

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Celebrating a True Renaissance Man: Jean-Claude Carron

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It is unusual for a single French department to house two early modernists, let alone two who studied under the same professor. Yet that is the case here at Brigham Young University. Bob Hudson and I both had the honor of preparing our doctorates under the guidance of Dr. Jean-Claude Carron at the University of California, Los Angeles. So, I think it safe to say that no other French department – outside UCLA, of course – has benefited as much as ours from Jean-Claude’s inspiring pedagogy and exemplary scholarship. Thus, it is with great pleasure and profound gratitude that we, the editors of this volume of *Lingua Romana* and the faculty of French and Italian at Brigham Young University, dedicate this issue to Jean-Claude Carron: respected scholar of early modern French literature and culture, esteemed mentor, and dear friend.

Jean-Claude is the type of teacher that every student hopes for, and that every doctoral student hopes to one day become. He is kind, erudite, encouraging, and he has a knack for finding just the right degree of demanding to bring out the best in his students. His classroom and office were islands of calm amid an otherwise anxious academic sea. They were places where students could count on a friendly welcome and intellectually invigorating conversation. A careful reader and listener, Jean-Claude patiently talked students through the difficult processes of developing and articulating ideas – and he always did it with an infectious, reassuring enthusiasm. I think all of his former students can picture the way he would lean forward with a spreading smile and accelerating speech as your ideas took shape over the course of a conversation. One of the best examples I can share of Jean-Claude’s exceptional pedagogical style is the final exam that he planned for our graduate course in Renaissance literature during my first year. Rather than the expected written exam, Jean-Claude invited the class to lunch at his lovely home, where he served us a marvelous, homemade salmon terrine and had us take turns responding to thoughtful questions pulled from a hat. I left that day with a full belly, a sense of accomplishment, and a new idea of what a professor can be.

Turning to his research, which is probably more apropos of the project at hand, possibly the most striking aspect of Jean-Claude’s work is its breadth. Approaching his scholarship with uncommon intellectual agility and sweeping curiosity, he led out in expanding the scope of Renaissance studies and redefining its objects, all while never losing sight of the established canon and its broad, cultural significance. From his earliest works, Jean-Claude has challenged traditional perspectives on Renaissance authors’ relationship to Antiquity and the Middle Ages, redefining familiar concepts like *Renaissance*, *translatio* and *imitatio* in terms of *dialogue* and *renovatio*. Shedding new light on less-studied sixteenth-century authors like Pontus de Tyard and works like the *Cymbalum Mundi*, Jean-Claude has helped to create a more complete vision of early modern French intellectual culture. Ever the innovative scholar, he has more recently transformed a passion for cuisine into the formal study of recipe books and culinary culture, which, like all of his previous work, has offered scholars new insights into early modern life. Given this particular talent for

translating such varied interests into fruitful academic discourse, I don't know that I can offer a higher or more accurate compliment than this: Jean-Claude Carron is a true Renaissance man – in every possible sense of the expression.

It is, therefore, appropriate that the eclectic collection of articles included here be offered in his honor. We express gratitude to the many talented scholars who join with us in celebrating Jean-Claude and his career. Most of all, we thank Jean-Claude for his example and support throughout the years.