duzione stessa. In questo modo si semplifica e si razionalizza la materia, tenendo ben distinti i personaggi che compaiono negli Ordinamenti, nelle Provvisioni e nelle Riformazioni da quelli, che al comune studioso di letteratura italiana interessano certo di più, che ci vengono presentati nella biografia.

Luca Azzetta annuncia, come si è accennato, ulteriori sviluppi delle indagini su temi particolari che nelle pagine introduttive a questo volume ha potuto solo accennare o che non sono ancora arrivate a un punto di maturazione sufficiente per un'esposizione in sede scientifica; l'auspicio è che anche i nuovi contributi si mantengano al livello di questo volume.

EDOARDO FUMAGALLI

Università di Friburgo (Svizzera)

NOTE

¹ Naturalmente si tratta di testi già studiati: "Legge suntuaria fatta dal Comune di Firenze l'anno 1355 e volgarizzata nel 1356 da Andrea Lancia", pubblicata da P. Fanfani, *L'Etruria* 1 (1851): 366-382 e 429-443; A. Rossi, "I nomi delle vesti in Toscana durante il Medioevo". *Studi di lessicografia italiana* 11 (1991): 5-123. Si è scelto questo esempio non per la novità, ma per l'importanza dell'oggetto.

² Lo studioso obbliga spesso il lettore a un esercizio di ricomposizione e interpretazione dei dati: nel caso della data di nascita, per esempio, non svolge il sillogismo, ma scrive: "Nato nell'ultimo decennio del sec. XIII (*terminus ante quem* è il 1297, e non si dovrà retrocedere di molto), Andrea di ser Lancia, o *Lance*, come si firma abitualmente in latino e in volgare, compare attivo come notaio a partire dal 1315: il primo documento con data certa da lui rogato che sia sopravvissuto è costituito dall'atto di vendita ASFi —cioè Archivio di Stato di Firenze— *Diplomatico, Cestello*, 3 giugno 1315" e solo in nota aggiunge l'elemento essenziale dell'età minima richiesta a un figlio o fratello di notaio per accedere alla professione (10-11 e n. 5). Si tratta di un piccolo neo, largamente compensato da una scrittura precisa ma aperta e piana, diventata oggi rara, purtroppo, tra gli studiosi di queste discipline.

Petrarch, Francesco. On Religious Leisure. Ed. and trans. by Susan S. Shearer, intro. by Ronald G. Witt. New York: Italica Press, 2002. Pp. xxv, 168 US.\$15 ISBN 0-934977-11-9

This is the first English translation of Petrarch's *De otio religioso*, an exordium to the life of religious leisure and contemplation which offers the reader a fresh view into the spiritual world of fourteenth-century humanism. Composed some time during Lent 1347 (11 February to 29 March), Petrarch continued to add to the text as late as 1356 before dispatching the final treatise to his brother, Gherardo, in 1357. In his introduction to the translation, Ronald Witt outlines the changing attitudes towards '*otium*' (leisure) from pagan to medieval times in order to contextualize Petrarch's treatise on religious leisure. As in his *De vita solitaria* (1346), Petrarch sought to legitimate his manner of life by envisioning the *otium* practised in Vacluse as continuous with the *otium* first identified with the monastic life by Augustine. Witt writes: "[Petrarch] seems to have felt compelled to set

pagan *otium*, which envisioned the life of retirement as a means of reaching moral perfection, within a Christian context where it became the way of salvation" (xiv). In *De otio*, Petrarch contrasts pagan and Christian cultures, aiming to affirm the absolute condemnation of the pagans, regardless of the virtues they possessed, because of the incapacity of pagan learning "to contribute to moral reformation intrinsic to the salvific process" (xvii).

The treatise begins by praising the life of religious leisure, for only in religious leisure is the soul most receptive to God's word (3-12). After providing an extensive series of biblical quotations designed to furnish guidance and comfort to Christians (15-19), Petrarch launches into the body of the work. This he formally divides into three parts according to the three major enemies of the soul, demons (24-78), the world (81-91), and the flesh (94-112). Given that these sources of sin are so interconnected, however, there is much overlap between these three parts. The remainder of the work is devoted to a comparison of ancient pagan religion with Christianity (115-148).

Understandably the *De otio religioso*, with its all-embracing condemnation of the life in the world and a glorification of withdrawal from it, was not popular with later humanists. As well, stylistically, Petrarch's Latin is less classical than most of his other works. It is no wonder, then, as Witt points out, that the treatise has aroused little interest on the part of scholars. There is still no critical edition of it. The present translation is based on the edition by Giuseppe Rotondi (Vatican City, 1958). Susan S. Schearer has produced a very good translation of the text into modern English, the result of eight years of work. Petrarch's treatise, divided into two books, has now been further subdivided into chapters by the translator. Schearer's translation, *On Religious Leisure*, along with Witt's introduction, which provides the historical context to the treatise, will be an excellent resource for scholars and, as her stated aim, will help "amplify our understanding of Petrarch's humanism." The translation comes at a welcome time as 2004 marks the 700th anniversary of Petrarch's birth.

MILTON KOOISTRA
Centre for Medieval Studies
University of Toronto

Ariosto Today. Contemporary Perspectives. Eds. Donald Beecher, Massimo Ciavolella, Roberto Fedi. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2003. xi, 237 pp. ISBN: 0-8020-2967-1 (cloth). \$50 Can.

This collection of essays provides critical approaches to Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and careful analyses of his lyrics and comedies. Eleven scholars put the *Orlando Furioso* in dialogue with Ariosto's other texts and works by modern and contemporary authors. The contributors consider the *Furioso* against the backdrop of the cultural and political milieu of the Este court, where Ariosto worked most of his adult life, and the humanistic and classical literary tradition in which his production was deeply steeped. The arrangement of essays seems to imitate the cinematic techniques of panning and tracking, which, according to Monica Farnetti, one