

## THE SOURCES OF OLIVIER DE MAGNY'S SONNETS

Of the poets, outside the actual *Pléiade*, who gathered round Ronsard and Du Bellay, the most attractive figure, at any rate of those who confined themselves to non-dramatic poetry, is undoubtedly that of Olivier de Magny, born at Cahors about 1530. His lively temperament and pleasant disposition made him a favorite among his contemporaries; his romantic relations with Louise Labé, *la belle cordière de Lyon*, his untimely death, and, it must be said, the intrinsic value of part of his work, have enabled him to maintain his place, modest as it is, by the side of the brighter constellation of the *Pléiade*, since the day that Sainte-Beuve revived the study of French sixteenth-century literature. His inborn talent, which was considerable, would have made it possible for him to occupy a more exalted position in the poetic firmament if he had followed his natural bent, instead of systematically resorting to Italian models.

It is our intention in the present paper to show how great was his indebtedness to Italian models, as far as the *Sonnets* are concerned.<sup>1</sup> That he lacked originality has been suspected or assumed, and in a few cases actually proved, but although Olivier de Magny's works have been republished and annotated<sup>2</sup> twice within recent times, and made the subject of a voluminous thesis for the Paris doctorate,<sup>3</sup> the question has never been thoroughly investigated. Such investigations may not have very great importance in themselves, but when looked at in the broader light of comparative literature they assume a different and more significant aspect. Not until the chief French writers of the sixteenth century have been subjected to a similar process will it be possible to

<sup>1</sup> While the present paper (written in the summer of 1908) has been waiting for the press in America, I have been anticipated in a few of my results by J. Vianey in *Le Pétrarquisme en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Montpellier-Paris), which appeared in the early months of the present year.

<sup>2</sup> By P. Blanchemain, 1869-75; and by E. Courbet, 1871-80.

<sup>3</sup> Jules Favre, *Olivier de Magny: Étude biographique et littéraire*. Thèse présentée à la Faculté des Lettres de Paris, Paris, 1885.