopting a courtesan aesthetic.<sup>226</sup>

Analysis of the two sonnets he wrote to Diane illuminates choices he made when publishing the *Regrets*: he displays a heightened consciousness of the roles that powerful people play at court and the complicated ways that they are interconnected. He is careful to pay Diane her due, to use vivid and complimentary imagery, and to avoid esoteric references and overt requests for patronage. He positions his poem to her carefully in relation to poems to her protégés and members of the royal family, just as he is careful when ordering his later *étrennes*. In both of these cases, the content of the poems to Diane was determined by her personality. Their form, however, was governed by their inclusion in homogeneous collections of sonnets and epigrams.

In the case of the odes and chansons, however, both the content and the form of the poems seem selected with Diane in mind. At this late stage in his all too brief career, Du Bellay appears to understand the ways that influence circulates, and that it is important to “have the ear” of important figures, just as he writes that the “grands seigneurs ... ont l’oreille du Roy.” Attuned to the workings of court personalities, he seems to know that Diane is not an avid consumer of contemporary poetry. He approaches her differently than he approaches other patrons like Marguerite de France

---

<sup>226</sup> Katz casts the move not as ambition but as realism on Du Bellay’s part: “the final action of the *Regrets* is the positive acceptance of a role: encomiast. Obviously, there is a tremendous deflation of the poet’s function; he no longer leads society, he follows it. But this acceptance accords well with the idea that Du Bellay is above all a realist and, therefore, accepts the only role that realistically the Renaissance poet can fill” (173-74).

and Jean d'Avanson: to them, he dedicates volumes of poetry, letters, and series of sonnets. He does not do this for Diane. Instead, he writes her odes and chansons that are likely to have been read or sung at court in front of an audience, and he is careful to write short verses that would have been easy to listen to, and regular enough to offer the possibility of being sung to musical accompaniment.

The long and flexible ode form allows Du Bellay to link Diane to the king and other powerful members of court, flattering them all as necessary and binding them together in his affirmation of a national poetry. The very open and social nature of the ode seems calibrated to Diane's critical public position--it acknowledges her relation to the king and her resulting centrality at court.

If Du Bellay seeks Diane's ear and adopts the supplicant's position at various points in the odes, he attenuates these requests not only by promising Diane a glorious place in poetic history, but by offering her the gift of a strong and defiant voice on two occasions. The content of the poems written in her voice suggests that Du Bellay had access to a private Diane in addition to her public persona, or at the very least he had the means to imagine this private person and the intimate side of her relationship to the king.

## Conclusion

This study represents the first comprehensive attempt to analyze Joachim Du Bellay's poems to Marguerite de Savoie and Diane de Poitiers. It has shown Marguerite to be Du Bellay's first female patron, and one of his most important literary interlocutors. She appears in nearly every volume that he published after meeting her in 1549. For ten years, Du Bellay consistently represented her in ideal terms as perfection itself. This contrasts with Du Bellay's representation of fellow poet Ronsard, a more commonly acknowledged literary influence. Du Bellay's verse registers both praise and blame in relation to Ronsard, and their friendship was punctuated by gaps and silences. Du Bellay's intensified competition with Ronsard in 1550, perhaps in part for Marguerite's patronage, motivated him to write sonnets rather than odes, which had quickly become defined as Ronsard's specialty. In the second edition of the *Olive* (1550), Du Bellay modifies his sonnets by incorporating some of the traditional functions of odes: he introduces proper names in the body of the poems (Marguerite, Ronsard, Scève) and explicitly comments on his own writing and contemporary developments in French poetry--a practice he will expand and refine in the *Regrets*. His social relationships in 1550--with Marguerite and Ronsard--thus have a lasting impact on his poetry.

Du Bellay also writes more poems to Marguerite than to her brother the king, and he frequently manages to imply that it is she, rather than Henri II, who embodies the humanist ideals of her illustrious father, François 1er. When he returns from four years in Rome, he publishes four volumes of poetry in quick succession: one is dedicated to Henri II (*Antiquitez de Rome*), but the other three are bound together by strategically placed references to Marguerite that construct a virtual temple in her honor. Tribute poems to the princess crown the triumphal ending to the *Regrets*, they

weave through the playful middle section of the *Jeux rustiques*, and they open the Latin collection of *Poemata*. Previous critics have acknowledged the poems to Marguerite in the *Regrets* and the *Poemata*--with varying interpretations--but the current study is the first to assert her presence in the *Jeux rustiques*. From the beginning, through the middle and to the end the princess is the “coulonne seure” (*Recueil de poésie*, Ode 2, v.16) around which Du Bellay builds not only his 1558 collections, but his entire poetic production from fall 1549 until his death in January 1560.

Although the dating remains uncertain, it seems that at the same time that Du Bellay published his 1558 collections, he began to enjoy the protection of Diane de Poitiers. The length and scope of their relationship was limited, with the result that Du Bellay wrote many fewer poems to her than to Marguerite. Most significant is his choice of genre when writing to Diane: he tended to write odes and songs--forms that have a voiced quality to them. While Marguerite's perfection was celebrated in no fewer than a dozen different forms, designed for occasions both private and public, for being declaimed aloud or read in silence, Du Bellay's poems to Diane seem to indicate that they were produced for public performance. This could suggest that Du Bellay had an official connection to Diane rather than an intimate one, although the fact that he wrote two unusual poems in Diane's own voice--poems that affirm her love for the king--seems to indicate that Du Bellay had some access to her private feelings. The choice of genre could alternatively be explained by Diane's own literary preferences: namely, that she viewed poetry as a social event rather than a private pastime.

The social relations that Du Bellay enjoyed with these women, inflected by their different roles at court, their literary preferences and their personalities, thus

impacted the poet's choice of form. They also caused him to stretch these forms in new directions, as when he began to modify the content of his sonnets in the second edition of the *Olive*, or when he adopted a female voice in the songs written for Diane. Further examination of Du Bellay's relationships with women at the Valois court is likely to lead to an enhanced understanding of his use of genre, and for this reason I would like to expand the current study to include an analysis of the sonnets that Du Bellay exchanged with Jeanne d'Albret, daughter of Marguerite de Navarre. Du Bellay apparently only wrote sonnets to Jeanne (although he wrote an ode on the birth of her son), and a comparison of his use of odes and songs for Diane to his deliberate choice of the sonnet form for Jeanne d'Albret--in contrast to the dozens of forms that he uses for Marguerite—is likely to be illuminating.

One might ask whether it would not be more efficient to simply read the *Deffence* and other *arts poétiques* from mid-sixteenth-century France in order to understand what Du Bellay thought about genre. There is general critical consensus, however, that it is in fact necessary to separate what sixteenth-century poets do from what they say (Colie; Naïs; Mathieu-Castellani “La Notion;” Rouget *L'apothéose*), because there is little systematic writing about genre and many “unexpressed assumptions” (Colie 115). Reading the *Deffence* accordingly proves to be of little help, even though it contains a chapter titled “Quelz genres de Poèmes, doit elire le Poëte François” (Book 2, Chapter 4).<sup>227</sup>

As its title suggests, this section of the *Deffence* recommends particular genres to a new generation of poets, but it proceeds by lists rather than clear definitions. Du Bellay rejects traditional French forms such as “Rondeaux, Ballades, Vyrelaiz, Chantz Royaulx, Chansons, et autres telles episseries” (Monferran edition 132), and he calls

---

<sup>227</sup> Hélène Naïs points out that few writers before 1549 used the term “genre,” but after Du Bellay used the term eleven times in the *Deffence* “genre est devenu un mot disponible” (121).

for French poets to adopt classical forms such as elegies, odes, eclogues, comedies, tragedies, and epic verse. He also recommends the Italian sonnet form, which he compares to the ode, concluding that the two forms are very similar:

Sonne moy ces beaux Sonnetz, non moins docte, que plaisante  
Invention Italienne, conforme de Nom à l'Ode, et differente d'elle  
seulement, pource, que le Sonnet a certains Vers reiglez, et limitez: et  
l'Ode peut courir par toutes manieres de Vers librement, voyre en  
inventer à plaisir à l'exemple d'Horace, qui a chanté en xix sortes de  
Vers comme disent les Grammariens. (Monferran edition 136).

If we compare Du Bellay's writing to Marguerite and to Diane, however, it is clear that he does not resort to odes and sonnets indiscriminately, and this is likely to be explained by factors that transcend the simple difference in length and flexibility that he refers to in the *Deffence*.

In his study of the ode form in sixteenth-century France, François Rouget found it more fruitful to examine poetic practice rather than theoretical treatises. He concludes:

En effet, c'est par l'expression lyrique déployée dans les poèmes que prend forme l'idée exacte du lyrisme que se faisaient les poètes de la Brigade, et moins dans le paratexte théorique (manifestes, préfaces, avertissements,...) auquel on a sans doute accordé parfois trop d'importance. (*L'apothéose* 347)

Accordingly, expanded analysis of Du Bellay's writing to his patrons (both male and female) will both advance our knowledge of genre systems in sixteenth-century France, and assign new value to Du Bellay's occasional poems, long dismissed by Chamard's assessment that they added "rien a la gloire de l'auteur" (*Du Bellay* 225). Placed in the proper context, these poems not only reveal evidence of the impact that women at the Valois court exerted on Pléiade poetics: they also promise to elucidate many literary assumptions that members of the Pléiade did not communicate in a more explicit manner. They deserve more than the occasional attention they have received to date.

## **Bibliography**

- Abbott, D. M. "Buchanan, George (1506–1582)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford UP, 2004. Online ed., May 2006. 23 Oct 2010  
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3837>>.
- Ahmed, Ehsan. "Pierre de Ronsard's Odes and the Law of Poetic Space." *Renaissance Quarterly* 44.4 (1991): 757-775. Print.
- Alduy, Cécile. "D'un Cygne absent : poétique de l'allusion dans L'Olive de Du Bellay." *Méthode !* 13 (Fall 2007): 45-54. Web. 2 April 2010.
- . "L'Arbre et la Branche: croissance du recueil et défense de la langue française (1549-1550)." *Du Bellay, une révolution poétique?* Bruno Roger-Vasselín, ed. Paris: Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance/Presses Universitaires de France, 2007. 35-53. Print.
- Armstrong, Adrian. *Technique and Technology: Script, Print, and Poetics in France, 1470-1550*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Print.
- Armstrong, Elizabeth. *Before Copyright: the French Book-privilege System 1498-1526*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. Print.
- Balsamo, Jean. "Le Poète et l'architecte." *Du Bellay et ses sonnets romains*. Ed. Yvonne Bellenger. Paris: Champion, 1994. 61-75. Print.
- . "Les poètes d'Anet." *Henri II et les arts*. Eds. Julia Fritsch and Hervé Oursel. Paris: L'Ecole du Louvre, 2003. 417-425. Print.
- Bardon, Françoise. *Diane de Poitiers et le Mythe de Diane*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963. Print.
- Beaune, Colette. *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late-Medieval France*. Ed. Frederic L. Cheyette. Trans. Susan Ross Huston. Berkeley: U California P, 1991. Print.
- Bellenger, Yvonne. "Les Dernières années de Du Bellay: Poésie et politique." *Mélanges de poétique et d'histoire littéraire du XVIe siècle*. Ed. Jean Balsamo. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1994. 205-223. Print.
- . *Du Bellay: ses Regrets qu'il fit dans Rome*. Paris: A.-G. Nizet, 1981. Print.
- Béné, Charles. "Marguerite de France et l'œuvre de Du Bellay." *Culture et pouvoir au temps de l'Humanisme et de la Renaissance*. Ed. Louis Terreaux. Geneva: Librairie M. Slatkine, 1978. 223-240. Print.

- Berriot-Salvador, Evelyne. *Les Femmes dans la société Française de la renaissance*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1990. Print.
- , Philippe Chareyre, Claudie Martin-Ulrich, Mack P. Holt Eds. *Jeanne d'Albret et sa Cour: Actes du Colloque International de Pau, 17-19 mai 2001*. Paris: Champion, 2004. Print.
- Billon, François. *Le Fort Inexpugnable de L'Honneur du Sexe Feminin*. Paris: 1555. Print.
- Bizer, Marc. "A source of Du Bellay's Most Famous Sonnet: 'Heureux qui comme Ulysse'." *Romance Notes* 42.3 (2002): 371-75. Print.
- , *Les lettres romaines de Du Bellay*. Montreal: PU de Montréal, 2001. Print.
- , "Letters from Home: The Epistolary Aspects of Joachim Du Bellay's *Les Regrets*." *Renaissance Quarterly* 52 (1999): 140-79. Print.
- Bonifay, Florence. "Du Bellay et la publication de ses oeuvres." *Les arrières boutiques de la littérature: auteurs et imprimeurs-libraires aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles*. Toulouse: PU du Mirail, 2010. 57-69. Print.
- Bourciez, Edouard. *Les mœurs polies et la littérature de cour sous Henri II*. Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1886. Print.
- Bovey, Rosamond J. "Joachim Du Bellay's Regrets and the Satire of the Poet." *L'Esprit* 19.3 (1979): 38-55. Print.
- Braybrook, Jean. "Les *Divers Jeux rustiques* et la critique anglo-saxonne." *Œuvres et Critiques* 20.1 (1995): 55-62. Print.
- Brooks, Jeanice. "Ronsard, the Lyric Sonnet and the Late Sixteenth-Century Chanson." *Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Music*. Ed. Iain Fenlon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. 65-84. Print.
- Brown, Howard Mayer. "*Ut musica poesis*: Music and Poetry in France in the Late Sixteenth Century." *Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Music*. Ed. Iain Fenlon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. 1-63. Print.
- Brown, Cynthia J. *Poets, Patrons, and Printers*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995. Print.
- Bushnell, George Herbert. "Diane de Poitiers and her books." *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 2.7 (1927): 283-302. Print.
- Cameron, Keith. *Concordance des Oeuvres Poétiques de Joachim Du Bellay*. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1988. Print.

- Cave, Terence. *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979. Print.
- Chamard, Henri. *Histoire de la Pléiade*. Paris: Henri Didier, 1939. Print.
- . *Joachim Du Bellay 1522-1560*. Lille: Travaux Et Mémoires de l'Université de Lille, 1900. Print.
- Cloulas, Ivan. *Diane de Poitiers*. Paris: Fayard, 1997. Print.
- Cogitore, Isabelle, and Francis Goyet, eds. *Devenir roi*. Grenoble: Ellug, 2001. Print.
- . *L'éloge du prince de l'antiquité au temps des lumières*. Grenoble: Ellug, 2003. Print.
- Colie, Rosalie. *The Resources of Kind*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1973. Print.
- Cornilliat, François. "Morales du sonnet: le vers et la vertu dans les sonnets de Jodelle a M. Fauquemberge." *Réforme, humanisme, renaissance* 24 (1987): 47-63. Print.
- Dassonville, Michel. "A propos d'un autre différend entre Ronsard et Du Bellay." *Studi di letteratura francese* 3 (1974): 93-106. Print.
- . *Ronsard : Etude historique et littéraire*. Vols. 2-4. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1970-85. Print.
- Dauvois, Nathalie. "La réception des odes d'Horace à la Renaissance." *Bonnes lettres/Belles lettres*. Ed. Claudine Poulouin and Jean-Claude Arnould. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006. 33-48. Print.
- , ed. *Renaissance de l'Ode*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007. Print.
- Defaux, Gérard. "'Moy ton Poete, ayant premier osé...': Du Bellay, Ronsard et l'Envie." *Cité des hommes, cité de Dieu: travaux sur la littérature de la Renaissance en l'honneur de Daniel Ménager*. Genève: Droz, 2003. 197-205. Print.
- Delaney, Susan. "L'Olive and the Poetics of Rivalry." *Classical and Modern Literature* 14.2 (1994): 183-196. Print.
- Demerson, Geneviève. "Joachim Du Bellay Disciple D'Horace." *Actes du Colloque International d'Angers du 26 au 29 mai 1989*. Ed. Georges Cesbron. Angers: PU d'Angers, 1990. 89-98. Print.
- . *Joachim Du Bellay et la belle romaine*. Orleans: Paradigme, 1996. Print.
- Demerson, Guy, ed. *La notion de genre à la Renaissance*. Geneva: Editions Slatkine, 1984. Print.

- . "Diane pour Ronsard: un mythe taciturne et toujours menacé." *Actes du colloque Le mythe de Diane en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle E.N.S. Bd Jourdan, 29-31 mai 2001*. Ed. Jean-Raymond Fanlo and Marie-Dominique Legrand. *Cahiers D'Aubigné : Albineana* 14 (2002): 81-106. Print.
- Desan, Philippe. "De la poésie de circonstance à la satire: Du Bellay et l'engagement poétique." *DuBellay: Actes du Colloque International d'Angers du 26 au 29 mai 1989*. Ed. Georges Cesbron. Angers: Presses de l'Université d'Angers, 1990. 421-437. Print.
- . and Kate Van Orden. "De la chanson à l'ode: Musique et poésie sous le mécénat du cardinal Charles de Lorraine." *Le Mécénat et l'Influence des Guises*. Ed. Yvonne Bellenger. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997. 469-494. Print.
- Devaux, Jean. "Lieux de Mémoire, Lieux D'Éloge: Les Grands Rhétoriciens et L'Histoire." *L'Éloge du Prince. De L'Antiquité au Temps des Lumières*. Ed. Isabelle Cogitore and Francis Goyet. Grenoble: ELLUG, 2003. 169-87. Print.
- Dobbins, Frank. "Joachim Du Bellay et la musique de son temps." *DuBellay: Actes du Colloque International d'Angers du 26 au 29 mai 1989*. Ed. Georges Cesbron. Angers: PU d'Angers, 1990. 587-605. Print.
- Du Bellay, Joachim. *La Deffence et Illustration de la langue Françoise*. 1549. Ed. Henri Chamard. Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1969. Print.
- . *La Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Françoise*. 1549. Ed. Jean-Charles Monferran. Genève: Droz, 2008. Print.
- . *L'Olive*. 1550. Ed. E. Caldarini. Genève: Droz, 1974. Print.
- . *Les Regrets et autres Œuvres Poétiques*. Ed. J. Joliffe and M.A. Screech. Genève: Droz, 1966. Print.
- . *Œuvres Latines: Poemata*. Ed. and Trans. Geneviève Demerson. Vol 7. Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1984. Print.
- . *Œuvres Latines : Xenia*. Ed. and Trans. Geneviève Demerson. Vol 8. Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1985. Print.
- . *Œuvres poétiques*. Ed. Daniel Aris and Françoise Joukovsky. 2 vols. Paris: Éditions Classiques Garnier, 2009. Print.
- . *Œuvres poétiques*. Ed. Henri Chamard. 6 vols. Paris: Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1908-1931. Print.
- Du Mans, Jacques Peletier. *Les Oeuvres Poétiques*. Ed. Marcel Françon. Rochecorbon: Éditions Charles Gay, 1958. Print.

- Du Moulin, Joseph. *Vie et œuvres de Frédéric Morel*. Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1969. Print.
- Erlanger, Philippe. *Diane de Poitiers*. Paris: Gallimard, 17th ed. 1955. Print.
- Falk, Henri. *Les Privilèges de librairie sous l'ancien régime*. Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1970. Print.
- Fanlo, Jean-Raymond and Marie-Dominique Legrand, eds. *Actes du colloque 'Le mythe de Diane en France au XVIe siècle' E.N.S. Bd Jourdan, 29-31 mai 2001*. Ed. Jean-Raymond Fanlo and Marie-Dominique Legrand. *Cahiers D'Aubigné : Albineana* 14: 2002. Print.
- Fleges, Amaury. "'Je ravie la mort': Tombeaux littéraires en France à la Renaissance." *La licorne* 29 (1994): 71-142. Print.
- Fleming, Chris. *René Girard : Violence and Mimesis*. Cambridge: Polity, 2004. Print.
- Fowler, Alistair. *Triumphal Forms*. Cambridge : Cambridge UP, 1970. Print.
- Françon, Marcel. "Notes sur l'Histoire du Sonnet en France." *Italica* 29.2 (1952): 121-128. Print.
- Fritsch, Julia and Hervé Oursel, eds. *Henri II et les arts*. Paris: École du Louvre, 2003. Print.
- Gadoffre, Gilbert. *Du Bellay et le Sacré*. Paris: Gallimard, 1976. Print.
- . *La Révolution culturelle dans la France des humanists: Guillaume Budé et François Ier*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1997. Print.
- Galand-Hallyn, Perrine. *Le "Génie" Latin de Joachim Du Bellay*. La Rochelle: Rumeur des Ages, 1995. Print.
- Gorris Camos, Rosanna. "Diane de Guindaye, Pentasilée et les autres ou les Diane de Jacques Gohory." *Actes du colloque 'Le mythe de Diane en France au XVIe siècle' E.N.S. Bd Jourdan, 29-31 mai 2001*. Ed. Jean-Raymond Fanlo and Marie-Dominique Legrand. *Cahiers D'Aubigné : Albineana* 14 (2002): 291-332. Print.
- Gray, Floyd. *La Poétique de Du Bellay*. Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1978. Print.
- Greene, Thomas M. "Regrets Only: Three Poetic Paradigms in Du Bellay." *Romanic Review* 84.1 (1993): 1-18. Print.
- Griffin, Robert. *Coronation of the Poet: Joachim Du Bellay's Debt to the Trivium*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1969. Print.
- Guiffrey, Georges. *Lettres inédites de Dianne de Poytiers*. Paris, 1886. Print.

- Horace. *The Complete Odes and Epodes with the Centennial Hymn*. Trans. W. G. Shepherd. 1983. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1986. Print.
- Hardison, O.B. *The Enduring Monument*. Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 1962. Print.
- Hampton, Timothy. *Literature and Nation in Sixteenth-Century France*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001. Print.
- Hartley, David. *A Critical Edition of the Circumstantial Verse of Joachim Du Bellay*. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellon Press, 2000. Print.
- . "Du Bellay et la Patrie: Échos Littéraires." *Du Bellay: Actes du Colloque International d'Angers du 26 au 29 Mai 1989*. Ed. Georges Cesbron. Angers: PU d'Angers, 1990. 653-59. Print.
- . *Patriotism in the Work of Joachim Du Bellay: A Study of the Relationship Between the Poet and France*. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993. Print.
- Joukovsky, Françoise. "Une Commande de Marguerite de Savoie : La Civitas Veri de Bartolomeo Delbène." *Mélanges de poésie et d'histoire littéraire du XVIe Siècle : Offerts à Louis Terreaux*. Paris: H. Champion, 1994. 465-479. Print.
- Jusselin, Maurice. *Gabriel Symeon à Anet au temps de Diane de Poitiers: la fontaine de la nymphe d'Anet, une médaille de Faustine jeune*. Chartres: Imprimerie Lainé et Tantet, 1935. Print.
- Katz, Richard. *The Ordered Text: The Sonnet Sequences of Du Bellay*. New York: Peter Lang, 1985. Print.
- Keating, L. Clark. *Studies on the Literary Salon in France 1550-1615*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1941. Print.
- Kritzman, Lawrence D. "The Rhetoric of Dissimulation in 'La Première Epistre de l'Amant Vert'." *Understanding French Poetry: Essays for a New Millennium*. Ed. Stamos Metzidakis. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Birmingham: Summa Publications, 2001. 101-119. Print.
- Langer, Ullrich. "Le discours de la souveraineté dans *Les Regrets*." *Du Bellay, Actes de Colloque International d'Angers, May 26-29, 1989*. Ed. George Cesbron. Angers : PU d'Angers, 1990. 377-388. Print.
- Laumonier, Paul. *Ronsard: Poète Lyrique*. Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1932. Print.
- Lecoq, Anne-Marie. *François Ier imaginaire*. Paris: Editions Macula, 1987. Print.

- Legrand, Marie-Dominique. "Exil et poesie : *Les Tristes* et *Les Pontiques* d'Ovide, les *Souspirs* d'O. de Magny, *Les Regrets* de J. Du Bellay." *Littératures* 17 (1987): 33-47. Print.
- . "Explication du sonnet 176 des *Regrets* de Joachim Du Bellay." *L'Information littéraire* 39.2 (1987 : 84-88. Print.
- . "Ronsard sous la plume de Du Bellay." *Ronsard Figure De la variété*. Ed. Colette Winn. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2002. 203-219. Print.
- Le Roux, Nicolas. *La faveur du roi*. Paris: Champ Vallon, 2000. Print.
- L'Hospital, Michel de. *Poésies complètes*. Trans. Louis Bandy de Nalèche. Paris: Librairie de L. Hachette, 1857. Print.
- Lombart, Nicolas. "La France face à l'Italie, de *La Deffence* à *L'Olive* (1549-1550)." *Du Bellay, une révolution poétique ?* Ed. Bruno Roger-Vasselín. Paris: Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance/PU de France, 2007. 58-83. Print.
- . "Pensée et pratique bellayennes du sonnet." *Du Bellay, une révolution poétique ?* Ed. Bruno Roger-Vasselín. Paris: Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance/PU de France, 2007. 99-117. Print.
- and Bruno Roger-Vasselín. "*L'Olive* et *La Deffence* dans le siècle: petite chronologie commentée." *Du Bellay, une révolution poétique ?* Ed. Bruno Roger-Vasselín. Paris: Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance/PU de France, 2007. 19-34. Print.
- Macphail, Eric M. "Facilis Descensus Averno : Retracing Aeneas' Steps in Du Bellay's *Regrets*." *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 39.2 (2008): 227-243. Print.
- Magnien-Simonin, Catherine. "Du Bellay et la tradition des *Xenia*." *Du Bellay, Actes de Colloque International d'Angers, May 26-29, 1989*. Ed. George Cesbrun. Angers : PU d'Angers, 1990. 131-147. Print.
- . "'L'unique Marguerite de nostre âge' et *Les Regrets*." *Op. cit.* 3 (1994): 49-55. Print.
- Magny, Olivier de. *Œuvres*. Ed. E. Courbet. Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1969. Print.
- Margolin, Jean-Claude. "Une princesse d'inspiration érasmiennne: Marguerite de France, duchesse de Berry, puis de Savoie." *Culture et pouvoir au temps de l'Humanisme et de la Renaissance*. Ed. Louis Terreaux. Geneva: Librairie M. Slatkine, 1978. 155-177. Print.
- Martin-Ulrich, Claudie. *La persona de la princesse au XVIe siècle: personnage littéraire et personnage politique*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2004. Print.

- Mathieu-Castellani, Gisèle. "La Notion de Genre." *La Notion de genre à la renaissance*. Ed. G. Demerson. Genève: Editions Slatkine, 1984. 17-34. Print.
- . "Poétique du nom dans *Les Regrets*." *Etudes seiziemistes*. Genève: Droz, 1980. 235-56. Print.
- Maurette, Ariane. "L'évolution des styles musicaux à la Cour de Henri II." *Henri II et les arts*. Ed. Julia Fritsch and Hervé Oursel. Paris: L'Ecole du Louvre, 2003. 437-444. Print.
- Mayer, C.A. *Clément Marot*. Paris: Editions A.-G. Nizet, 1972. Print.
- Melchior-Bonnet, Sabine. *L'art de vivre au temps de Diane de Poitiers*. Paris : NiL editions, 1998. Print.
- Ménager, Daniel. *Ronsard: Le Roi, le Poète et les Hommes*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979. Print.
- Merrill, Robert V. "Considerations on 'Les Amours de I. du Bellay'." *Modern Philology* 33.2 (1935): 129-38. Print.
- Millet, Olivier. "Les *Epigrammata* de 1558: l'économie du Recueil." *Du Bellay, Actes de Colloque International d'Angers, May 26-29, 1989*. Ed. George Cesbrun. Angers: Presses de l'Université d'Angers, 1990. 569-585. Print.
- Molinier, H.-J. *Mellin de Saint-Gelais*. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1968. Print.
- Monferran, Jean-Charles. "A propos de la constitution du genre de l'ode: les définitions de l'ode française avant Ronsard." *Renaissance de l'Ode*. Ed. Nathalie Dauvois. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007. 19-46. Print.
- and Olivia Rosenthal. "A Quoi sert de nommer ? Politique du nom dans *Les Regrets* de Du Bellay." *Nouvelle Revue du XVIe siècle* 15.2 (1997): 301-323. Print.
- Montaignon, Anatole Courde de. "Diane de Poitiers et son goût dans les arts." Paris, 1879.
- Naïs, Hélène. "La notion de genre en poésie au XVIe siècle : Etudes lexicologique et sémantique." *La notion de genre à la Renaissance*. Ed. G. Demerson. Genève: Editions Slatkine, 1984. 103-127. Print.
- Noirot-Maguire, Corinne. "*La Deffence et L'Olive*: l'appel et les écueils de la haute poésie." *Du Bellay, une révolution poétique ?* Ed. Bruno Roger-Vasselin. Paris: Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance/PU de France, 2007. 84-98. Print.
- Ong, Walter J. "The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction." *PMLA* 90 (1975): 9-21. Print.

- Patry, H. "Le protestantisme de Marguerite de France." *Bulletin du Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français* 5.2 (1904): 7-26. Print.
- Pasquier, Etienne. *Les recherches de la France ... Augmentees en ceste derniere edition de trois liures entiers, outre plusieurs chapitres entrelassez en chacun des autres liures, tirez de la Bibliotheque de l'auteur*. Paris, 1633. *The Making of the Modern World*. Gale 2010. Gale, Cengage Learning. Washington University. Web. 6 November 2010. <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/MOME?af=RN&ae=U3600122971&src=htp=a&ste=14>> Gale Document Number: U3600122971.
- Peletier du Mans, Jacques. *Les œuvres poétiques de Jacques Peletier du Mans*. Ed. Marcel Françon. Rochecorbon : Éditions Charles Gay, 1958. Print.
- Peyre, Roger. *Une Princesse de la Renaissance. Marguerite de France, duchesse de Berry, duchesse de Savoie*. Paris: Emile Paul, 1902. Print.
- Pillorget, René. "Le rôle universitaire de Marguerite de France." *Culture et pouvoir au temps de l'Humanisme et de la Renaissance*. Ed. Louis Terreaux. Geneva: Librairie M. Slatkine, 1978. 207-219. Print.
- Platt, Helen O. "Structure in Du Bellay's *Divers Jeux Rustiques*." *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 35.1 (1973): 19-37. Print.
- Pot, Olivier. "Le mythe de Diane chez Du Bellay : de la symbolique lunaire à l'emblème de cour." *Actes du colloque 'Le mythe de Diane en France au XVIe siècle' E.N.S. Bd Jourdan, 29-31 mai 2001*. Ed. Jean-Raymond Fanlo and Marie-Dominique Legrand. *Cahiers D'Aubigné : Albineana* 14 (2002): 57-80. Print.
- Quentin-Bauchart, Ernest. *Les Femmes bibliophiles de France (XVIe, XVIIe & XVIIIe siècles)*. Paris: Damascène Morgand, 1886. Print.
- Rigolot, François. *L'Erreur de la renaissance*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002. Print.
- . *Poétique et onomastique*. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1977. Print.
- . "Qu'est-ce qu'un sonnet? Perspectives sur les origins d'une forme poétique." *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 84.1 (1984): 3-18. Print.
- . "The Renaissance Fascination with Error: Mannerism and Early Modern Poetry." *Renaissance Quarterly* 57.4 (Winter 2004): 1219-1234. Print.
- Ronsard, Pierre de. *Hymnes*. Ed. Albert Py. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1978. Print.
- . *Oeuvres complètes*. Ed. Gustave Cohen. 2 vols. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1950. Print.

- Roubichou-Stretz, Antoinette. *La Vision de L'Histoire dans L'Oeuvre de la Pléiade: Thèmes et Structures*. Paris: Librairie A.-G. Nizet, 1973. Print.
- Rouget, François. "Alain Chartier, Pierre de Ronsard, et la Représentation du poète de cour mélancolique." *Moyen français* 59 (2006): 235-248. Print.
- . *L'Apothèse d'Orphée L'esthétique de l'ode en France au XVIe siècle de Sébillet à Scaliger*. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1994. Print.
- . "L'Esthétique de l'ode et de la chanson de la Pléiade (1550-1560)." *Romanic Review* 87.4 (1996): 455-466. Print.
- . "Marguerite de Berry et sa Cour en Savoie d'après un album de vers manuscrits." *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 106.1 (2006): 3-16. Print.
- . "Présences de Du Bellay dans les Odes de Ronsard." *Littératures* 45 (2001): 37-48. Print.
- . "Ronsard et la poétique du monument." *Ronsard Figure de la Variété*. Ed. Colette Winn. Genève: Droz, 2002. 295-307. Print.
- Saint-Gelais, Mellin de. *Œuvres poétiques françaises*. Ed. Donald Stone, Jr. 2 vols. Paris: STFM, 1993. Print.
- Santirocco, Matthew. "The Maecenas Odes." *Transactions Of the American Philological Association* 114 (1984): 241-253. Print.
- Saulnier, V.-L. *Du Bellay*. 4th ed. Paris: Hatier, 1968. Print.
- Sider, Sandra. "Dianne de Poitiers: The Woman Behind the Legend." *Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation*. Ed. Katharina M. Wilson. Athens: Georgia UP, 1987. 158-176. Print.
- Silver, Isidore. "Did Du Bellay know Pindar?" *PMLA* 56.4 (1941): 1007-1019. Print.
- . "Pindaric Parallelism in Du Bellay: A Proof of His Independent Imitation of Pindar." *The French Review* 14.6 (1941): 461-472. Print.
- Skenazi, Cynthia. "L'Ordre et la paix: une perspective de la *dispositio* Ronsardienne." *Ronsard Figure de la Variété*. Ed. Colette Winn. Genève: Droz, 2002. 161-72. Print.
- . *Le poète architecte en France*. Paris: Éditions Champion, 2003. Print.
- . "Le poète et le roi dans les *Antiquitez de Rome* et le *Songe* de Du Bellay." *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 60.1 (1998): 41-55. Print.
- Smith, Paul J. *Dispositio: Problematic Ordering in French Renaissance Literature*. Leiden: Brill, 2007. Print.

- Stegmann, André. "Les cheminements spirituels de Marguerite de France, duchesse de Savoie." *Culture et pouvoir au temps de l'Humanisme et de la Renaissance*. Ed. Louis Terreaux. Geneva: Librairie M. Slatkine, 1978. 185-205. Print.
- Stephens, Winifred. *Margaret of France, Duchess of Savoy 1523-1574*. London: John Lane, 1912. Print.
- Soubeylle, Georges. "La découverte du chañon manquant, Les *Carmina* de Jean Salmon Macrin." *Renaissance de l'Ode*. Ed. Nathalie Dauvois. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007. 13-18. Print.
- Sutherland, G. M. "Proper Names in Renaissance Poetry." *The French Renaissance and its Heritage*. Eds. D.R. Haggis et al. London: Methuen & Co, 1968. 267-86. Print.
- Tacaille, Alice. "Un curieux hommage musical à Diane de Poitiers, les recueils de Barthélemy Beaulaigue (1559) : Musiques chez Diane de Poitiers et musiques pour Diane de Poitiers." *Actes du colloque 'Le mythe de Diane en France au XVIe siècle' E.N.S. Bd Jourdan, 29-31 mai 2001*. Ed. Jean-Raymond Fanlo and Marie-Dominique Legrand. *Cahiers D'Aubigné : Albineana* 14 (2002): 345-360. Print.
- Thompson, Patricia Z. "De nouveaux aperçus sur la vie de Diane de Poitiers." *Actes du colloque 'Le mythe de Diane en France au XVIe siècle' E.N.S. Bd Jourdan, 29-31 mai 2001*. Ed. Jean-Raymond Fanlo and Marie-Dominique Legrand. *Cahiers D'Aubigné : Albineana* 14 (2002): 345-360. Print.
- . "Diane de Poitiers: A Reassessment." *Stanford French Review* 13.1 (1989): 49-63. Print.
- Yandell, Cathy. "L'Amour au Féminin? Ronsard and Pontus de Tyard Speaking as Women." *Ronsard Figure de la Variété*. Ed. Colette H. Winn. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2002. 65-83. Print.
- Wiley, W.L. *The Gentleman of Renaissance France*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1954. Print.
- Wilson-Chevalier, Kathleen, and Eugénie Pascal, eds. *Patronnes et mécènes en France à la Renaissance*. Saint-Etienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 2007. Print.
- Winn, Colette. "Dire de ne plus dire/dire de ne pas ... encore dire. Ecriture et négation dans *Les Regrets* de Joachim Du Bellay." *Du Bellay, Actes de Colloque International d'Angers, May 26-29, 1989*. Ed. George Cesbrun. Angers: PU d'Angers, 1990. 213-226. Print.
- Zecher, Carla. *Sounding Objects*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. Print.

Zerner, Henri. "Diane de Poitiers, maîtresse de son image ?" *Actes du colloque 'Le mythe de Diane en France au XVIe siècle' E.N.S. Bd Jourdan, 29-31 mai 2001*. Ed. Jean-Raymond Fanlo and Marie-Dominique Legrand. *Cahiers D'Aubigné: Albineana* 14 (2002): 335-343. Print.

Zemon-Davis, Natalie. "Le monde de l'imprimerie humaniste: Lyon." *Histoire de l'édition française*. Ed. Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin. Vol. 1. Paris: Promodis, 1982. 255-277. Print.