

Paméla – Mémoires pour servir à la vie de Monsieur de Voltaire, écrits par lui-même

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Jonathan Mallinson

Author:

Voltaire

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Paméla and the *Mémoires pour servir à la vie de Monsieur de Voltaire* are accounts of the author's own life, concentrating particularly on his relationship with the king of Prussia. They were composed in the 1750s, one of the most turbulent decades in Voltaire's life, which opened shortly after the death of Mme Du Châtelet with an extended visit to Prussia, and ended with his installation at Ferney with Mme Denis. It was a decade of extreme contrasts shaped by his relationship with Frederick the Great, a period of supreme, seemingly unassailable celebrity and of public humiliation, of independence and exile, of power and vulnerability.

The texts are unusual in the works of Voltaire, for two reasons: they are both written as first-person narratives, dealing with the actions and emotions of the writer; and they were both unpublished during the lifetime of the author. *Paméla*, a reworking of letters to Mme Denis during his years in Prussia (which were long thought to be authentic), gives a very carefully constructed view of the period, where attitudes are modified, chronology manipulated, details omitted. The same is true of the *Mémoires*, where the perspective is different, but still issues are simplified, and evidence changed at will. Through these two texts, Voltaire speaks directly to posterity, as he seeks to claim the authority to write about himself, to create and control his image.

Table of Contents:

Paméla (Jonathan Mallinson)

Mémoires pour servir à la vie de Monsieur de Voltaire, écrits par lui-même (Jonathan Mallinson)

Pages:

504

Price Sterling (£):

Revue Voltaire

J. Mallinson retrace la passionnante histoire éditoriale [de *Paméla*] [...] En signalant sa dette envers le travail déjà effectué sur ce corpus quelque peu négligé, cette édition ouvre et prolonge des perspectives de recherches passionnantes, notamment du côté de la réécriture et des jeux complexes d'interaction et d'influences entre le matériau autobiographique et la fiction. [...] L'intérêt de [*Paméla et des Mémoires pour servir à la vie de Monsieur de Voltaire*] est [...] indéniable [...].

Cahiers Voltaire

un événement [...] cette édition se recommandera [...] par le soin de son travail historique et littéraire [...] une édition bien conduite et bien réalisée
