

capital in publishing multiple, revised, and annotated editions of his poetic collection *Les Amours* would lead to more profitable long-term patronage. This approach to craftsmanship is reflected both thematically in his poetry and economically in his publishing practices. Kennedy reveals how Ronsard recycled poems between one collection of poetry dedicated to Cassandra Salviati and a later one dedicated to Marie de Bourgueil, making his complaints against the beloveds interchangeable. Ronsard also cleverly profited twice from the set of poems commissioned by French king Henri III for his recently deceased lover Marie de Clèves, when he repurposed and published them in a new collection, *Sur la Mort de Marie*, dedicated to his beloved Marie de Bourgueil.

Part 3 analyzes Shakespeare's sonnets within the framework of the Petrarchan *homo economicus* and a "dynamics of maturation" that characterized the poetry of Sidney and Spenser. Kennedy theorizes that, based on the opaque quality of the Young Man poems, Shakespeare continued to revise them after he composed the Dark Lady poems, and right up to the quarto's publication in 1609. Indeed, it is in the Young Man cycle, where the figures of the *homo economicus* and *homo literarum* come together, where we see more explicit references to economics, enterprise, and work alongside the poetic expression of love, desire, and male friendship/homosociality. Kennedy closes the book by returning to the "shape-shifting" figure of Mercury as a model for the poets—and their respective contextual economies—examined throughout the book. He ultimately shows how Petrarch's legacy was as economic as it was poetic, that the act of poetic revision and emendation should be understood within both theoretical frames of Platonic furor and Aristotelian craftsmanship. Kennedy's command of the source materials and close readings of poetic variants are exceptional. With *Petrarchism at Work* he has written another authoritative and original study of Petrarch's legacy that will greatly impact the field.

Aileen A. Feng, *University of Arizona*
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Poetry in a World of Things: Aesthetics and Empiricism in Renaissance Ekphrasis.
Rachel Eisendrath.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. x + 192 pp. \$30.

Poetry in a World of Things argues that the Renaissance underwent a decisive shift toward an empiricist world view, privileging objective forms of experience—as expressed in an increasing interest in the material world and its objects—over subjective, imaginative experience. Poetry registers this shift while simultaneously serving as a "complex repository" of the "partially renounced subjectivity" (3). Drawing on Adorno's modernist aesthetics, Eisendrath sees the work of art as resisting forms of

closure and gesturing beyond itself. It is in ekphrasis—here employed in its classical sense as detailed description, not in its modern understanding as verbal representation of a visual representation—that the Renaissance’s new interest in the world’s objective materiality finds particular expression. Eisendrath makes her point in four case studies: Petrarch’s discussion of the Roman ruins, book 3 of Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander*, and Shakespeare’s *Rape of Lucrece*. A coda sketches forms of female resistance to the aesthetic reification studied in the previous chapters.

These are Eisendrath’s main arguments. Due to his new empiricist sense of antiquarian history, Petrarch replaces the medieval mode of the *ubi sunt* topos with a historicized interiority. In Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* an old subjectivity is supplanted by a new objectivity, a stance of detachment from the things described, especially from grotesque art. Grappling with a shift from “subjective imaginative immersion to objective detachment” (77), the poem refuses to establish a stable core of meaning, remaining instead “in a state of internal conflict and irresolution, calling for our ongoing involvement” (81). *Hero and Leander* responds critically to a post-Augustan aesthetic of stasis and reification as embodied in the works of the fourth-century historian Ammianus Marcellinus. Rejecting the aestheticized thingliness of late antique literature’s excessively detailed descriptions and endless poetic lists, Marlowe explores poetic creativity as a self-critical, open-ended process. Shakespeare’s *Rape of Lucrece* is modernist *avant la lettre*, drawing on an aesthetics of fragmentation as it “presciently explores problems of objectivity that were just emerging in the late sixteenth century” (150). The coda shows female voices resisting the reification of women as images of history and depicts Don Quixote as suffering from similar anxieties.

This is an interesting book addressing some of the most important issues in Renaissance literature. Eisendrath’s obvious enthusiasm for her period resonates all through the text, making for entertaining reading, and there are some impressive observations, like the one on Sidney’s *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*, where the veins in a statue’s marble evoke the veins of the person represented. There are, however, a number of points on which critics might disagree. Intended as a sensibly pragmatic move, Eisendrath’s staunch refusal to define her use of the terms *objectivity* and *subjectivity* ultimately proves counterproductive. Not only does she cut herself off from the vast scholarly discussion of premodern forms of subjectivity, but she also employs the word *subjectivity* in different ways, ranging from something like complex interiority to a view of the world not based on observable fact. Eisendrath’s commitment to Adorno frequently results in normative aesthetic judgments—such as those on post-Augustan literature—that deny the historical artifact an aesthetic value of its own, accepting it only if it conforms to the modernist principles that inform Adorno’s perspective. The book’s underlying historical narrative is teleological in an almost triumphalist Western manner that recent voices from postcolonial or feminist criticism would consider problematic. A more detailed discussion of early modern aesthetic theory and philosophy in general could have provided a more nuanced view of the role of the imagination in

Renaissance poetics and epistemology. By using ekphrasis in the sense to be found in ancient rhetoric, Eisendrath avoids some of the aesthetic essentialism potentially inherent in *paragone*-style debates, but she also ignores the ways in which the traditions of ekphrastic poetry—in the sense of verbal representations of visual representations—have, since the days of Homer, themselves generated some of the interesting effects Eisendrath is prone to attribute to a supposed shift toward an early modern interest in objectivity and materiality.

These objections notwithstanding, Eisendrath convincingly demonstrates the importance, complexity, and ongoing fascination of early modern ekphrasis.

Andrew James Johnston, *Freie Universität Berlin*
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Meditations on the Life of Christ: The Short Italian Text.

Sarah McNamer, ed. and trans.

The William and Katherine Devers Series in Dante and Medieval Italian Literature 14.
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For students of late medieval devotional writing, and of literature inspired by Franciscan ideals, the Latin *Meditationes Vitae Christi* (*MVC*) is a work of major importance, surviving in over a hundred manuscripts (not counting partial versions and translations) and posing a set of difficult questions. The most debated of these has been the question of authorship, still not resolved: after an original attribution to Bonaventura, and then to pseudo-Bonaventura, more recent proposals for the identity of the author are the Franciscan friars Johannes de Caulibus and now Jacopo de Sancto Geminiano. Possibly more consequential, however, is the question of the relation of the Latin *MVC* to a number of other contemporary texts that contain recognizably the same material, but are of varying length and, in several instances, composed in an Italian vernacular. This volume by McNamer upends and revises, with three principal, well-defended claims, the main debates regarding the Latin *MVC*.

First, for McNamer, the original form of the text is not the long Latin form of the *MVC*, but the shortest of all the versions, which she calls the *testo breve*, surviving in a single MS (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Canonici Italiani 174). This was originally set down, as McNamer reckons, between 1300 and 1325 in a west Tuscan, likely Pisan, dialect, though in its present form is replete with Venetian and North Italian forms, since it was copied in Venice or the Veneto toward the end of the fourteenth century. This text, with a prologue and thirty chapters, McNamer assigns to writer A. Second, writer A was a woman, almost certainly a nun, perhaps a Poor Clare, living in a Pisan convent, perhaps the convent of Ognissanti (no longer extant). Although the *testo breve*