the poet himself is very polished (cultissimus) and undeservedly (immerito) labels his own poems as "nugae." Beza counterbalances the criticisms he will receive against the honor of having his name forever linked with the Zastrisílius family. The appendices and addenda (to previous volumes) that the editors present include other literary pieces of note: an epigram of George Buchanan to Beza that appears at the beginning of the 1597 edition (it also stood at the beginning of the 1569 edition); the sketch of a response to Jean de Sponde, whose commentary on Homer Beza had previously praised, but whose long refutation of the Traité des vraies... marques provoked him; an emblem dedicated to Beza by Denis Lebey de Batilly on the Colloquy of Montbéliard in 1586; a debate between Lutheran Jacob Andreea and Beza himself on the Eucharist, in which de Batilly compares the latter’s success to that of several mythic heroes; and a previously unknown text of Caspar Peucer’s Tabula justificationis.

One also encounters here several mentions of the episode of the premature report of Beza’s death as propagated by the Jesuits, especially Clément Deyx, Provincial of Paris (2520 and 2521). These Jesuits not only proclaimed that Beza had died but also spread the rumor that before his death he switched his allegiance to the Pope, convincing the assembly of Geneva to do the same. This was met with a series of responses, by Beza himself and by Antoine de La Faye and the Company of Pastors, resulting in the publication of a pamphlet entitled Theodoris Beza reddivus. The latter pamphlet, in all its various parts, the editors have inserted at 18 October based on the letter to Zurich theologian Johann Stucki that begins it (2535). Most notable is the poem in which Beza attacks the Jesuits using a Latin wordplay; this poem and other similar ones appear in the 1597 Poemata varia.

Several letters call attention to the continuing conflicts with both Catholics and Lutherans. The draft in response to de Sponde, mentioned above, falls into the former category, as do the two letters regarding Jean de Serres’s advocacy for reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants (2518 and 2524). De Serres reminds Beza that the rumors of his conversion to Catholicism should no more be assumed true than those being spread about Beza. Two other letters toward the end of the year (2543 and 2546) relate to the conflicts taking place between Geneva and the “brothers of Thonon” who, influenced by the machinations of the Duke of Savoy, were attending the devotions and sermons of Père Chérubin, a Catholic missionary. These signal the beginnings of problems that would escalate in the following year. A letter from Peucer on 28 June (2515) speaks of a kind of aggressive collaboration between Catholics and Ubiquitarian Lutherans against the Calvinists in the German principalities, to the point that Peucer identifies these with the two horns of the beast of the Apocalypse. Similar problems at Nuremberg are alluded to in Beza’s consolations to Fabricius (2519).

In sum, this is a fairly dense and laudable volume that will reward deep investigation and undoubtedly encourage much research.

Les Muses secrètes: Kaballe, alchimie et littérature à la Renaissance.
Ed. Rosanna Gorris Camos.

REVIEWED BY: Scott E. Hendrix
Carroll University

Reviewing an essay collection can sometimes be difficult. Often the essays read more like a glimpse into what was available to the editor at the time rather than a coherent collection of scholarly studies with a comprehensible organizing theme. Les Muses secrètes is not that sort of volume. Rosanna Gorris Camos’s introduction explains that the genesis
of this collection was a 2005 conference hosted by the François Secret Journée in order to pay homage to this pioneer in the study of Christian hermeticism and the kabbala. Camos establishes a clear chronological ordering of the essays, with each one demonstrating the importance of the work François Secret initiated in 1964 with the publication of Les Kabballistes chrétiens de la Renaissance (Paris: Dunod, 1964) and continued for over thirty years, down through his 1998 Postel revisité: Nouvelle recherche sur Guillaume Postel et son milieu (Milan: Arché, 1998), published just five years before Secret's death in 2003. Throughout the course of his long career he influenced a great many scholars, both with his insistence on the importance of the study of esoteric subjects as well as his emphasis on their study in the original languages, be that Latin, Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew, or Syriac, in the best ad fontes tradition of Renaissance scholarship.

Jean-Marc Mandosio opens this volume with "Le De Magia Naturali de Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples." This is a fitting opening both chronologically as well as because it is in many ways the strongest essay in the volume. Although d'Étaples's (d. 1536) De Magia Naturali was neither published nor popular—as evidenced by its survival in only four manuscript copies—Mandosio demonstrates that this work was important beyond its limited distribution. Drawing directly on the work of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (d. 1494) and transmitting the ideas of, among others, Albert the Great (d. 1280), this volume shows the often blurry lines between the Renaissance and the high Middle Ages. D'Étaples wrote this work during a time in which magic was controversial, following the 1494 condemnation of magic and astrology by the theology faculty at the University of Paris (67). Though Mandosio would have been well advised to at least mention the difficulties surrounding interpretation of this condemnation, he does an excellent job of contextualizing the importance of d'Étaples's work as the first treatment of Christian kabbala produced in France.

Jean-Pierre Brach's "Guillaume Postel et la 'Sextessence'" comes next and is equally interesting. In this short essay Brach examines Postel's interest in the Zohar, the work of Jewish kabbala he translated into Latin in 1553. According to Brach, this work reinforced Postel's eschatological interests while his translation provided a vehicle for political commentary (81–82). This argument is most interesting, given Postel's later examination for heresy. Brach manages skilfully to demonstrate the importance of Postel's esoteric interests within the broader contexts of sixteenth-century French intellectual and political history in a way that would certainly have met with Secret's approval.

Following Brach's essay is Rosanna Gorris Camos's "Le Séraphin et la Sybille: Signes célestes de l'Encyclopedie des secrets de l'Eternité au Cantique de la nouvelle estoile." This study combines an examination of the marginalia Guillaume Postel's student, Guy le Févre (d. 1598), left behind in his copy of his master's translation of the Zohar with a consideration of le Févre's poem, Cantique de la nouvelle estoile. The result is a thoroughly researched and interesting analysis demonstrating le Févre's commitment to the idea of pan-European peace held by such diverse Renaissance figures as Erasmus (d. 1536) and Thomas Cranmer (d. 1556). This essay is particularly interesting because Camos is able to give us both a glimpse into le Févre's private thoughts through an examination of the marginalia he left behind as a reader as well as how he sought to promote those ideas in a work with the primary purpose of spreading astronomical knowledge.

Didier Kahn contributes the final essay in this volume, "La Question de la Palingénésie, du pseudo-Paracelse à H. P. Lovecraft en passant par Joseph du Chesne, Agrrippa d'Aubigné et quelques autres." Kahn takes up the alchemical question of the process of successive rebirths as introduced by Paracelsus (d. 1541) in his 1572 De natura rerum.
Paracelsus confined his discussion to the way in which a plant could be rendered down to its essence and given new life through a form of botanical reincarnation, as it were (153–56). However, later writers with an alchemical bent expanded upon this notion to consider whether or not a similar process of rendering animals down to their "essential salts" could be used to give these creatures new life (160–66). H. P. Lovecraft apparently found this idea to be quite intriguing, working it into his 1927 story, The Case of Charles Dexter Ward, which contains a quotation taken from an author identified as Borellus suggesting that a human could also be given new life. According to David E. Schulz's 1987 edition of Lovecraft's Commonplace Book, this is the alchemist Pierre Borel (d. 1671), whom Lovecraft quotes through the medium of Cotton Mather (d. 1728). Kahn attempts to throw doubt on the line of transmission wherein Lovecraft learned of Borel through Mather's 1702 Magnalia Christi Americana (169–71), but his evidence, such as it is, consists of elements of Lovecraft's writing that might suggest a greater familiarity with Borel's original work than he could have gained through the medium of Mather. While this essay is interesting, the argument is hardly groundbreaking, and the evidence is superficial at best.

In sum, in spite of the rather weak conclusion Kahn's essay provides, this collection of essays amply demonstrates not only Secret's scholarly legacy, but the wide range of work left to be done on the history of esoteric subjects. In spite of such pioneers as François Secret, scholars have been very slow to give serious attention to the place of subjects such as alchemy, astrology, and kabbala in the historical record. Although these subjects may be marginalized in the modern world, at one time they were central to the European intellectual tradition, making studies such as those contained in Les Muses secrètes important contributions to our understanding of the past.


Reviewed by: Julia Nephew
Independent Scholar

This complex study carefully details why the humanist Jean de Vauzelles deserves more attention as an influential member of the Lyonnais circle. It stands alongside a wonderful collection of academic books from at least the last fifty years that celebrate the humanist poets of Renaissance Lyon, including Louise Labé, Maurice Scève, and Permette du Guillet. They and many other personages appear in this volume, and Vauzelles knew nearly all personally. Kammerer uses the metaphor of the creuset, or crucible, to describe the period in Lyon between 1520 and 1550 when these humanists were especially active in publishing but also organizing cultural, ecclesiastical, and political events. It can be argued—and this study does a magnificent job of it—that many of Jean de Vauzelles's works, be they poems, eulogies, or royal entrées, had a profound influence on what we know about that period in Lyon. He deserves more credit for his role in the religious, literary, cultural, and political events of the era.

The organization of the work is chronological within chapters, but the order of the chapters is by personages and projects: Marguerite de Navarre, Louise de Savoie, Aretilo, Vauzelles's translation of Holbein's Dance of Death, Lyon printing, Sancte Pagnini, the Aumône générale, and the royal entries. Biographical and historical information is interspersed with literary analysis of writings, and the annexes at the end are particularly useful.