

Erin A. McCarthy. *Doubtful Readers: Print, Poetry, and the Reading Public in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. xviii + 277 pp. + 13 illus. \$85.00. Review by JOSHUA ECKHARDT, VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY.

This is an important book. It surveys printed books of English poems from 1590 to 1660, arguing for the importance and influence of the stationers who compiled, published, and sold them. It nevertheless poses a challenge to “print studies” and to most any scholarship based solely on printed books. It poses this challenge, in very small part, by referring to its printed evidence with greater specificity than usual, citing not only editions and issues by STC or Wing number but also individual copies by library and shelf mark (except when using an EEBO copy). Likewise, and less distinctively, McCarthy provides library shelf marks for manuscripts. More to the point, she has found manuscripts to cite more or less throughout the volume, even though she has focused this study on print. In my view, this is what makes McCarthy’s book so challenging to print studies: it can help demonstrate how much we have yet to learn, even about stationers and printers, from surviving manuscripts.

Although she cites more than thirty manuscripts, McCarthy gives to one manuscript in particular the introduction to a broad audience that it has long deserved. McCarthy has begun assembling this audience not only by writing a monograph for a top university press, but also by devoting entire chapters to Shakespeare and Lanyer and engaging a wide range of other literary figures as well: Michael Drayton, Samuel Daniel, Thomas Coryate, Mary Fage, Anne Bradstreet, George Herbert, William Crashaw, John Milton, and others. Students of Shakespeare’s poems and women’s writing cannot afford to overlook this study. Some of the former will find challenging McCarthy’s reassessment of William Jaggard’s *The Passionate Pilgrim* as a success in the context of sonnet sequences. The latter will appreciate McCarthy’s consideration of Richard Bonian’s decision to publish so many dedicatory poems at the start of *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*.

The manuscript at the heart of McCarthy’s book is the O’Flahertie manuscript (Harvard MS Eng. 966.5). The O’Flahertie manuscript

needs no introduction to Donne scholars, especially those who have made good use of *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* and its website, *Digital Donne*, with its full-color facsimile edition of this important source. Donne experts have long known that this overly inclusive collection of “The Poems of D. I. Donne / not yet imprinted” was apparently compiled by or for an anonymous stationer by the date on the title page, “12 October 1632.” McCarthy points out that this date falls “exactly one month after Marriot entered his copy in the Stationers’ Register” (158). Over several years, *Variorum* textual editors have assembled the evidence to show that John Marriot must have acquired the O’Flahertie manuscript after his printers had started, but before they had finished, printing the first edition of *Poems, by J.D.* in 1633. In McCarthy’s words, “the manuscript was completed too late to be of much use in the production of the 1633 edition” (158). *Variorum* editors have also confirmed that the O’Flahertie manuscript gave Marriot the texts and the generic categories that he needed to produce an entirely new second edition of *Poems, by J.D.* (1635). The O’Flahertie manuscript deserves to be better known beyond the community of Donne experts, particularly for what it can reveal and suggest about the activity of stationers and compositors in general. McCarthy has designed her book perfectly to make the manuscript better known. She has used her opening chapters to call on Shakespeareans and scholars of women’s writing; and she has ranged widely, drawing on non-canonical authors and miscellanies in both print and manuscript. By doing so, she has claimed a relatively broad readership for a work of early modern scholarship. I encourage any readers attracted to the opening chapters to keep reading, even and especially if they think that a Donne manuscript does not really pertain to their interests. It does. And McCarthy explains why.

McCarthy represents the first edition of Donne’s poems, printed in 1633, as “a loosely organized collection resembling a manuscript miscellany.” She recognizes that the roughly contemporaneous O’Flahertie manuscript, on the other hand, “divided the poems by genre in order to highlight Donne’s religious poems” (148–49). Paradoxically, it is the printed book that mixes its content like a manuscript miscellany, and the manuscript that organizes genres as readers might later expect of a printed book. McCarthy shows that

the mixture of contents in the 1633 printed edition concerned a number of the poets who wrote elegies on Donne—particularly the mixture of religious and other verse. She demonstrates that most of the “elegists had some familiarity with Marriot’s planned edition, and they propose reading Donne’s [secular or non-religious] poems in three ways, as sins to be repented (what I will call the repentance model), as necessary if less worthy preparatory exercises for Donne’s later achievements (the preparation model), and as evidence of the underlying unity of Donne’s habits of mind (the continuity model)” (153). McCarthy returns to these interpretive or biographical models throughout the rest of the study, as she explores the profound influence that Marriot’s editions of Donne had on subsequent printed books of English poems.

Having acquired the O’Flahertie manuscript, Marriot adopted its generic categories for the second edition of *Poems, by J.D.* (1635). Crucially, however, “he rearranged them.” As a result, “the O’Flahertie manuscript and the 1635 printed edition suggest different frameworks for interpreting Donne and his work.” The manuscript foregrounds the “Diuine Poems” that, in that location, emphasize “the most recent and, arguably, publicly recognizable stage of Donne’s career” (161). The 1635 edition, by contrast, is “organized roughly along a trajectory from profane to sacred,” even though “no extant manuscript organizes the poems in quite this way” (167). “The 1635 edition of *Poems* thus anticipated Walton’s *Life* and inaugurated a new, if not entirely straightforward, biographical account of Donne’s transformation from young rake to sober Dean.” The now-familiar contours of Donne’s life find their origin, then, not so much in Walton’s *Life* (nor even in Donne’s life) as in Marriot’s efforts to take advantage of the O’Flahertie manuscript for an entirely novel second edition. With its generic sections progressing from profane to sacred, “the second edition also established authorial biography as a means of understanding Donne’s poems” and provided “a deeply influential model for future poetic publications” (179).

McCarthy shows the influence of this edition on readings of Donne’s verse and on understandings of his biography, as well as in a wide range of seventeenth-century printed poetry books. In order to consider its influence on readings of Donne’s poems, consider

the contrast between the start of his “Songs and Sonnets” in the O’Flahertie manuscript and the 1635 edition. In the manuscript, this generic section begins with four of Donne’s valedictions, numbered one through four, as if they constitute “a sequence” (175). Marriot, though, decided to start his 1635 grouping of *Songs and Sonets* with “The Flea.” “The modern status of ‘The Flea’ as a quintessential Donne poem—if not *the* quintessential Donne poem—can thus be traced back to the second edition” and, in particular, to Marriot’s interest in “both the underlying unity of Donne’s life and career and the very kinds of poems he arguably needed to repent” (173). Consistent with McCarthy’s argument about stationers and print publishers, Marriot is the agent here, changing course and going his own way, with the benefit of a fellow stationer’s work. What makes the argument especially impressive is that McCarthy is sufficiently well-informed about manuscripts to draw that anonymous stationer’s labor into a study that champions print publication, even though the stationer’s work on Donne remains in manuscript.

At least as wide ranging as the first, the final chapter traces the profound and lasting, yet limited, influence that the second edition of Donne’s poems had on subsequent printed books of English verse. The chapter ranges through printed books of poetry by Beedome, Suckling, Cartwright, Waller, Lord North, Bradstreet, Henry King, Herrick, Jonson, Vaughan, and others. McCarthy’s point in this chapter is generally to demonstrate the remarkable extent of the influence that the second edition of Donne’s poems soon had. Nevertheless, she also delimits its influence. For instance, she admits that the editor of Corbett’s *Poëtica Stromata* “felt no need to emulate the structure of Donne’s *Poems*” (198). Furthermore, George Herbert’s *The temple* offers an exclusively religious model for poetry that is quite distinct from that of *Poems, by J.D.* Nevertheless, McCarthy shows that, even as he marketed Abraham Cowley as “Herbert’s *second, but equall*,” Humphrey Moseley ended up separating Cowley’s secular and religious poems in terms that are reminiscent of Donne in the 1635 edition. In the final example before the conclusion, Moseley’s 1645 edition of the *Poems of Mr. John Milton* serves as another delimiting example, resembling certain predecessors “only superficially” and resisting “biographical organization” (214). Ideally, McCarthy’s book will demonstrate

to students and scholars of print that manuscripts relevant to their interests survive and continue to be made accessible to them by the labor of librarians and other scholars.

Patricia Fumerton. *The Broadside Ballad in Early Modern England: Moving Media, Tactical Publics*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020. x + 469 512 pp. + 83 illus. \$89.95. Review by LAURA WILLIAMSON AMBROSE, SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE (NOTRE DAME, IN).

With *The Broadside Ballad in Early Modern England*, Patricia Fumerton has produced the singular volume on the broadside ballad in the early modern period. Part ballad primer, part exhaustively-researched history of ballad media, collectors, and culture, part theoretically-informed analysis of individual ballads and their publics, *The Broadside Ballad in Early Modern England* stands as a cornerstone for scholars interested in print history and ephemera, music history, performance studies, popular culture, and more. In focusing on the heyday of broadside ballads (1600–1650 and 1670–90), Fumerton's book spans the seventeenth century. But it also gestures both backward and forward, treating earlier sixteenth-century examples alongside eighteenth- and nineteenth-century collecting practices as a way to contextualize the seventeenth-century cultural milieu, refining our own contemporary understandings of the broadside ballad as a genre, a material object, and, indeed, a maker of early modern “publics.”

The ballad, Fumerton reminds us, was far more than mere cheap print: it was at once a multisensory performance, a printed record, and an art form. In this study, Fumerton sets out to “approximate something of the lived aesthetics and mobile makings of early modern English broadside ballad culture” and does so through an attention to what she calls the “many moving parts” of the ballad sheet: text and tune, woodcut illustration and typographical form, seventeenth-century paper and twenty-first-century digital scan (19). Ballad producers and consumers engaged with these “mobile component blocks, both intentionally and fortuitously” much like “hits” in an online web search (15). The interactions among language, music, and illustration