

yet to be explored. Overall, this work would be of great use to anyone specifically studying Quakers, but also for those with a broader interest in early modern economic and social history.

Roberto Romagnino. *Théorie(s) de l'ecphrasis: entre Antiquité et première modernité*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2019. x + 299 pp. €32.00 Review by KATHRINA A. LAPORTA, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY.

This book presents a history of theories on descriptive writing from Antiquity through the seventeenth century with a particular focus on France. Citing the preoccupation among early modern French authors to paint with words, Roberto Romagnino centers his study on one of the primary rhetorical tools that can give an audience the impression that they are *seeing* what they read or hear: *ecphrasis*. Indeed, one of the strengths of the book is its focus, which allows the author to differentiate with painstaking care the meaning of the term *ekphrasis*, as well as related words such as *enargeia*, *hypotyposis*, *diatyposis*, *description*, and *evidence*. It is exceedingly difficult to discern a stable meaning for any of these terms owing to the evolution in their meaning over time and to mistranslations that have yielded competing definitions in different languages. The clearest example is the term “*ekphrasis*” itself. Whereas for centuries the word referred to vivid descriptive speech that conjures an image before the mind’s eye of the listener, it has been used since the twentieth century to describe a genre in which a writer describes a specific artistic work, such as a painting, in great detail.

Romagnino’s book contributes to a body of scholarship on *ekphrasis*, *hypotyposis*, and other forms of word-images in classical rhetorical treatises and on the reception of these treatises in early modern Europe. Adopting what he calls a “historico-philological approach” (17), Romagnino expertly navigates the vast continent of terms and techniques associated with descriptive speech. He nods to the complexity of such an undertaking in setting forth the goals of his study:

Rouvrir le dossier sur l’*ecphrasis* signifie se confronter à une notion complexe et fuyante, dont la conception s’est reconfigurée à plusieurs reprises au fil des siècles. Voici donc le défi de cet ouvrage: parcourir l’histoire du discours descriptif en tant que

catégorie rhétorique, en mobilisant les grilles conceptuelles et les instruments critiques élaborés par les rhéteurs antiques et reçus dans la réflexion de l'âge prémoderne. (13)

Romagnino thus disentangles what is a true terminological morass for the contemporary scholar interested in how early modern authors were trained to transform their words into powerful textual images.

Originally a doctoral dissertation, the book is divided into three sections, each comprising three chapters. The first section, "Archéologie de l'*Ekphrasis*," sketches a "cartography" of descriptive writing through a presentation of treatises from Antiquity and a selection from the seventeenth century. Reminding the reader of the etymology of the word "ekphrasis," which comes from the Greek *ek-phrazô* meaning "complete, exhaustive exposition" (21), Chapter One centers on the rhetorical exercises in the *Progymnasmata*, in which ekphrasis is theorized as a type of speech that exhaustively describes, as distinct from the quality of the speech responsible for allowing ekphrasis to achieve this goal (enargeia). Chapter Two focuses on formal aspects of ekphrasis, including some of its associated techniques, with further analysis of the often-tenuous distinction between ekphrasis and enargeia in treatises from Antiquity. Chapter Three seeks to unpack the "constellation" of lexical terms on descriptive writing: *graphein*, *descriptio*, *demonstratio*, *hypotypôsis*, *diatypôsis*, *repraesentatio*. Throughout this first section, ekphrasis is thus presented as a sort of floating signifier, defined in relief against the contours of an "abundance" of terms denoting descriptive writing: "l'*ekphrasis* semble encore s'identifier tantôt à une figure macrostructurale, tantôt à un insaisissable *je ne sais quoi* du discours qui le rend particulièrement saillant" (42).

Scholars of seventeenth-century France will likely take a particular interest in Part Two of Romagnino's study, which traces the evolution of ekphrasis in the early modern period, when description became central to the imperative to "delight" (*delectare*) and "move" (*movere*) readers. The first chapter in this section studies the reception of treatises on ekphrasis produced in Italy and in France in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, while the second examines late seventeenth-century French dictionaries (by Richelet, Furetière, Thomas Corneille, and others) to examine the reformulation of the term. Romagnino argues that the seventeenth century marks a moment of rupture in the his-

tory of ekphrasis; while classical rhetoricians primarily focus on the coupling of *enargeia* and ekphrasis, late seventeenth-century French lexicographers express a more sustained interest in hypotyposis and expand the lexical field of vivid, visual speech to include terms such as *peinture*, *description*, and *représentation*. The third chapter in this section, which is also the longest in the study, shifts from dictionaries to theoretical texts produced in Jesuit circles in Spain and France, treatises that influenced several generations of European authors. In addition to drawing on prior research by Marc Fumaroli on the place of the image in Jesuit writings, Romagnino notes an important connection between the capacity of hypotyposis to transport readers and listeners “outside of themselves” and the “ravishing” effect of the sublime in Pseudo-Longinus (124).

The third and final section presents a typography of ekphrasis to emphasize its persuasive power. Following the *Progymnasmata* and other treatises examined in preceding chapters, this section examines in detail each of the categories of description. The first chapter studies the description of people and moral character while the second centers on the description of actions and events as distinct from pure narration. The final chapter presents an overview of techniques to describe places and moments. In the Conclusion, Romagnino points to the shared etymology of the words *montrer* (to show, to bring to light) and *monstre* (monster) as indicative of the terminological murkiness surrounding ekphrasis—an imprecision that can paradoxically obscure the “clarity” central for descriptive speech to achieve its desired effects.

As is perhaps evident, Romagnino’s study matches the exhaustive nature of his subject matter. He draws on contemporary research in French, Italian, and English, and synthesizes an impressive number of treatises from the classical and early modern periods. Although the book slightly suffers from a focus on summary, it is important to mention that the author specifically sets out to “describe” the history of ekphrasis rather than to analyze its stakes (18). Specialists of literature might find certain sections to be too detailed or repetitive, while scholars of rhetoric will appreciate Romagnino’s precision. The author’s focus on minutiae also occasionally obscures his central contentions; this is the case for his discussion of the relative affective freight of ekphrasis and hypotyposis, for example. Indeed, the shift

from description to analysis in the concluding chapter will be most welcome for scholars interested in affect studies and in exploring the affective stakes of various types of word-images that can strike and even subjugate the reader. By analyzing a wide range of theoretical texts and rhetorical exercises devoted to description, Romagnino achieves his goal of “placing before the eye” the rich domain occupied by ekphrasis within the larger territory of descriptive writing.

Kathrina Ann LaPorta. *Performative Polemic: Anti-Absolutist Pamphlets and their Readers in Late Seventeenth-Century France*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2021. xiii + 322 pp. + 1 illus. \$39.95. Review by IVY DYCKMAN, INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR.

Focusing only on the two-word title of Kathrina Ann LaPorta's recently published book, the reader might gather that it concerns the current vitriolic attacks from partisan ideologists, who urge their audiences to adhere to and act on their spoken and written assertions of purported truths about a targeted governmental system that goes against their grain. Modern technology, especially social media, has opened up ideas and opinions to vast numbers of people all over the world, who, not that long ago, were restricted to receiving this sort of information by word of mouth or in print. Continuing on to the subtitle, the reader discovers that in her work, LaPorta is referring to the political assertions of the anti-Louis Quatorzean pamphlets distributed inside and outside of France in the latter part of the seventeenth century. To allege governmental injustices at any point in time requires not just objections but also calls for performing the necessary actions to realize justifiable change. Not surprisingly, her arguments and examples presented from selected texts have relevance to our present-day sociopolitical realities.

By way of introducing the illicit trade of anti-absolutist propaganda during this period, LaPorta opens her study with a compelling story. She describes how, in 1701, the defrocked priest Antoine Sorel smuggled several texts, known as *libelles* or *pamphlets*, into France. Pamphlet writing that either justified or condemned actions perpetrated by the French State had begun well before the advent of Louis