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### Title

La Fabrique du roman classique: lire, éditer, enseigner les romans du xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle de 1700 à 1900. Par Camille Esmein-Sarrazin

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### Author

Paige, Nicholas D

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*La Fabrique du roman classique: lire, éditer, enseigner les romans du xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle de 1700 à 1900.* Par Camille Esmein-Sarrazin. (Lire le xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle, 81; Romans, contes et nouvelles, 12.) Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2023. 343 pp.

One surprising takeaway from Camille Esmein-Sarrazin's new book is how, over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the trans-generic rubric of 'classicism' effectively smothered interest in the history of the seventeenth-century novel. Most of Esmein-Sarrazin's sources — and the author's exhaustivity is remarkable — are broader literary histories: compared to the continuous British interest in the history of the novel, stretching from Clara Reeve to Ian Watt, French commentators tended to mention the novel only in passing. As this book shows, the rich production of novels running from d'Urfé's *L'Astrée* in 1607 to Fénelon's *Télémaque* in 1699 was quickly reduced to a small canon of works illustrating the opposition between purportedly unreadable heroic romances (La Calprenède and Scudéry are sempiternally derided) and the masterpieces of Lafayette. The first of this book's four parts gives an overview of the types of critical discourse brought to bear on the novel in the 200-year span covered: dictionaries, prefaces, treatises, *tableaux*, and finally the literary history practised by Ferdinand Brunetière and Gustave Lanson. Esmein-Sarrazin highlights the major commonplaces governing this historiography — 1660 as a moment of rupture, the *roman-nouvelle* distinction, debates on the genre's (im)morality, and its supposed ability to offer us a window on the period's *preciosité* and *galanterie*. The second part catalogues further commonplaces still, and enlarges the scope by examining eighteenth-century efforts to abridge, repackage, and anthologize the novels of the previous century. The rest of the study itemizes in more detail the restricted canon retained by commentators. In the third part, Esmein-Sarrazin traces the reception of *L'Astrée* (held simultaneously to be both a monument of perfection and also outdated), the heroic romances of La Calprenède and Scudéry (decried as monstrously pre-classical), *Télémaque* (whose very perfection called into question its status as a novel), and a small band of infrequently mentioned novels (Scarron's *Roman comique* being the only one to appear in these histories with any regularity). The author reserves the fourth part for what she calls 'le cas Lafayette'. Here, the reader will find information on the stabilization of Lafayette's corpus, judgements on the 'revolution' ascribed to *La Princesse de Clèves*, as well as discussions of the latter's morality (in the eighteenth century) and style (in the nineteenth). A Conclusion expresses consternation at the endless critical recirculation of clichés about the novel, while also underlining the enduring resistance to the genre's integration into the conceptual category of classicism. Because of the book's focus on the discursive reception of the period's novels, the reader will not find here information on re- editions: we learn what critics said about the novels, but, apart from the question of abridgements, not which ones readers still bought. Neither does Esmein-Sarrazin provide information on French thought about the history of the novel that would be deeper (accounting for pre-1600 prose fiction) or wider (encompassing contributions from abroad). But we could not wish for a more detailed study of the critical fortunes of French seventeenth-century novels before the twentieth century.

Nicholas D. Paige University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, United States