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**Maddalena Signorini. 'Sulle tracce di Petrarca. Storia e significato di una prassi scrittoria.' Biblioteca dell'«Archivum Romanicum». Serie I: Storia, Letteratura, Paleografia, 500. Florence: Olschki, 2019.**

Eva Del Soldato  
*University of Pennsylvania*

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narrative structure in the *Decameron*. Furthermore, it is a step towards the modern, substituting the knight of medieval romance with a modern range of merchants, pirates, cargo, and riches. “Il mare sostituisce la foresta e la novella abbandona l’obbligo di concentrarsi su un protagonista unico.” Readers of the *Decameron* will find her analysis of individual novelle to be compelling and convincing, especially the sections on Alatiel, Zinevra, Paganino, and Torello. In the second part of the chapter, Morosini demonstrates her deep knowledge of Boccaccio’s entire corpus, extending her reading into Boccaccio’s humanist and classicizing Latin works: the *Genealogie deorum gentilium* and the *De mulieribus claris*.

The third chapter is an essay on Petrarch’s Mediterranean that identifies two opposite poles in his use of the sea. At one end there is the *Itinerarium*, in which Petrarch uses his friend’s journey to the Holy Land as a pretense for describing the geography of Italy in great detail. At the other end is the *Canzoniere*, especially *Rvf.* 189, the sonnet *Passa la nave mia colma d’oblio*. Pushing back on Picone’s allegorical reading of the sonnet, Morosini reaches the conclusion that in Petrarch’s vernacular lyric poetry, “*mare* e *Francesco* sono sinonimi.”

Compared to the rich analysis of the *Decameron* and Boccaccio’s other works, Dante and Petrarch fade into the background, becoming the foils to its true protagonist: Boccaccio’s innovative use of the Mediterranean as a narrative structure. This shortcoming, if it can be called such, is one that the book wears on its sleeve. The author readily acknowledges Boccaccio as the centripetal force for this project, and as such prepares the reader well for what is an excellent study of the *Decameron*’s use of the sea.

A few editorial oversights, such as the citation of *Convivio* in place of the *De vulgari eloquentia* (p. 57) and the 30<sup>th</sup> canto of *Paradiso* instead of the 33<sup>rd</sup> (p. 143), are more than forgiven on account of the elegant presentation of 77 figures (primarily miniatures from illuminated manuscripts) in vivid color that not only illustrate Morosini’s arguments, but serve as objects of her effective reading.

*Il mare salato* offers a compelling reading of Boccaccio as a literary innovator who uses the Mediterranean as a tool for his narrative. Thus Morosini’s “Mediterranean philology” is successful as an analysis of the sea that contributes directly to our reading of the text. Morosini captures the complexities of the Mediterranean: the dangers and opportunities it poses to those who cross it, and the wide expanse of experiences it provides to those who write it. In addition to scholars working on the Mediterranean in Italian literature, this study will be useful to anyone interested in Boccaccio’s narrative techniques and innovation.

Alejandro Cuadrado, *Columbia University*

Maddalena Signorini.

*Sulle tracce di Petrarca. Storia e significato di una prassi scrittoria.*

Biblioteca dell’«Archivum Romanicum». Serie I: Storia, Letteratura, Paleografia, 500. Florence: Olschki, 2019. XII + 224 pp. €28.

Few authors have a close relationship with their own writing as Petrarch, and classic studies like those by Armando Petrucci and Albinia de la Mare have proven that Petrarch's graphic choices represented an important part of his intellectual program. This was made clear also by the annotations he left in the books he owned. At the center of Maddalena Signorini's splendid volume is a specific corpus of Petrarch's annotations: thirty-nine traces (*tracce*) he left on the flyleaves of several of his books. Signorini classified all of them according to an efficient scheme.

The operative word here is precisely "traces." Scholars have suggested to use this word in a larger, more general sense, to replace "sources": traces are what historians use to talk about the past. And traces, as an anthropological attitude, are typically associated to the work and the method of Carlo Ginzburg. Signorini's traces have instead a more technical and restricted sense of adventitious written records which appear in places not originally conceived for writing, according to an use suggested originally by Petrucci and Alfredo Stussi. Yet, this does not mean necessarily that they were extemporaneous writings. The story of the term is the focus of the first chapter of the book, in which Signorini shows how "trace" has been gradually accepted and better defined in this technical meaning. Particularly interesting are the pages on autograph texts, those in which the author is not merely dictating, but writing his own words, or at least correcting them (11), and that after the thirteenth century are the norm rather than the exception.

In the following chapter Signorini introduces the corpus at the center of her study, Petrarch's "traces", those texts he left in the flyleaves of his books (or, to be more precise, in the flyleaves that have arrived to us: the corpus was certainly larger). The fact itself that Petrarch was the owner of the books in which he left these records suggest that they corresponded to a precise will, and not to an extemporaneous action. In many cases they were actually "depositories of memory" (16). The unsuccessful plans Petrarch had to donate his library to Venice might be read in connection with many of his traces. Signorini divides them in three categories: biographical, exegetical, and of service. These latter are the most common, with 16 occurrences, and report pieces of information about the book they are drafted in, being comparable to notes of possession. Yet, Petrarch did not want to proclaim himself the owner of the book by inserting them, rather, as Signorini convincingly argues, he wanted to tell the story of his book collection. The most intriguing category is the biographical one, with a special mention for the flyleaf of Par. Lat. 2923, already studied by Pierre de Nolhac, and the *Virgilio Ambrosiano*. Those in the third group, the exegetical one, are traces in a less proper way, since they establish an explicit connection with the content of the book in which they are recorded. Reflecting in terms of time and space, Signorini shows how all these traces were part of Petrarch's project to fashion his persona and his biography, confirming the association between the traces and the public destination that he wished for his library. This chapter includes a paleographic section that beautifully guides the reader into Petrarch's graphic experimentations, and a discussion about the positions of the traces in the page and the reasons behind Petrarch's choices.

The third chapter narrows vertically (61) the focus on two traces, the trace on the death of Laura in the abovementioned *Virgilio Ambrosiano*, and the distichs at the end of the commentary on Macrobius (BL, Harley 5204). After Petrarch's

death, the Laura-trace was copied at least 82 times, being occasionally translated in the vernacular because of its connection with the *Canzoniere* and the *Trionfi* (and it was not the only Petrarchean trace to have such a vibrant afterlife). This reception caused a shift in the meaning of the brief text, which lost its original moralizing tone. The Harleyean trace, instead, is notable because includes Petrarch's name, offering Signorini the opportunity to deepen her discussion on Petrarch's authoriality.

The book is completed by a treasurable final section, in which Signorini offers an edition of the texts, chronologically organized. Crucially, the edition is accompanied by short commentaries and photographic reproductions which further allow to directly appreciate the brilliance of Signorini's analysis.

This is a refined piece of scholarship, wonderfully written and researched, that enriches our understanding of Petrarch as a writer and as an author.

Eva Del Soldato, *University of Pennsylvania*

Simon Gilson.

*Reading Dante in Renaissance Italy. Florence, Venice and the 'Divine Poet'*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. XIV + 434 pp. \$120.

*Leggere Dante a Firenze. Da Boccaccio a Cristoforo Landino (1350-1481)*.

Trans. Giulia Gaimari. Ed. Anna Pegoretti.

Frecce, 286. Rome: Carocci, 2019. 333 pp. €28.

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Fifteen years ago, Simon Gilson gave new freshness to studies on Dante's reception in the early modern age with his *Dante and Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). In that dense and harmonious volume, Gilson analyzed Dante's fortune between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries through studying how several generations of educated Florentine citizens had absorbed and re-used the figure of the poet in the city's cultural context. Italian readers will therefore be delighted to see the first Italian translation of this classic of contemporary Dante criticism finally published. The book released by Carocci does not only contain the translated text of the 2005 volume. The pages of this elegant book from the bright red cover contain an updated version of the work, superbly edited by Anna Pegoretti, which takes into account the most recent publications on the reception of Dante's work. This element makes Gilson's work even more precious, especially if one considers the extraordinary development in recent years of studies on Dante's reception in the early modern age.

Shortly before the release of the Italian edition of *Dante and Renaissance Florence*, Gilson provided his audience with another fundamental text on Dante's fortune—a work that is not only the ideal complement to his previous volume, but also the most complete historical tool on the intricate reception of Dante's works in the “Century of Petrarch.” *Reading Dante in Renaissance Italy* represents an