Both earthly and celestial spaces are at the heart of *Urania*, and Cavanagh has devoted much attention in her book to the exploration of them, especially geography’s intersection with gender, sexuality, and otherness. Typically in romances, spaces on the outer edges of Christianity, especially of Christian England, are sites for various spectacles of pleasure. As Cavanagh shows, Hungary and the eastern Mediterranean are two such locations. One would have liked a more attentive historicized explanation of why these locations are so central to *Urania* and more about how they may function as cultural signifiers within the narratives about subjectivity. (Hungary was seen as the easternmost frontier of Christianity and hence its protector from Turkish sieges; when the Turks assaulted Buda, bells tolled in Jacobean London in solidarity with the endangered fellow-Christians.) The eastern Mediterranean, dominated by the Turks, was the space of the failed colonial dream of early modern England, an ambivalent space of both dodgy diplomacy and flourishing trade with the Turks. What Cavanagh shows in this part of the book is that much of Wroth’s geography is not fantastical but topical and functional. Thus Cavanagh argues that the interrelationship of the “Eastern” and “Western” countries of the Mediterranean, through which Wroth emphasizes her conceptualization of a Christianized globe, influences Pamphilia’s shifting identification, first as one of the ladies of the West, and later as “The Eastern Star,” in contrast to Amphilanthus as the “Light of the Western World.” Those working in the area of early modern race and empire will find much useful information (and much to quibble with) in Cavanagh’s reading of these two phenomena, which overarch the narrative of *Urania*.

Although devoted to one such work only, this book should make us all turn to prose romances to attempt to complete, as much as is ever possible, the picture of some of the problems raised in Renaissance texts generally. In turn, that should help us rethink some of our views and arguments about gender, sexuality, East-West politics, and the nature and function of early fiction narratives. Cavanagh’s clear style, cogent arguments, and novel views have produced a book that we need about a text — and genre — that we should further explore.

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The relationship between language and architecture may be a subject of particular scholarly interest at present, but it is hardly a novel concern. Its provenance proves deep, engaging, and very relevant to European architectural theory as it developed in the Renaissance era. Renaissance writers, working both with and outwards from Vitruvius, recognized the relations between the two discourses as both parallel and interactive. The fact that current scholarship has come back to this observation
reflects both its enduring relevance, on the one hand, and substantial modern advances in the theoretical consideration of both elements, on the other. Six of the essays before us in this volume were first aired at a 1997 Courtauld Institute conference on Architecture and Language; five were added on thereafter. Together they represent a fair sampling of the sorts of questions now being asked about this problem, at least as it applies to European culture, from the central Middle Ages through the Baroque era. On the whole, the essays are concerned with how far one may carry the analogy in light of current critical theory, and to what extent, and in what ways, architecture may be construed as a language of national or cultural identity.

Though the opening four essays, by Peter Draper, Caroline Bruzelius, Lindy Grant, and Achim Timmermann, deal with periods that fall outside the nominal scope of this journal, they do provide some contextual comparisons and thus set the stage for some of what follows. Of those that fall into the Renaissance and post-Renaissance eras, two deal primarily with a single theorist or treatise. Caroline van Eyck reconsiders the relationship between architecture and language and rhetoric in Alberti, using his landmark *De re aedificatoria* to investigate the limits of his understanding of the architecture/language metaphor. She finds that, although Alberti did describe architecture as a legitimate art form capable of investigation, analysis, and verbal description, he did not go so far as to see in it the syntax or vocabulary which would allow him to consider it a language. Paul Davies and David Hemsohl collaborate in examining the work of Michele Sanmicheli, one of the key pioneers of the *all’antica* architecture, which came to characterize the Venetian High Renaissance. They show how the architecture of Vitruvius, Bramante and other writers — and also the literary theories of Baldasarre Castiglione and Pietro Bembo — allowed this style to flower. That ancestry produced, not an architecture as language, but rather architectural developments based in part on linguistic analysis. At least by implication, this essay raises the question of imitation as a form of stylistic communication, an issue that becomes central to Cammy Brothers’ essay, “Architecture, Texts, and Imitation in Late-Fifteenth- and Early-Sixteenth-Century Rome.”

Brothers reminds us, again going back to Alberti, that the virtues of imitation were heralded in literary discourse before they were recognized in theoretical writings on architecture. She then takes us from subsequent literary debates about the virtues of imitation to the realm of architecture, where an equally vigorous discussion emerged in the guise of texts, images, and actual buildings. Alina Payne (“Architects and Academies, Architectural Theories of *Imitatio* and the Literary Debates on Language and Style”) also dwells on the imitation vs. innovation equation. Beginning with Castiglione’s observation in his *Book of the Courtier* that, though imitation may be essential to the art of good writing, a judicious violation of grammatical rules also adds richness and splendor to the oration, she draws useful parallels between linguistic and architectural imitation.

The remaining essays move away from the direct concern with the Italian experience and on to new questions. Yves Pauwels, in “The Rhetorical Model in
the Formation of French Architectural Language in the Late Sixteenth Century: The Triumphal Arch as Commonplace," takes up the interesting parallel between commonplace books as a training device for young writers and the codices which came to function as architectural commonplace books for students of architecture. Neither conveyed the strict grammatical rules of their respective forms, but both conveyed the rhetoric that employed such rules, thus imparting an artistic quality to their respective discourses. Pauwels illustrates his point by discussing the writings of Philibert De L’Orme, and by considering the triumphal arch and the square as applications of the architectural commonplace.

The last two essays bring us to the British Isles and to two cultures whose grasp of Renaissance style was more distinct than most. Drawing on her masterful command of the life and work of Inigo Jones, Christy Anderson explores the relationship of Jacobean neo-classicism as created by Jones to the neo-classical poetry of the same era, and with it the work of Jones in architecture and of his friend George Chapman in poetry. She sees their work as producing stylistic and intellectual watersheds in both fields, and thus in English high culture itself. Finally, we have Deborah Howard’s important piece on “Languages and Architecture in Scotland, 1500–1600,” valuable in its own right, and also because it adds to one of the less explored architectural traditions of this era. Howard very usefully examines the dialogue in Renaissance Scotland between native elements of architecture and neo-classical elements imported from abroad. In addition, she makes the important distinction between architectural language and architectural style, arguing that while Scotland may have recognized diverse contemporary architectural languages from abroad, its native climate and culture provided a constant and necessary consideration in determining style. The point resonates nicely with Alina Payne’s observation about rules and exceptions in national cultural traditions.

Given the virtually infinite possibilities for exploring the relations between architecture and language in the broad period at hand, it is too much to expect that any volume devoted to that task will produce an entirely cohesive result. This collection is no exception. But these essays do represent some of the most interesting work being conducted in this area at the present time; the volume very usefully ignores traditional disciplinary boundaries, and its contributors seem without exception to be at the cutting edge of their fields.

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Alain Legros, qui a récemment beaucoup contribué par ses articles à la connaissance de l’écriture de Montaigne, publie ici, *mutatis mutandis*, sa thèse d’État de 1997. À la limite, on peut aborder ce magnifique ouvrage d’érudition et de réflexion un peu à la manière d’un excellent roman policier. Un acte a été commis ;