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GUILLEBERT DE METS, *Description de la ville de Paris, 1434*, ed. and trans. EVELYN MULLALLY. (Textes Vernaculaires du Moyen Âge 14.) Turnhout: Brepols, 2015. Pp. 180; 2 black-and-white figures. €65. ISBN: 978-2-503-55496-9. doi:10.1086/696965

To read this *Description* is to walk through medieval Paris. In 1434, Guillebert de Mets, a professional copyist, innkeeper, and town councillor working in Geraardsbergen, wrote an evocative account of the history and topography of Paris. Note that, Guillebert's family name, de Mets, is not a toponym; instead, it reflects a commonplace abbreviation of "De Metsere" (or "the mason"). To craft this unique text, Guillebert relied on a number of sources (especially Raoul de Presles) as well as his own memories from his time as a student in 1407, "quant la ville estoit dans sa fleur" (88). While the historical section of the *Description* reaffirms many of the French city's mythic origins and retraces a conventional chronology of its legendary early rulers, the subsequent description of the city is a treasure trove of personal observations. Guillebert recollects various encounters with impressive houses (particularly the maison of Jacques Dussy, at 96), curious objects (like the griffin's foot in the Sainte-Chapelle, at 86), lush gardens (located atop the Petit Châtelet, at 88), and beautiful works of art (such as the "noble euvre" of heaven and hell, a lost painting in the choir of the church of the Celestines, at 92). Today, thanks to the work of Evelyn Mullally, we have a view of unprecedented clarity into Guillebert's vision of fifteenth-century Paris.

In this excellent edition of the *Description*, which also includes the first full English translation, Mullally has managed to both frame and display Guillebert's colorful landscape. Before Mullally's study, the most accessible version of the *Description* appeared in Le Roux de Lincy and L. M. Tisserand's seminal tome *Paris et ses historiens aux XIV<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1867). While this nineteenth-century edition contains helpful notes, it lacks a bibliography and detailed references. Finally, after nearly one hundred and fifty years, the *Description* has received the close analysis it deserves and it is now available to a wide audience.

Mullally's publication is the fourteenth volume in the Textes Vernaculaires du Moyen Âge (TVMA) series, which aims to produce updated editions of hitherto neglected examples of vernacular literature for a wide academic audience. This book is slim, accessible, and well organized. She opens with an extremely clear introduction to the text (1–47), which provides an overview of the *Description* and its genre, situating it alongside Jean de Jandun's encomiastic *Tractatus de laudibus Parisius* of 1323 and Antonio d'Asti's poem of 1451, two fascinating Latin texts that still need modern scholarly editions. Mullally unveils a clear biographical portrait of Guillebert as she considers his travels, methods, motivations, and access to various sources. The most impressive part of her introduction is her detailed study of both the manuscript tradition and Guillebert's use of Middle French, which is laced with striking Wallonisms (for example, *mercier* is always spelled "merchier"). After a brief excursus into how and why the *Description* entered the library of Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy (1396–1467), Mullally then gives a short introduction to Guillebert's treatment of the city's administration, churches, and universities. In this case, her discussion could have been rooted in a deeper historical narrative. There are hardly any references to the monumental amount of research related to each of these important topics. Nevertheless, Mullally undoubtedly succeeds in delivering a superlative introduction to this *Description*, which will serve as an invitation to other scholars who might want to use this invaluable record.

Following the introduction, Mullally presents the transcription of the *Description* from Guillebert's autograph, which is the sole surviving copy of the text, preserved in Brussels,

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Bibliothèque royale, MS 9559–9564. Every page of the original Middle French account is mirrored with a succinct modern English translation (54–109). Both Mullally's introduction and translation are equipped with extensive notes (110–66), and in between these sections we find a map and key for various Parisian sites mentioned by Guillebert, a black-and-white reproduction from the original manuscript, and a bilingual table of contents according to Guillebert's chapters (48–53). Guillebert's organization of his *Description* was no less meticulous than Mullally's. He divided his contents into two parts: a history of Paris (chapters 1–19) and his description of the city (chapters 20–30). The second section of his text is subdivided into five sections according to a logical peregrination from the center to the periphery. Guillebert leads the reader around the Cité, to the Left Bank and then the Right, before discussing the outer walls and gates and closing with musings on the excellence of the city, with its preeminent doctors and skillful craftsmen; even its sausage makers were beautiful (106).

Besides presenting her diligent investigation into this text and its author, perhaps one of the most exciting contributions of Mullally's work will be its legacy. This edition will attract academics at every stage of their career who are working on understanding the city's lost landmarks (such as the splendid church of the Celestines or the crowded houses and stalls that once lined the bridges over the Seine). Moreover, because she has presented her work in such a clear and coherent format, students and scholars alike can carry this little book with them as they make a sort of historical pilgrimage around Paris, following in Guillebert's footsteps. Wherever you are, reading Mullally's delightful edition of Guillebert's *Description* will paint the medieval city in a colorful new light.

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