

Employment contracts for Vallet's school illuminate the relationships between dance masters, apprentices, and musicians, while the notebook's student enrollment records include welcome demographic details: the Brussels school attracted an international clientele of men and women from the upper and middle ranks of society.

For theater historians, dance reconstructors, and choreographers, this book is worth buying just for the 450-plus dance figures, facsimiles of which are included in an appendix. Arranged for convenient consultation, the figures illustrate configurations for five to sixteen dancers for numerous geometric shapes and physical objects, as well as all the letters of the alphabet. As Nevile observes, "The staggering variety of this collection of figures is a telling reminder of just what was meant when contemporary witnesses wrote of their amazement at the bewildering variety in the figures which unfurled before their eyes, and why it was so difficult for those watching the shifting panorama before them to be precise, clear and detailed in their accounts of what they saw" (88). Additional appendixes feature facsimiles, transcriptions, and translations of the pike exhibition and six ballet plots, and facsimiles of approximately seventy pupils' enrollment information. Nevile also provides musical examples in modern notation and tables with titles, composers, and printed concordances.

Theatrical entertainments loomed large in the early modern period, literally and figuratively. In addition to illuminating the inner workings of a dance school, Jennifer Nevile's *Footprints of the Dance* takes us several steps closer to understanding Renaissance spectacles and increasing our knowledge and appreciation of those who designed and developed them.

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L'Époque de la Renaissance (1400–1600), Tome II: La nouvelle culture (1480–1520). Eva Kushner, ed.

Histoire comparée des littératures de langues européennes 30. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2017. 544 pp. \$263.

With the publication of *La nouvelle culture (1480–1520)*, the long-anticipated second volume needed to complete Eva Kushner's four-tome comparatist history *L'Époque de la Renaissance (1400–1600)*, readers now have full access to the most thorough, complete and up-to-date pan-European treatment of the spectrum of the human sciences as conceived in the premodern period we know as the Renaissance.

Initially undertaken in 1988, with the publication of the series' first volume, *L'avenement de l'esprit nouveau (1400–1460)*, followed by the fourth and final chronological volume in 2000, *Crises et essors nouveaux (1560–1610)*, and then the 2011 third volume, *Maturations et mutations (1520–1560)*, this second volume truly is the

culmination of three decades of research. That this volume would appear last in the series is understandable, as the four decades in question represent the period in which the renewed brand of humanism, heretofore practiced largely and most significantly in Italy, would begin to take root in the rest of Europe, in nations that were only beginning to reconsider the nature of their political systems. If the subsequent four decades would be, as the series suggests, the period of maturity and evolution, 1480–1520 would represent the cusp of a Europe moving from medieval ways of thinking into new conceptions of culture, belief, art, identity, communication, and civic life. A roundtable discussion at a recent MLA convention posed the rhetorical question, “The year 1500: Are we modern yet?” With cultural novelties and reconsiderations traced twenty years in both directions from this generic historical nodal point, *La nouvelle culture (1480–1520)* makes it abundantly clear that this certainly is the period of assaying new methods and becoming modern.

Remaining resolutely interdisciplinary and international in their approaches to epistemological inquiry in this period of discovery, the authors bring to the fore a number of domains that certain readers might be surprised to learn were examined and discussed across borders and linguistic traditions in this generative era. For example, over an opening trio of essays, Matteo Soranzo demonstrates the calling into question and transformation of Aristotelian ideals, Thomist theology, the scriptural canon, and the uses of sacred music—all over Europe and the New World. Indeed, the theories of Ficino, Pico, Leone Ebreo, and Agrippa are evoked across chapters as Europe is shown to become more open to Neoplatonism, cabala, the esoteric, and even the occult. A succeeding section examines political transformation, as Europe evolves from decentralized feudal states into national sovereign monarchies, and new states and civic mentalities are born. In later sections, novelties such as printed books, humanistic treatises, individualized literary and artistic pursuits, patronages and social organizations, reflections on the church and clericalism, festivities and rituals, new theories and their detractors, academies and quarrels, and much more, are examined in depth, straddling borders and confirming the widespread, pervasive zeitgeist that embraced newness, discovery, and calling into question the truisms of the past.

To underline the volume’s unrelenting fidelity to the comparatist approach, allow me to refer to an essay germane to my own research, François Rouget’s contribution “Le madrigal pétrarquaisant: Mutations de la lyrique courtoise.” The author examines the development of Quattrocento lyricism from the royal courts to the Italian cultural hubs of Milan, Rome, Venice, Ferrara, and Naples, before tracing the Platonization of Petrarchism in the Cinquecento and its exportation to the French Grands Rhétoriqueurs, Spanish Canioneros, the courtly makers of England, and the Meistersingers of the burghs of the German states, ultimately passing by Croatia, Portugal, and Scotland en route.

Much like the quadrivium, the volume concludes with discussions of music and astronomy, as humankind seeks beyond itself, its civic sphere, and the known world

to contemplate the stars, the seas, nature, magic, ideals of perfect harmony, and other concepts unconsidered that had previously been ignored or simply evaded scrutiny. Naturally, in addition to those mentioned above, names like Erasmus, Lefèvre, Leonardo, Luther, Machiavelli, More, Savonarola, and Valla figure prominently throughout the essays in this rich volume.

Astride two eras, with a Janus-like glance to the medieval past and a gaze oriented toward the new in the nascent Renaissance, *La nouvelle culture (1480–1520)* will stand as a valuable and enlightening reference for generations to come.

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Langues imaginaires et imaginaire de la langue. Olivier Pot, ed.
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The starting point is a conference held in Geneva in 2008, with a first set of ten participants. The editor later added thirteen written contributions to honor the anniversary of Thomas More's *Utopia*, published in Paris (1517; see Pierre Swiggers, 91–115), and the memory of the poet and scholar Antoine Raybaud. Olivier Pot frames the articles (mostly in French) with two long essays (76 and 155 pages, respectively) that guide his general and personal purpose: to stress the role of imagination, or rather the “imaginative world” (*l'imaginaire* in French contains a psychoanalytic connotation), in very different texts and methods dealing with language (*langage*) or tongues (*langues*). The ambitious introduction (“Language in All Its Ways”) offers long abstracts of the articles, avoiding the contradictions between them and reiterating the Foucauldian misinterpretation that “in the *imaginaire* of the Renaissance, the world is written like an alphabet” (27). The historical approach is allocated in nine sections that try to organize a variety of heterogeneous domains (cryptography, hybrid languages, ethnography, orientalism, linguistic scenes, glossolalia, Armand Gatti, Valère Novarina, and music) into a set of themes.

Fourteen out of the twenty-five articles are devoted to early modern authors or texts, but they are not the best part of the volume, which is nevertheless worth reading for other contributions on Vedic linguistics, imaginary languages in modern Italian literature, and the late conspiracies about the origins of Eastern European languages. To contextualize the topics in a broader perspective, one should read Sylvain Auroux's overview of the language origin question, and Gabriel Bergounioux's historical approach to clinical language pathologies in the nineteenth century. Among the most useful for Renaissance scholars, I would single out Daniel Ménager's essay about German in Rabelais's novels, Paul-Victor Desarbres's detailed and elaborate study of Vigenère's *Annotations on Caesar* (1589), and Gilles Siouffi's cautious presentation of the blurred