Giuseppe Savoca. *L'infinito e il punto. Letture di poesia tra Ungaretti e Cattafi*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2011. Pp 164. ISBN 9788822261182. € 19.80.

In *L'infinito e il punto*, Giuseppe Savoca examines the concept of the infinite and the spatial point in four twentieth century poets—Ungaretti, Saba, Montale, and Cattafi—and two critics—Muscetta and Marchese. It is his belief that the figures at the core of his investigation “abbiano avuto tutti a che fare con questi concetti, a partire da Leopardi, e che dietro i [suoi] punti di vista [...] ci stia spesso il Pascal filosofo-poeta dell'infinito e del punto” (7). Along with Petrarch, Pascal, and Leopardi, to whose theories and influence Savoca returns time and time again, a range of other European intellectuals such as Schleiermacher and Baudelaire compose the complex intellectual context in which Savoca places his analysis.

The volume begins with a preface and seven pages of work by the poets studied. While this short anthology contains only two poems by Ungaretti, five by Saba, and seven by Montale, there are nineteen by Cattafi, a disproportionality for which Savoca does not account. The rest of the book is divided into two sections and nine main chapters. In the first section, “Lecture,” are three chapters focusing on Ungaretti, two on Saba, one on Montale, and two on Cattafi. In the second section, “Per due lettori,” are one on Muscetta and one on Marchese. All of the chapters are versions of essays and/ or lectures that have been published elsewhere.

Savoca begins his *lecture* with an investigation of the direct and indirect influence of Pascal on Ungaretti's work, tracing Ungaretti's exposure to and use of Pascal beginning with “il principale mediatore tra Ungaretti e Pascal” (17), Fortunato Strowski, and ending with Ungaretti's papers on what he terms “Leopardi pascoliano” (23). He continues his analysis of Ungaretti in the chapter “Ungaretti 'girovago' tra deserto e terra promessa,” which looks at manifestations of the “viaggiatore, nomade e girovago” (29) in Ungaretti's poetry and prose. Savoca then returns more explicitly to the topic of the present volume with “Verso l'infinito: Ungaretti tra Pascal e Leopardi.”

The next two essays examine Saba. The first, “Saba, Petrarca e la *paura di ripeter se stessi*,” explores Saba's affirmation of the necessity, “se non si vuole essere poeti veri e originali, di non rifuggire dalla opportunità di ripetersi” (57). Although the title of the chapter would suggest that it limits discussion to the role of Petrarca in Saba's literary process, other intellectuals, especially Leopardi, also figure prominently. “Saba e il *Canzoniere* tra i suoi padri Petrarca e Leopardi,” continues points of investigation touched on in the previous essay. After four pages addressing more general questions, the bulk of the chapter elaborates “un tema preciso quale quello della ricerca che il poeta fa dei suoi padri nella poesia” (77).

Next is the chapter on Montale. In what is in large part a detailed analysis of the poem “Voce giunta con le folaghe,” Savoca offers “alcune proposte per l'interpretazione di un testo chiave” that, he holds, “si presenta come centrale nell'universo della *Bufera*” (92). The following essay looks at linguistic and thematic elements of Cattafi's poetry inspired by his contact with Montale. As Savoca states, “centrale e decisivo per la formazione di Cattafi è l'incontro con Montale a cui, storicamente, nella linea di una poesia dell'oggetto-occasione o del correlativo

oggettivo, ma anche, per usare una formula di Raboni, del ‘pessimismo esistenziale,’ è da ascrivere il profilo globale dell’opera cattaiana” (119). The final essay in the section of *Lecture* is entitled “Un ‘punto d’infinito’ per la geometria di Cattafi.”

The two chapters composing the last eighteen pages of this volume shift focus to literary critics. In “Muscetta e l’infinito da Leopardi a Baudelaire,” Savoca sets himself the task of appraising Baudelaire “attraverso il lungo lavoro di comprensione e traduzione che Muscetta vi ha dedicato, si direbbe, a partire proprio da Leopardi” (140). The Leopardi who is at the core of Muscetta’s work as translator and critic and who serves as a kind of intermediary for Muscetta’s interpretation of Baudelaire is, Savoca holds, European. Following nine pages of perceptive analysis, Savoca concludes that “Muscetta si colloca volontariamente al di qua del grande tema dell’infinito, che lo tenta e lo spaventa, e nel quale non si avventura esplicitamente per paura di perdersi” (148). The book’s last chapter considers Marchese’s writings on Montale. Savoca examines in the three major published collections containing these “articoli e saggi, capitoli di storia letteraria, letture, edizioni e commenti” (149), summarizing each while also providing an original analysis of Marchese’s reflections on Montale. The volume closes with a useful index.

As can be the case with a collection of essays written for various purposes and printed in various venues, *L’infinito e il punto* lacks strict cohesion among its individual parts. Although the chapters are loosely held together by the themes indicated in the work’s title, and while Savoca’s observations are consistently insightful, the author makes significant jumps in topic from chapter to chapter, sometimes straying slightly from his stated goals. However, this potential weakness is also a great strength, since the volume’s broad scope allows Savoca to incorporate analysis of a wide range of authors and works, making the collection of use not just to scholars occupied with the ideas of the infinite and the spatial point, but also to those interested in any of the individuals studied. Savoca furthermore intelligently and effectively shows how important Italian intellectuals interacted with and fit into the larger European context. Indeed, by themselves and as a whole, the essays offer a valuable and relatively accessible contribution to the study of twentieth century Italian poetry and literary criticism.

KATHLEEN GAUDET
University of Toronto

Robin Healey. *Italian Literature before 1900 in English Translation. An Annotated Bibliography 1929-2008*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2011. Pp. 1150. ISBN 9781442642690. \$ 150.

It is difficult to challenge the description of this work, contained in one of the endorsements on the book cover, as a “monumental achievement” because the scope, detail, organization, precision, and sheer mass of Healey’s bibliography is enormously impressive. The author’s sources, objectives, and methodology are presented in a generous, elegantly written Introduction, and the volume contains a number of very useful indexes: Author Index (62 pages), Title Index in both Italian