

Social Capital, Imitation, and the Use of Greek in Collective Poetry of the French Renaissance

In this paper, I draw attention to the unstudied use of Greek in the collective poetry associated with Étienne Pasquier and his social circles, in particular as found in *La Puce de Madame des Roches* (1582) and *La Main ou Oeuvres poétiques faits sur la Main de Estienne Pasquier* (1584). Each is a collection of poems, centered on a single, seemingly trivial topic, that emanated from many individuals, mostly advocates and magistrates involved in the *Grands Jours* of Poitiers (1579) and Troyes (1583), respectively. In each we find Greek compositions of various sizes and metrical shapes alongside the more numerous contributions in French and Latin.

My approach is to view the poems ultimately published in these collections as reflective of a process of community-formation in which individuals of disparate professional and literary standings created responses to an already existing poetic discourse in order to win a place in a community of learned and discerning men and women. The participants' knowledge and manipulation of prestigious literary traditions, especially those derived from classical antiquity, earned them acceptance in, and distinctive roles and personalities within, this community. One way in which this process played out was through *imitation*, a form that might be argued to possess generic status, in which an earlier poem was paraphrased in a different language but with some kind of supplement that served to comment on the original. Many of the Greek poems of *La Puce* and *La Main* are productions of this kind.

After providing an overview of the two collections and of the Greek poetry contained in them, my paper focuses on the illustrative case of the obscure Charles Hautbois, responsible for a relatively long Greek poem in *La Puce*. After indicating the models on which Hautbois draws, both those from classical literature and those from *La Puce* itself, I show how his poem should be viewed as one component of a campaign of literary patronage through which the young man sought to connect himself with the famous humanist jurist Barnabé Brisson.

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