Peruzzi’s text is based on that of the editio princeps but includes the fragments from the unique Verona MS (edited and discussed by Pellegrini in 1947), our only source for the very end of the dialogue.

Michael J. B. Allen
University of California, Los Angeles


This rich volume, the beneficiary of rigorous editorial care, gathers a treasury of information on the dialogic poetry that flourished across southern Europe from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. Essays by nineteen contributors in three languages (11 in Italian, 7 in French, 1 in Spanish), originally presented in a 1997 convegno at the University of Lausanne, form a tightly focused, remarkably cohesive collection. Intelligently organized in sequences or couplings that multiply the critical refractions, the book is a model of what conference proceedings should be, but rarely are, with papers that take a seemingly narrow topic and imaginatively pry it open to unexpected breadths. It brings a valuable resource to the scholarly literature, not only as touchstone for the state of the question, but as an encyclopedia of primary textual sources.

In conception, as its organizers explain in a cover note, the project was designed to counter the tendency in Academia toward ever narrower specialization. Their sweep is consequently broad, “pluridisciplinare,” reaching Italian, Provençal, French, Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, and medieval Latin in order to underline “l’unità culturale del Medio Evo europeo, contrassegnata da numerosi tratti comuni delle varie letterature e dalla determinante presenza dei modelli latini. ... Si sono volute verificare analogie, divergenze e intertestualità fra le varie lingue e fra i vari scrittori e avviare un discorso sulla definizione e sui limiti del concetto stesso di tenzone.”


Produced attractively by Longo, this publication manifests the gulf that, for better or worse, divides Americans from their transatlantic colleagues. Over there, veneered with the language of theory, Romance Philology is not only alive and well, it triumphs with justifiable pride in this comparative set of multilingual studies. Yet in spite of the modish Marxist, Structuralist, and Semiotic codes that some essays conspicuously sport, an odor of mothballs clings to the collection, as if parts of it had emerged from a long-stored family trunk. For example, considering how frequently medieval poetry with the back-and-forth of two voices mounts amusing scenarios of seduction or preserves male-female dialogues of other sorts, from debates between ‘trobairitz’ and troubadours, to the fictitious ‘battibecchi’ that Cecco d’Angiolieri scripted for his feisty Becchina, it is surprising to find among these essays so little awareness of gender issues. Brandenberger is the lone man who speaks explicitly of “construcción ideológica de gender” (384), and Castagnola’s musings, nearly paired with Suitner’s elegant entry, do build effectively on Antonia Arveda’s pioneering Contrasti amorosi (Rome: Salerno, 1992). More typical of the Pedroni-Stäube anthology are drily cast articles in pseudo-scientific prose raised as platforms for inventories of raw material, as if poetry could be reduced to verbal corpses laid out for post-mortem on a clinical examining table. A major exception is Billy’s magisterial study, by far the longest (77 pp.), which combines sensitive literary analysis with a most useful concordance of ‘loci’ in the poetry itself for such core terms as ‘tenso’, ‘partimen’, and ‘jeu-parti’. An appealing hint of self-irony hovers protectively over Zufferey, who ends his thoughtful remarks, after quizzing a snatch of Alfred de Musset in dialogue with his Muse, by proposing for them a subtitle that could well apply to this entire volume: “grandeur et misère de la philologie” (328).

VICTORIA KIRKHAM
University of Pennsylvania


In this book, Antonello Borra offers an intelligent and comprehensive expo-