ence of modern nations have led to mighty results; but is it so certain that they have accomplished the task imposed by Dante on the Emperor, the triumph of Justice over Force?" [xxxi]), it is only with Kay's edition that the Monarchia's usefulness is made explicit. In 1998, just as in 1916, as Europe again faces issues of nationhood, empire, unification and dictatorship, the Monarchia stands as a reminder that history very likely does repeat itself. If that is the case, the Monarchia, properly contextualized, as it is in this edition, may be studied as zealously as the treatises of modern political scientists. Richard Kay's edition is therefore not only of the highest quality and of enormous value to scholars, replete as it is with philological and bibliographical information, but extraordinarily timely. As Kay himself says in his preface, "our century has found many reasons for reading the Monarchia, but perhaps the greatest of all is the relevance of its ideals to our troubled times" (ix).

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This delightful little volume (one could easily fit it in a pocket for hiking expeditions) opens with a graceful, lyrical preface written by the almost octogenarian Trevesan poet Andrea Zanzotto. The contemporary poet makes us realize how the much debated "lettera familiare" about climbing Mt. Ventoux in 1336 still has the power to move the reader to identify with Petrarch's physical and spiritual journey. The letter's "ricchissime sollecitazioni," in Zanzotto's words (viii), seem truthful, even though the reader is forced to recognize, and try to understand, the complexities of the Trecento literary devices Petrarch used. Zanzotto's preface is a compelling invitation to read or reread a text that holds appeal for all sorts of readers, from those who know Petrarch only through the occasional sonnet to the critic who wants to resolve the crux of the internal versus external (not to say 'fictional') autobiography of the great poet.

The Latin text is the definitive critical one established by Vittorio Rossi (Edizione nazionale delle opere di Francesco Petrarca, 1933—ristampa anastatica, Firenze: Le Lettere, 1997). There are five pages of endnotes to this text that serve to orient the reader by providing the necessary context of person, place and time, and by identifying Petrarch's ancient sources, in some cases citing a lengthy Latin text without translation. Adding to the popular appeal of this edition, the editors wisely decided to combine these two objectives in order to avoid having two sets of notes, one for the text and one for the translation, as there are in Dotti's edition. For the same reason it was a good and necessary decision to use endnotes rather than footnotes. Since the difficulties of accurately translating the meaning of Petrarch's Latin into Italian had already been skillfully addressed by Giuseppe Fracassetti (1863), Enrico Bianchi (1955) and Ugo Dotti (1970/74/78), Maura Formica was able to concentrate her efforts on adroitness and freshness of phrasing. The resulting translation flows smoothly and is a
pleasure to read, though it hardly gives us an inkling of Petrarch's masterful adaptation of Ciceronian style. In the twenty-three pages of commentary plus nine pages of notes that follow the Latin text and facing page Italian translation, Maura Formica and Michael Jakob deal with the much debated question of truth versus fiction in the interpretation of Familiarium rerum libri IV, 1. After reviewing the different critical stances from Carducci ("Petrarca alpinista") and Burckhardt ("scoperta del paesaggio," "primo uomo moderno") to the more recent and varied exegetical theses about the letter as Augustinian "conversio," and as "allegoria della vita umana" (Courcelle, Billanovich, Martinelli), Formica and Jakob launch an extensive and convincing discussion of why this brief letter deserves so much critical attention (33). Starting from the philological proofs given by Billanovich that Petrarch didn't start planning his literary epistolary until 1345 and that, therefore, the date Petrarch gives to his letter, 26 April 1336, is an "adjusted," fictional one for the real date of composition that critics now agree to be 1353 (39), the two authors of the commentary show how there are various other elements of the letter whose veracity could and should be questioned. These include the "chance" opening of Augustine's Confessions to the significant passage, the identity of Petrarch's interlocutor(s), the ascent of a real Mt. Ventoux, and both the exteriority and the interiority of the view. In discussing the various contemporary critical viewpoints on veracity, allegory, and conversion in the Ventoslo letter that this speculation provokes, we are grateful to Formica and Jakob for taking into account, in addition to Italian critics, both the German (Kablitz, Groh, Stierle, et al.) and the American (Durling, Robbins, O'Connell, et al.) schools. One need only peruse the six pages of Bibliography (69-75) to be convinced of the breadth of preparation with which the commentary was prepared.

Scholars, students and general readers alike will all find this edition of Petrarch's "Ventoso Letter," Familiarium rerum libri IV, 1, pleasing in format and affordability, as well as reliable for the Latin text, the Italian translation, and the commentary. They have achieved their goal of positioning this quintessential Petrarchian text in all of its "straordinaria novità" (56).

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The present volume is a collection of previously published and unpublished work on the evolution of chivalric literature during the Renaissance. As the author explains in the preface (7), the essays treat divergent topics but are unified by a common attention to philological problems and by the importance given to the cultural context within which the chivalric epic/romance developed. In the introduction (9-21), Casadei situates his collection within current scholarship in the field, placing particular emphasis on historical studies devoted to courtly culture and to the book market and on the relatively recent use of the methods of Anglo-American bibliography in the philological study of Italian texts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Drawing on this scholarship and on his