

Cefalo on Guermès and Krulic, editors (2018)

Guermès, Sophie, and Brigitte Krulic, editors. *Edgar Quinet, une conscience européenne*. Travaux Interdisciplinaires et Plurilingues, vol. 28, Peter Lang, 2018, pp. 276, ISBN 978-2-8076-0632-6

Erica Maria Cefalo, University of Maryland, College Park

In *Edgar Quinet, une conscience européenne*, Sophie Guermès and Brigitte Krulic present an engaging volume of articles taken from presentations given at the 2017 Fondation Singer-Polignac colloquium by the same name. The collection on the whole offers glimpses of Quinet the historian, the writer, the professor, the traveller, the romantic, and even Quinet the musician. As the volume's title suggests, these articles ultimately seek to explore the depths of Quinet's intellectual connections to Europe and identity as a "European" citizen with an eye on his "préoccupation morale," as Guermès and Krulic explain in their introduction.

The volume begins with two articles discussing Quinet's roots in French Enlightenment philosophy and the impact of the Revolution on his early intellectual formation. Simone Bernard-Griffiths's "La Révolution française et l'Europe jusqu'à la mort de Louis XVI dans La Révolution (1865) d'Edgar Quinet" opens the volume with a look at Quinet's fundamental questioning of the concept of a Republican monarchy in France. The article includes important comparisons between Quinet's conclusions on the Revolution and those of Germaine de Staël and serves as a solid starting point for the reader entering into this material. Éric Francalanza's "Quinet et la pensée des lumières" follows with an intimate glimpse into the literary works and personal life experiences (fairytales and family life, for example) that shaped Quinet's youth.

Apart from these articles, however, the remainder of the volume focuses overwhelmingly on Quinet's ties to other countries. The sheer variety of countries represented is remarkable. Moreover, many of the articles explore complimentary themes, allowing the reader to make connections and comparisons among them. The result is a multidimensional portrait of Quinet's life and work that begins to come into focus as the volume progresses. Two articles, for example, are dedicated to Quinet and Greece: Irini Apostolou's "Quinet entre la Grèce et l'orient" and Sandrine Maufroy's "Edgar Quinet, la Grèce et le philhellénisme." The former dissects Quinet's role as a traveller in Greece, drawing some thoughtful comparisons between Quinet's encounter with Greece and the accounts of earlier romantics such as Chateaubriand and Gautier. According to Apostolou, the Orient for Quinet represented a possible remedy to the occidental spiritual crisis. Maufroy then broaches the conflict between Quinet's lack of philhellenic writings and his association with the philhellenic movement. Another pair of articles, one by Brigitte Krulic and another from Christophe Buton, reveals different aspects of Quinet's rapport with German thought and highlights Quinet's progressive pull away from German philosophy. Sophie Guermès's own article, "Quinet, le pape et le Risorgimento" is certainly an outstanding contribution. It dives deep into Quinet's consideration of Catholicism as an obstacle not only to "liberté, égalité, fraternité" but also to the very creation of an Italian nation. This is one of several articles that inevitably come back to Quinet's evolving attitude towards Napoléon Bonaparte. Loris Chavanette's "Un héros européen: Napoléon l'audacieux vu par Quinet," reveals contradictions in Quinet's work that contribute to a better understanding not only of Quinet, but of nineteenth-century French political thought itself. Tatiana Antolini-Dumas's work on Quinet's time in Spain, "L'Espagne d'Edgar Quinet," likewise touches on Bonaparte, specifically Quinet's consideration of Spain's role in the fall of the first Empire. Antolini-Dumas also includes some wonderful details here describing Quinet's mystic interpretation of bullfighting in Spain and the oddly religious vocabulary he chooses in his writings on Spanish politics. Fanny Gribenski and Étienne Jardin's "Le souvenir des âmes heureuses: la figure d'Edgar Quinet dans *Ce que dit la musique*" closes the volume with a delightful look at Quinet's flirtation with musical composition while exiled in Switzerland, as told through the writings of his widow, Hermione.

Despite the general focus on Europe, two of the most notable articles extend to Quinet's influences on contemporaries in Brazil and Chile. Vincente Romero Espinoza recounts the cooperation between Quinet and Chilean philosopher Francisco Bilbao during the June uprising of 1848. Espinoza's conclusion questions Quinet's "conscience européenne" in light of his lack of conscience concerning French colonization, noting that he and Bilbao fought for the European people but said nothing on the plight of Algerians at that time. Arlenice Almeida da Silva's "Edgar Quinet et le romantisme brésilien" highlights a number of thought-provoking connections between Quinet and Brazilian romantic poet Castro Alves, in particular the theme of the poet in exile as the Wandering Jew or "l'homme maudit."

For those already familiar with Quinet's life and work, *Une conscience européenne* offers a wealth of fascinating and fresh global perspectives. That said, the volume is geared primarily toward Quinet scholars. Those who have only a casual acquaintance with his work may find some of the material a bit opaque. Again, however, the variety of innovative perspectives

alone makes *Edgar Quinet, une conscience européenne* a valuable resource and will certainly pique interest in the complexity of his life and work.

Volume: 48.1–2

Year:

- 2019