

**BRYN MAWR COLLEGE
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SERIES, VOL. II: CRITICAL EDITION OF
THE DISCOURS DE LA VIE DE PIERRE
DE RONSARD PAR CLAUDE BINET**

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de la vie de Pierre de Ronsard
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BY

HELENE M. EVERS

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PREFACE.

This investigation was suggested by the observation that the beginning of Binet's biography (Edition of Becq de Fouquières) is copied literally from the *Élégie à Rémy Belleau*. M. Chamard had already drawn attention to the fact that the three versions of the biography show notable divergencies, but he gave no intimation of an intention of pursuing the investigation further, and the importance of Binet's work in the study of Ronsard made it appear worth while to examine the relation of the three redactions. The present edition is based upon manuscript copies of the editions of 1586, 1587 and 1597, made upon the request of Professor Foulet, for the library of Bryn Mawr College, in January and February, 1904, from the copies in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. A careful comparison of the copies with the original texts was made by M. Joseph Aynard.

It was learned, when this investigation was already more than half completed, that M. Paul Laumonier, whose important contributions to the study of Ronsard are well known, is also preparing a critical edition of the *Discours* of Binet, on which he has been at work for some time. M. Laumonier's articles on Ronsard contain no hint of his purpose. Moreover these articles themselves were not at first accessible to me. In view of the fact that my work has been quite independent of that of M. Laumonier, and that I had no intimation of his intention to publish a critical edition of Binet until my thesis was almost finished, I feel justified in publishing the results of my studies, while fully acknowledging M. Laumonier's claim to priority in this field of research.

I gratefully record my great indebtedness to Professor Lucien Foulet, who suggested to me the subject of this investigation, for much helpful criticism and advice.

H. M. EVERS.

INTRODUCTION.

The *Discours de la Vie de Pierre de Ronsard* of Claude Binet is valuable because of the fact that it is the only contemporary biography of Ronsard, which makes any pretensions to completeness (1); but it is disappointing in many respects, being full of inconsistencies, of wrong statements, and even of wholly legendary stories. It is necessary, therefore, to inquire how far Binet may be trusted, and what place this biography holds in the critical study of Ronsard.

The writer, if we accept his own statement, was a disciple and intimate friend of Ronsard, and his work has, therefore, been accepted as authoritative by all subsequent writers on the subject. Of Binet's life little is known. A native of Beauvais, he received his education in Paris, where he was for a time a pupil of Dorat (2). He also studied in Italy, where he claims to have made the acquaintance of eminent men of letters (3). A lawyer by profession and *avocat* in the Parlement of Paris, Binet devoted his leisure to literary pursuits, as was the fashion of the time. Being a pupil of Dorat, he naturally became attached to the school of the *Pléiade*. He began to write at the age of sixteen (4). Among his works are: *Ode sur la naissance . . . de Marie-Elisabeth de Valois* (1572); *Rencontre merveilleuse sur les noms tournez du Roy et de la Roync*; *Adonis, ou le trespas du Roy Charles IX*; *Les Daulphins, ou le retour du Roy*; *Eclogue marine . . . qui est un epithalame sur le mariage du Roy Henry*

1—The only other biographical sketches of Ronsard by his contemporaries are the funeral orations, whose main object is eulogy of the departed poet, all references to the events of his life being merely incidental.

2—Text, page 47, l. 4.

3—page 103, l. 23.

4—page 115, l. 20.

III; (1575) (1). He published in 1573 an edition of the works of La Péruse, to which he appended a number of his own poems, and a story in prose (2). In 1594 he published *Les Destinées de la France*, and in the same volume a fragment of a poem of Ronsard *Sur la Loy* (3), which according to Garnier, he had not dared to publish during the lifetime of Henry III (4).

Although his reputation as a writer was small, so small that d'Aubigné and Pasquier, in their enumeration of the literary celebrities of their time, do not consider him worth mentioning, (5) yet Binet counted among his acquaintances a large number of the friends and followers of Ronsard. With most of these his relations were probably not intimate, but due merely to their common interest in literature and to community of ambition. It is this kind of acquaintance which must have existed between Binet and the majority of those who, at his invitation, took part in the *Tombeau* published in honor of Ronsard. Others he may have known as colleagues in his profession, e. g., Pasquier and Sainte-Marthe (6). Certain ladies of Paris and of the court, who took an active interest in literary affairs, seem to have gathered about them all who had any pretensions to learning; and in this way Binet may have met some of the most celebrated men of his time, at the houses of Madame de la Roche (7), and of Madame de

1—La Croix du Maine, *Bibliothèque*.

2—La Péruse, *Oeuvres*, ed. des Seguins, xxxiv.

3—Bl. VIII, Bibl.; *Les Destinées de la France*, par Claude Binet, J. Metayer, Paris, 1594.

4—Marty-Laveaux, *Ronsard VI*, 272.

5—Hatzfeld et Darmsteter, *XVI^e Siècle*, 126; *Morceaux choisis*, 135, 139.

6—E. Frémy, (*L'Académie des derniers Valois*, p. 146) says that Binet was probably a member of the *Académie du Palais*; if Binet had really had this honor, his vanity would surely have led him to speak of it.

7—Binet was one of the contributors to the collection of poems published under the title *La puce de Mme. de la Roche*, a literary pleasantry whose originator was E. Pasquier. Hatzfeld et Darmsteter, *XVI^e Siècle*, 132 n. 2.

Retz (1). Those with whom Binet is known to have been on more intimate terms of friendship or acquaintance are very few; Dorat, his teacher; Galland, with whom he was associated in the publication of the works of Ronsard; and perhaps also Baif, who furnished him, on at least one occasion, with information for his *Vie de Ronsard* (2). His friendship for La Péruse, he says, led him to publish the works of this young poet (3). The following letter to Sainte-Marthe shows that Binet was fairly well acquainted with him, though the tone of the letter is not one of intimacy (4).

"A Monsieur, Monsieur de Sainte Marthe, Tresorier general de France

A Poitiers.

Monsieur, l'amitié que j'ay receue de Monsieur de Ronsard & qu'il vous a departie lors qu'il viuoit, pour les vertus rares qu'il recognoissoit en vous, m'ont incité à vous rescrire & vous prier dhonorer sa memoire de quelques vers affin de les mettre au rang de ceux que l'assemble pour son tombeau. Je sçay que sa memoire est assez illustree par ses propres escritz mais si nous ne l'honorons gueres dauantage pour les vers que nous luy sacrerons nous pourrions encourir vn deshonneur ne faisant pour luy ce que nous n'auons refusé pour d'autres de moindre vertu. Je ne vous mande rien de sa mort qui est tout assuree au grand regret de la Muse françoise mais ie vous puis assurer que la plus part de ses amis, ie dy de ceux dont luy mesme il a fait cas &

1—Mme. de Retz is among those to whom Binet addressed his "poèmes de circonstance"; at least this is to be gathered from M. Marty-Laveaux's explanation of a line in Jodelle's sonnet to Binet, *Ton Neptune, mon Binet . . . et ta Dictynne . . .* "Dictynne . . . est une nymphe dont le nom . . . a souvent désigné la maréchale de Retz." Marty-Laveaux, *Jodelle*, II, 373.

2—To be sure it is in the form of a correction, in the second and third editions.

3—" . . . pour l'amitié de feu J. de la Peruse, j'ay bien désiré vous adresser ses œuvres." La Péruse, *Oeuvres*, ed. des Seguins, p. 8.

4—This letter was published for the first time by M. Marty-Laveaux, in *Ronsard*, VI, p. cj.