

**PIERRE DU RYER,
DRAMATIST**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649141685

Pierre Du Ryer, dramatist by Henry Carrington Lancaster

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HENRY CARRINGTON LANCASTER

**PIERRE DU RYER,
DRAMATIST**



SAVL,
TRAGEDIE.

A PARIS
Chez { Antoine de Sommaville, en la petite salle, à l'Escu de France. }
{ Augustin Courbé, en la mesme salle, à la Palme. } .642 } au Palais.

PIERRE DU RYER,

DRAMATIST,

BY

HENRY CARRINGTON LANCASTER

PROFESSOR OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES IN AMHERST COLLEGE



WASHINGTON, D. C.

PUBLISHED BY THE CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON

1912

BLK

CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON
PUBLICATION No. 171

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

PREFACE.

The second quarter of the seventeenth century is of vital importance in the history of the French drama. It was then that the form of classic tragedy peculiar to France was created, that the comedy won value by substituting the portrayal of manners for the representation of farcical and romantic adventures, and that the tragi-comedy was at the height of its popularity. Some persons have believed that this period could be sufficiently understood by the consideration of Corneille's theater alone. Others, perceiving the superficiality of this view, have turned to minor writers of the time, and carried on investigations that led to excellent studies of Hardy, Rotrou, Tristan, and Mairet. But Du Ryer, though as important as these, has been neglected. Twelve of his pieces illustrate various forms of the tragi-comedy, from the play of romantic adventure to the classical tragi-comedy with its careful treatment of a few persons in a few situations. His one comedy is an early representation of local conditions and surroundings. His six tragedies, the most valuable and successful of his pieces, were second only to the works of Corneille in establishing the French classic type of tragedy. When studied as a whole, his theater shows a constant progress away from the loose and sensational methods of his predecessors to a simple, united, and profound conception of dramatic art, a process which shows the development of both Du Ryer and his audience through the twenty-five years of his activity as a playwright.

François Colletet's life of Du Ryer is lost. Pellisson, Sorel, the frères Parfait, Jal, and others have given him little space. Fournier united many of the facts stated by these writers with a number of his own opinions in the introduction to his reprint of Du Ryer's *Vendanges de Suresne*. In spite of its errors, this article¹ remained the principal work on Du Ryer until K. Philipp published a dissertation entitled *Pierre Du Ryers Leben und dra-*

¹ *Théâtre français au seizième et au dix-septième siècle*: Paris (1871), vol. II., 68-75.

matische Werke,¹ which to Fournier's article added analyses and criticisms of the plays and some new facts and ideas, especially in regard to Du Ryer's influence on Campistron. This dissertation is not without merit, as will be shown by subsequent reference, but it is by no means a definitive treatise. Certain documents connected with Du Ryer's life were unknown to its author. He should have studied more carefully those already at hand, including Du Ryer's translations, lyric poems, dedications, etc. His dates are often at fault. He seems to have taken two analyses from La Vallière without having read the plays to which they refer. He is not acquainted with a number of sources that Du Ryer can now be shown to have used, nor does he study with pains the sources with which he is acquainted. His book leaves us without an accurate biography of Du Ryer or a thorough criticism of his plays.

It was with the hope of writing a more informing biography and a more ample criticism that I undertook the present work. It is the result of researches made chiefly at the National, Arsenal, and Mazarine Libraries of Paris, and at the British Museum. I have treated Du Ryer as a dramatist only, using his lyric poems and his translations merely so far as they concern his other work. The biography is followed by four chapters on his twenty pieces, by a general criticism of his dramatic productions, and by two appendices that list his plays and translations in their various editions.² The frontispiece and vignettes are taken from a copy of the first edition of Du Ryer's *Saül* (Paris, 1642) in the possession of the Johns Hopkins University, graciously loaned by that institution for reproduction here.

I am indebted to the late Professor A. M. Elliott for his special interest in this book, as well as for the never-failing sympathy he extended to his former students in their various undertakings. For advice and other assistance I wish to thank M. Paul Bonnefon, M. Gustave Lanson, and Professor E. C. Armstrong.

¹ Zwickau, 1905.

² In giving French titles and quotations, I follow the orthography of the original documents except in the case of works as well known as those of Corneille, Racine, and Molière, where the usage of contemporary French has been preferred.

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The plate used as a frontispiece for this volume and the vignettes on the back of this plate and on pages 1 and 170 are reproduced from the first edition of *Saül*, published at Paris in 1642.

