tema nei suoi rapporti con la corrente francescana, lasciandoci così con il desiderio di saperne di più sui rapporti tra Dante e San Bonaventura nell'intendere l'esperienza divina come incontro affettivo.

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Thomas E. Peterson. *Petrarch's Fragmenta: The Narrative and Theological Unity of Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016. ISBN 978-1-4875-0002-3.

The central problematic of Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (*RVF*) is right there in the title: in what sense do these "fragments," the various poems of which the *Canzoniere* is comprised, cohere into a unified work of art? No one who reads the *Fragmenta* can avoid the feeling that the disparate elements must be participating in a larger story, but the lack of a simple, universally convincing account of what that story might be, testifies to the extraordinary vitality and autonomy of each individual poem. In *Petrarch's Fragmenta*, Thomas Peterson seeks to remedy this lack, proposing a complex narrative scheme in which Petrarch does not so much repent of his love for Laura as consecrate it. Thus read, the *RVF* become a kind of spiritual autobiography analogous to Augustine's *Confessions*, with the notable difference that Petrarch's *itinerarium mentis* does not require him to forsake the world. To the contrary, where the Augustinian tradition would tend to distinguish between temporal and eternal goods, between the City of Man and the City of God, Peterson finds in Petrarch's lyric a way to bridge the gap. Drawing on the Humanist idea of poetry as a means of shaping culture, Peterson interprets the *Fragmenta* as an ethical exemplum with broad social and spiritual applications, from the crucial role of poetic language in settling the passions, to a grand conception of civilization as "humanity willing itself towards the kingdom of God" (206).

The implications of Peterson's thesis are wide-ranging and significant, but the chief burden of his monograph is to propose a coherent narrative for Petrarch's lyrics. Dividing the *Canzoniere* into seven slightly-overlapping thematic sequences that range in size from 10 poems to around 80, he devotes a chapter to each. This narrative architecture for the *RVF* is, to my mind, the most fruitful and

thought-provoking element of the study: whilst somewhat arbitrary, the divisions afford Peterson sufficient scope both for close readings of individual poems, which he does well, and for identifying interrelated poetic clusters and miniature sequences, which he does even better: eddies and ripples within the general stream of Petrarch's narrative. Even if one felt the need to quibble with the collocation of a particular poem, Peterson's proposed scheme is enormously useful simply as a framework for talking about the *Canzoniere*. Peterson excels at juxtaposing several different levels of perspective, considering the stanza in light of the poem that contains it, then considering that poem in light of the intermediate sequence in which it is found, and contextualizing that sequence in turn within the macro-text. His detailed readings of the individual poems are well-considered and at times provocative, but it is his ear for these broader, intermediate sequences, combined with the discipline to track them across the whole *Canzoniere*, that makes this book invaluable.

Peterson makes another important contribution to the world of English-speaking Petrarch scholars in drawing widely on recent Italian criticism. The argument is flexible and covers a lot of ground, from Augustinian metaphysics to Franciscan spirituality, and every page gives evidence of erudition carefully distilled.

Despite its manifest virtues, it must be admitted that Peterson's overall thesis is not wholly persuasive. To domesticate the *selva* of Petrarch's lyric is a mighty task, and it is no slur on the critic to remark that the lyrics have a way of resisting even the most determined attempts to pin them down. Peterson's is a large and generous theory, encompassing the whole of a long and complex work, and it suffers the disadvantages of such theories in accounting for a wide diversity of evidence. There are moments when the argument skips a step, when something that really ought to be demonstrated is merely asserted. To cite one example, Peterson advances the claim that a biblically-informed reading of "Amor, se vuo' ch'i' torni al giogo anticho" (270) would perceive that the yoke (*giogo*) alludes not to the tyranny of Eros, but to the grace by which the Christian follows Christ ("Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me [...] for my yoke is easy and my burden light," Matthew 11:29–30). This would revise Petrarch's view of Love from tyrannical idol to a "celestial figure [...] who is assisting the subject in his reconciliation with the past" and thus furnish a basis for later claims that Petrarch's love has been elevated—without renunciation—beyond the danger of idolatry (173). Yet far from introducing us to a redeemed figure of Love, "Amor, se vuo'" seems, rather,

to celebrate the subject's recovered liberty from Love's power due to Laura's death, which protects Petrarch from the snare of her physical beauty. Moreover, the *giogo antico* is a major trope in the *Canzoniere* and overwhelmingly a negative symbol of ignominy and bondage (e.g., *RVF* 28.61–62). There may well be sound reasons in this instance to supplant that connotation, but Peterson does not supply them.

Nevertheless, it remains clear that Petrarch's *RVF* are, if polysemous, equally a unified and theologically engaged narrative, the shape of which tells us much about both Petrarch himself and the Humanists who were his great legacy. If Peterson's attempt at a comprehensive analysis falls somewhat short, I suspect that the categories he proposes will inflect the ongoing critical conversation in important ways. Should we ever resolve the problem of Petrarch's *Fragmenta*, it will be because we stood upon such shoulders.

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Unn Falkeid and Aileen A. Feng, editors. *Rethinking Gaspara Stampa in the Canon of Renaissance Poetry*. London-New York: Routledge Limited, 2016. Pp. 236.

Gaspara Stampa (1523?–1554) was a renowned poetess, musician, and singer who made a strong impact on sixteenth-century Italian culture but who, unfortunately, was forgotten after her death. Her poetry was republished in the eighteenth century, yet her work was underestimated and presented in a distorted way; her poetry and personal story were exploited through myths and prejudices. Only in the last few decades has Stampa's poetry been carefully studied and interpreted, using a critical approach and a textual analysis through the social, cultural, and intellectual context in which it was produced. *Rethinking Gaspara Stampa in the Canon of Renaissance Poetry* is a praiseworthy effort by an international group of interdisciplinary scholars who each employ different methodologies to investigate Stampa's poetry. This volume aims to offer a more authentic interpretation of Stampa's lyrical verses and to restore this long-misunderstood and neglected author to her proper place among the poets of the Renaissance.

The book is a collection of 10 chapters grouped into three parts. The first part, "The Sublime," begins with an essay by Jane Tylus, who analyzes the relations