against overromanticized visions of a "paternal" past or dubious generalizations regarding government support for laissez-faire. Paul Minoletti notes significant variations between the West Country and the West Riding in terms of the impact of, and scale of resistance to, new machinery in the textiles industry, suggesting that early nineteenth-century parliamentary inquiries often reflected more sympathy for the plight of unskilled workers than has generally been appreciated. The collection ends with Jane Humphries's fascinating use of nearly three hundred working-class autobiographies to argue that the repeal of the Statute of Artificers in 1814 did surprisingly little to blunt the lasting attractions and advantages of apprenticeship, as well as (pace Adam Smith) its availability beyond the bounds of immediate family and trade connections. The real deathblow to apprenticeship may have been the pressure upon children, under the New Poor Law, to begin contributing to the household income as soon as possible.

By both intervention and nonintervention then, the British often found means to direct their economic practices in beneficial directions. Unlike those of many such volumes, the essays in this collection both cover a wide range of relevant subjects and are uniformly strong. It deserves a wide readership.

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The Franciad (1572). Pierre de Ronsard. Trans. Phillip John Usher. AMS Studies in the Renaissance 44. New York: AMS, 2010. lxvii + 272 pp. $162.50. ISBN 978-0-404-62344-9.

Reviewed by: James H. Dahlinger, SJ
Le Moyne College

This book is a fine contribution to Ronsard studies on many points; particularly, it is the first translation into English of Ronsard's unfinished epic poem about the hero Francus. The text Usher follows is that of 1572, which may be found online at *Gallica*. Usher explains that he has chosen this earliest text because in later editions Ronsard expunged some of his original images and concepts; thus the 1572 version gives us a more complete impression of his creative process. A second very important contribution provided by this book is Usher's introduction, the object of much of my discussion here and which thoroughly surveys attempts at epic poetry in Ronsard's time and also the modern criticism of the *Franciad*. Usher pauses over the reasons contemporary poets would have invested their talents in the epic medium. He cites François Rigolot's assertion that Ronsard's own goal was quite literally to "give birth to France" (xvi). Usher's treatment of his topic dovetails nicely with recent studies by François Rouget on Ronsard's activities in publishing and in otherwise promoting his works and his persona. Usher further notes, citing Ulrich Langer this time, that an ambient desire for a national epic came together with Ronsard's own career goals (xvii). Like other poets among his contemporaries, Ronsard expressed himself in all of the poetic forms then in favor.

At its appearance, the *Franciad* was well received. Usher notes the testimony to this effect of many contemporaries, notably the historian Belleforest, who cited book 4 of the poem a total of twenty times in his *Grandes Annales*, an act which embroiled him in not unjustifiable accusations of plagiarism (xxxiii). Like other critics—and the modern reader may wonder this as well—Usher is puzzled as to why the Francus portrayed by Ronsard would have been an apt model for the valiance and wisdom hoped for in Charles IX, yet the poem was dedicated to this king, who also ordered that the canon of all French kings be memorialized. Usher finds it most unlikely that the poem could contain veiled criticisms,

either of the Queen Mother in the guise of the triumphant Cybele, or of Charles, as Ror sard was devoted to the service of the Valois. When Charles IX died the agonizing deat depicted in such lurid terms by d'Aubigné, the poet continued work on the epic, yet it wa to remain unfinished. Usher reviews the discussion as to the poem's unfinished state. Ror sard himself had been ordered by the king to compose in *alexandrins* as opposed to th less arduous decasyllable. But what we have is a fine attempt on the part of the chief of th *Pléiade* to render his Homeric and Virgilian themes in the service of France and its legenc ary Trojan foundations. Of course, critics have not been lacking who attacked the poer with its exhaustingly heavy references as a carpenter's tacking together a variety of differer "shards" (li).

Usher's painstaking translation efforts in blank verse read more like prose in mar places, as his objective is really to provide both scholars and students with as meticulous translation as possible of the 1572 text. He masterfully renders Ronsard's images: the tirac of the angry Neptune in book 2 (vv. 15–58) represents an especially successful effort. Ush er's excellent notes capture Ronsard's sources and offer in places a comparison with the us of some of these sources and images by other poets, his contemporaries. While it can b agreed by most that the *Franciad* is not a great work of art or by any means among Ror sard's finest works, it is still one of the most pleasing contemporary efforts at epic by or of the French early modern period's finest poets. Usher's very impressive volume is a fir introduction to Ronsard for students as well as a very significant aid to scholars. This fir translation contributes most helpfully to our continuing discussion about Ronsard's ow composing and publishing practices.

Genesis and the Chemical Philosophy: True Christian Science in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Michael T. Walton. AMS Studies in the Renaissance 45. New York: AMS, 2011. 172 pp. $92.50. ISBN 978-0-404-62345-6.

Reviewed by: David Porreca
University of Waterloo, Canada

This book offers a study on the use of the book of Genesis by early modern scier tists belonging to the Paracelsian school of thought. The author argues that the accou of creation contained in the sacred text provided those scientists with an essential piece intellectual framework within which they elaborated their theories of nature as well as the experimental endeavors.

A priori, the number of occasions when Paracelsus and his disciples referred to Ge esis is fairly limited, and this is reflected in the succinctness of this study. The 153 pages writing include twelve full-page illustrations of frontispieces and engravings from the var ous works under discussion; a chapter of theological background reaching back to Phi of Alexandria; a chapter of alchemical and esoteric background that reaches back to Pla and the Hermetic texts; four chapters proceeding in roughly chronological order beginnir with Paracelsus and ending with Kepler and Newton; finally, an epilogue where the auth attempts an assessment of the use of Genesis as a source for scientific work in the time sin the early modern era.

This division of material—ultimately little more than half of the book is devoted early modern material treated in depth—leads the reader to question the intended auc ence of this work. Early modernists at all familiar with the material in either of the tv background chapters will find them to be superficial and selective in what they present. Tl