

## Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



Maupas, Charles. *Grammaire et syntaxe françoise*. Ed. Nathalie Fournier

John McClelland

Volume 44, Number 3, Summer 2021

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1085859ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v44i3.38033>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

McClelland, J. (2021). Review of [Maupas, Charles. *Grammaire et syntaxe françoise*. Ed. Nathalie Fournier]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 44(3), 308–310. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v44i3.38033>

© Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies / Société canadienne d'études de la Renaissance; Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society; Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium; Victoria University Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2022

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

the ways in which works such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Prudentius's *Battle of the Soul*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Boccaccio's *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*, and Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* might have played a role in the poem's conception, its generic inflections, and its programmatic protofeminism. Along with all the philosophical, mythological, geographical, and biblical references, many of these works reappear in the volume's generous footnotes; this, in turn, allows the reader to appreciate *Amore innamorato*'s multi-dimensional, creative scaffolding. Overall, Marinella's ingenious recycling of themes present in the works of her predecessors and her contemporaries, as well as elaborate display of high-profile dedicatees, attest to this woman writer's "desire to insert herself within the ranks of the political and cultural intelligentsia in Venice and on the Italian peninsula" (7).

The present volume constitutes not only an excellent addition to ongoing Marinella studies but also a significant contribution to the fields of early modern women's, gender, and literary studies.

ALEXANDRA COLLIER

Lehman College, City University of New York

<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v44i3.38032>

### **Maupas, Charles.**

***Grammaire et syntaxe française*. Ed. Nathalie Fournier.**

Descriptions et théories de la langue française 4 / Grammaires françaises des XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles 2. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2021. Pp. 637. ISBN 978-2-406-10455-1 (paperback) €39.

Charles Maupas's *Grammaire* was among the most popular of the string of sixteenth- to eighteenth-century grammars of French written in French by the French that began with Louis Meigret's innovative *Treuvé de la gramme françoise* (1550). Maupas first published his book in 1607, then revised, expanded, and republished it in 1618; it was reissued by his son in 1625, shortly after his death. In addition, his work was translated into Latin (1623) and English (1634), and there were also pirated editions in 1625, 1632, and 1638. Like the contemporary *arts poétiques* that pullulated after 1548, this string of grammars was a response to a number of factors and initiatives. Although

French was still the language of international diplomacy (according to Erasmus, *Ciceronianus*, 1528), Italian had become the preeminent European cultural language, while Latin continued to be the language of philosophy, medicine, science, mathematics, and even law, despite François I's 1539 edict that made French the official language of the courts. Although Meigret had patriotically maintained that French was rich enough to deal fully and elegantly with any art or science, more than a century later Pascal still felt obliged to switch to Latin in order to make his mathematical demonstration clear ("Je vous le dirai en latin, car le français n'y vaut rien," in *Lettre à Jean Fermat*, 29 July 1654). The politically and religiously troubled decades between the death of Henri II and Louis XIV's "l'état, c'est moi" were marked then by successive efforts to expand and confirm the possibilities and boundaries of French's vocabulary, morphology, and syntax. Each new grammar claimed to replace its predecessor, for unspoken commercial as well as asserted linguistic reasons. Thus, Maupas stated that he had seen no need to read previous grammars—"je n'en ay leu pas-une" (181)—though he was in fact indebted to them. And the author of the next grammar in the string, Antoine Oudin (*Grammaire française rapportée au langage du temps*, 1632), said that Maupas was so full of "antiquailles" and "erreurs" that he, Oudin, had had to write "une [grammaire] moderne" (quoted by Fournier, 24).

Charles Maupas (ca. 1558/65–1624) lived in Blois, in the Val de Loire that had the reputation of being home to the best version of French. Though by profession a *chirurgien* who treated physical injuries, his main activity was teaching French to foreign gentlemen "amateurs de la langue Française," the most famous among whom was "George, Duc de Buckingham," the favourite of James I and dedicatee of the 1625 edition. Most of Maupas's pupils seem in fact to have been English, and when he compares French to other languages, English is the one most often cited. Maupas's pedagogical method is certainly of interest to historians of education, and as a key to thought patterns in the early seventeenth century. His book is perhaps of greater interest to historians of the language who can observe in it both an accurate picture of educated provincial usage during a period of linguistic fluctuation and the increasing sophistication of grammatical analysis: unlike his predecessors, Maupas treats "grammaire et syntaxe" concurrently, thus making them into a single concept, as is evidenced by the singular adjective, "françoise." His deep understanding of the parts of the language and of the ways in which they are assembled into

meaningful utterances justifies Fournier's characterization of his book as a "grammaire théorique de haute volée" (19).

Like other grammarians, Maupas follows the expository models bequeathed by Donatus and Priscian. He begins with the French alphabet of twenty-two letters and their pronunciation (no *k* or *w*; *i/j* and *u/v* are the same letters despite their audible and typographical differences), and proceeds from there through the variable, then the invariable parts of speech. His analyses of the article, a part of speech absent from Latin, are particularly subtle and perspicacious, as are his expositions of the complexities of French verbs and participles. Where French is lacking a Latin grammeme, e.g., the future participle active, Maupas demonstrates that the modern language has ample resources to render "diversement" the meanings that might be expressed in Latin by the participle (340–41).

Fournier's comprehensive critical edition consists of a 170-page introduction summarizing and elucidating Maupas's text, stressing both his originality and his debts to his predecessors. The text itself (181–472), using the 1973 Slatkine reprint of the 1618 edition as copy text, is copiously annotated and is followed by six "annexes bibliographiques" (473–509) that detail the physical description of the three authorized editions, the three pirated editions, and the two translations, plus the textual and paratextual differences between 1607, 1618, and 1625. These in turn are followed by seven "annexes grammaticales" (511–51), comparative and analytical tables of the parts of speech that synopsise the differences between Maupas's three editions, and, where applicable, the differences between him and other grammarians. Fournier then provides a nineteen-page bibliography of primary and secondary materials, five indexes of French, Latin, and metalinguistic terms and quotations, and a detailed "table des matières." In short, we now have, thanks to her labours, not only a reliable text of one of the most important of the early grammars of French, but also all of the information we might think of needing in order to understand it and to position it within the sequential developments attendant upon the post-1650 emergence of classical French.

JOHN MCCLELLAND

Victoria College, University of Toronto

<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v44i3.38033>