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Book Review: Jean de Sponde, *Méditations sur les Pseaumes*. Édition critique par Sabine Lardon.

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BOOK REVIEW

Jean de Sponde, *Méditations sur les Pseaumes*. Édition critique par Sabine Lardon. (Textes de la Renaissance, 9). Paris, Champion, 1996. 515 pp.

This edition of the *Méditations* is a noteworthy project that will prove a valuable research tool. Part of Lardon's success stems from the fact that she preserves the integrity of the original 1588 La Rochelle edition by making only the slightest and most obvious changes in orthography and punctuation for purposes of enhanced readability. The volume is more remarkable, however, for the ways in which it goes beyond Alan Boase's 1954 and 1978 editions of the *Méditations*. Lardon, though careful not to challenge Boase's methods or results, surpasses the latter by adding thorough discussion footnotes, and the opposite page cross-referencing of the *Méditations* with what she calls "biblical and cultural" sources of Sponde's prose. The footnotes elaborate key aspects of Sponde's language and style, while the passages from the Old and New Testaments, as well as from literary and philosophical works, shed light on Sponde's theological and intellectual inspirations. With respect to Sponde's bibliography, Lardon acknowledges the debt owed to Jean Céard and Franco Giacone for identifying Sponde's readings. One could easily envision scholars using these references as a point of departure for further work on the *Méditations*. Major aspects of the work's introduction include a study of the text's publication history, as well as a discussion of how French orthography and syntax evolved during the Renaissance. Specialists will be interested to learn that variants between the three extant copies of the original edition (no primary manuscript remains) are so few in number as to

have little impact on the compilation of Lardon's current work. The volume ends with a detailed glossary, several indices, a long list of biblical citations, and an extensive bibliography, all of which help render it a commendable undertaking.

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