

Torquato Tasso. *Rhymes of Love*. Intro. and trans. Maria Pastore Passaro. Eds. Maria Henry and Susette Acocella. *Legas Italian Poetry in Translation* 14. Ottawa: Legas, 2011. Pp. 213. ISBN 1-8819-0155-6 (paperback) n.p.

Just as Max Wickert's 2009 verse translation of the *Gerusalemme Liberata* provided English readers with a fresh sense of Torquato Tasso's powerful epic voice, Maria Pastore Passaro's recent selective translation helps further communicate Tasso's innovative imagery and stylistic agility to modern readers of English. Passaro's translation contains 111 of the poet's 204 amorous lyrics, along with 69 of his 294 "extravagant" lyrics and those composed at the request of others.

The volume is preceded by a translator's "Introduction", a "Biographical Note" and a note "About the Translation." Passaro's introductory essay helps situate the reader in the environment of late sixteenth-century Petrarchism and outlines the relationship of Tasso's lyrics to Petrarch's *Canzoniere* and to Dante's *Vita Nuova*. The piece raises a number of salient points on Tasso's love lyrics. Passaro draws attention to the doubling of the love-object along with what she identifies as the "hermeneutics of desire" propelled by jealousy that these *Rime* provide. She provocatively suggests a polemical relationship between Tasso's love lyrics and Neoplatonic philosophy. Despite these insights, however, Passaro's introduction is too brief to allow for in-depth analysis or a discussion of the available scholarly literature.

Although her "Biographical Note" on the poet is a succinct introduction to Tasso's life, it relies heavily on dated biographies, such as those of Angelo Solerti and C.P. Brand, whose romantic reconstructions of the poet's madness and all-consuming love for Leonora d'Este have been challenged by recent scholarship. While her biography details the poet's writing career, it neglects to mention the poet's philosophical engagement and his writing of twenty-seven *Dialoghi*. Late romantic influences are also present in Passaro's note "About the Translation", where she claims that Tasso's lyrics can be read as "a sort of double diary - a sentimental chronicle of his life and the document of his apprenticeship" (21). Such identification of the poetic voice with that of the historical Tasso discounts the possibility of a self-consciously constructed lyric voice that cannot wholly be identified with the voice of the historical poet, a dis-identification already active in Petrarch's own *Canzoniere*.

The organization of the *Rime* themselves is, at times, confusing. They are split into three parts: the *Rime* for Lucrezia Bendidio, those for Laura Peperara, and a combination of "extravagant" love lyrics with love poems written at the request of others. Passaro maintains the internal structure of the *Rime Amoroze* as they have traditionally been published. While she does note that all three sections are based on Francesco Flora's 1952 *Aminta e Rime* (reprinted 1976), she neglects to mention that these poems are a selection of a larger corpus. No table is provided to coordinate Flora's re-numbering of the poems with the 1898 Solerti edition or standard Osanna edition of 1591, rendering her edition difficult for academic use.

The strengths of this edition lie in Passaro's translation, which is often quite sensitive to the original text. She mentions at the outset that her main goal in translating the poems was to "help readers understand the original text" through "a ver-

sion as faithful to the letter and spirit of the original as modern literary English allows" (21). The facing-page translation is particularly useful for such comparisons with the original Italian. Although the rhyme is not maintained in the English, Passaro's sensitivity to Tasso's imagery and poetic skill makes for an elegant English rendition. For example, in poem I.xiv where the poet "Praises his lady's bosom", the first line, "Quella candida via sparsa di stelle" is translated "That milky way bestrewn with countless stars" (38-39). Such a translation augments and even completes Tasso's imagery while remaining quite faithful to the original. Another example of her ingenious ability to render Tasso's voice in English occurs in poem II.ii where the fifth line, "Ma, quando l'alba poi la notte sgombra", becomes "But then, when daybreak edges the night" (110-111). There are, however, a few rare occasions where her translation is awkward and stumbling, such as in poem I.xliv, where she translates "la virtù smarrita" of line 6 with "off-wandering man-force" (70-71), or in the tenth and eleventh lines of I.xx, where "dal fiorito grembo / parte sentia spirar gigli e viole" becomes "From her flowered womb, / I felt wafting fragrance of lilies and violets" (44-45). Passaro's choice to translate her own footnotes, having them both on the English and Italian pages, is somewhat excessive and redundant. These notes, furthermore, are often taken directly from Flora who is neither cited in the notes nor listed in any of the introductory material as their author. What's more, there appear to be several misprints. One of these is the year Tasso began attending the University of Padua: the text reads 1570, though it should be 1560 (18). Another is the reference to "Paolo Solerti" as a "devoted chronicler of Tasso's sentimental life"; the text should read "Angelo Solerti" (12).

In short, Passaro is to be praised for her beautiful renditions of many of Tasso's amorous lyrics. Despite such strengths, however, this edition suffers from dated introductory essays, footnotes that do not take current scholarship into account (except Passaro's own essays) and the lack of a coordinating table and bibliography. Nonetheless, the elegance of Passaro's translation and the facing-page Italian makes this edition a suitable introduction to Tasso's amorous rhymes for a broader public. Now that we have some of Tasso's *Rime Amoroze* translated into English, their role as an important intertext for the Petrarchism present in both the *Aminta* and the *Gerusalemme Liberata* emerges with greater clarity. It is to be hoped that these relationships will be further explored by future scholarship.

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Il celebre ritratto di Federico da Montefeltro e di suo figlio Guidobaldo, dipinto intorno al 1477 e di attribuzione ancora dubbia, dà l'avvio ad un libro particolarmente intrigante e il cui argomento è ancora poco studiato in Italia: l'idea della