the edited text and the translation, as it contains Middle French and English forms of proper names and includes names of plants, animals (except the various names for sheep), and diseases.

This first critical edition of *Le Bon Berger* (the so-called 1879 edition is in truth a reprint of the Jonot text: *Le Bon Berger, ou Le vray régime et gouvernement des bergers et bergères, composé par le rustique Jehan de Brie, le bon berger* (Paris: [n. pub], 1541; repr. Paris: Liseux. 1879)) touches upon an impressive range of aspects of daily life in the late Middle Ages. For instance, the treatise expands on the usefulness of dried sheep bowels as cords for a range of musical instruments such as ‘almaduries’ or ‘cytholes’ (p. 60), describes the art of telling the weather by reference to different birds, and demonstrates specialized knowledge of local fauna (pp. 76–81). This specialized knowledge in various fields is reflected in the language by the presence of various lexical fields (for medical–botanical lexis see Tony Hunt, ‘L’Art d’élever les moutons: le lexique médico-botanique du Bon Berger de Jean de Brie’, in ‘Qui tant savoir d’engin et d’art’: mélanges de philologie médiévale offerts à Gabriel Bianciotto, ed. by Claudio Galderisi and Jean Maurice (Poitiers: Université de Poitiers, Centre d’études supérieures de civilisation médiévale, 2006), pp. 301–10). Striking a balance between necessary annotation and keeping the text readable thus becomes a complicated feat, which the editors manage by means of a select critical apparatus in the text, and more extensive background research in supplementary comments after the edition. With notes and comments being supported by a wide range of reference works as well as on-the-ground experience in managing a farm flock, this edition provides fascinating insights into sheep husbandry around 1379.

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**Catharina Peersman**


Jacques Auguste de Thou was still only a fledgling poet when he composed his didactic Latin epic on the art of falconry. Yet the *Hieracosophon* would appeal largely to a royal court under the influence of the pronounced Valois passion for hunting, and the poem soon won respect for its literary merits and its mastery of the technicalities of falconry. In this impressive and scholarly volume, Ingrid de Smet—an established authority on de Thou—has produced a new critical edition of his magisterial poem complete with a detailed commentary, the first modern translation of the poem into French, and a comprehensive historical survey of falconry in sixteenth-century France.

De Thou’s poem is divided into three books: the first lists the qualities of different types of falcon; the second describes how to train your falcon; and the third explains how to treat it for various common diseases. De Thou’s handling of his hybrid combination of didactic, scientific, and epic poetry is deft: the detailed technical information, tempered by short mythological and aetiological digressions, is
conveyed with clear conciseness and lightness of touch, and the same deftness is felt in the accuracy and fluency of De Smet’s highly readable translation. The commentary expands on the poem’s literary and linguistic features, and contextualizes its technical descriptions of falconry through comparison with the Renaissance ornithological works on which de Thou drew.

The extended introduction explores the literary, cultural, and social status of falconry in Renaissance France. Both the men and the women of the Valois house are shown to have participated in this most aristocratic and magnificent of pastimes, as did various Renaissance cardinals and popes—despite the sixth-century decree that banned the clergy from hunting (perhaps in anticipation of the Huguenot disapproval of hunting as a symbol of debauchery). A combination of strict hunting laws and prohibitive expense (de Thou recommends feeding ailing falcons on such costly ingredients as saffron and fine cuts of beef) preserved falconry as an exquisitely noble pursuit, but its wider sociological repercussions were felt through the growing trade in birds and bird products as well as through the multiple associated crafts required to support the industry of falconry. Royal enthusiasm for hunting is, however, shown not to have placed it above criticism: the luxurious opulence of an activity whose utility as military training decreased as the use of gunpowder grew exposed it to moral scrutiny, as did its place during the religious wars, when instead of being seen as a means of distracting men from fighting, hunting simply demonstrated the violent tendencies that it failed to purge. Early conscientious objectors to the cruelty of killing animals included Michel de l’Hôpital and Montaigne—whose ethical stance against hunting may have been quite independent of his professed incompetence as a hunter.

One of the great pleasures of this wide-ranging volume is its wealth of unexpected faits divers, reflecting a fondness for incidental detail that de Thou and De Smet seem to share. Where de Thou cites the Renaissance belief (‘Experti credunt’, p. 238) that a sheepskin drum will be silenced by the sound of its wolfskin equivalent, demonstrating the abiding posthumous fear in animal products of their natural predators, De Smet includes the anecdote of the hanged man’s corpse that Gaspard de Saulx-Tavannes thought fit to place in the comtesse de Crussol’s bed (‘Délits de chasse’, p. 77), demonstrating Renaissance hunters’ energetic, if ghoulish, taste in practical jokes. Overall, this accessible, informative, and richly detailed volume makes an excellent case for directing Renaissance scholars’ attentions back to both the Hieracosophion itself and the art it so carefully describes.

University of St Andrews

Emma Herdman

Marivaux et la science du caractère. By Sarah Benharrech. (SVEC, 2013:06)

The starting-point for Sarah Benharrech’s study of Marivaux and caractère is the fact that the eighteenth century was a time when the relationship between the sciences and the arts was still close enough for practitioners often to be able to