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Rime (review)

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(Review)

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elusive imitations of classical verse and contemporaneous satire. Tripet's examination of Du Bellay's thematic structure in these sequences and of its relationship to the author's ideas about literary purposiveness, as already sketched in his *Deffence et illustration*, is particularly valuable.

Shakespeare's representation of Rome in *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus* occupies the book's fourth chapter. Against the sheer volume of scholarship and criticism on these plays, Tripet's unfettered approach allows his argument to find a new direction. Each play dramatizes a turning point in ancient Roman history, but in each play this point redirects its historical players back to a *status ante quem*. In *Julius Caesar*, the forces that march against tyranny wind up accelerating tyranny as civil war marks the end of the Roman Republic. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the ascendant Roman Empire demolishes the world order envisioned by its hero in a countervailing form of extravagance. In *Coriolanus*, strategically reverting to the dawn of the Republic, the hero manages to oppose the mediocrity of the new order to itself and, thereby, to undo the gains that he had fought so hard to achieve.

Two subchapters on the Roman tragedies of Corneille and Racine offer contrasting analogues to Shakespeare's treatment of history. In *Horace*, *Cinna*, and *Polyeucte*, Corneille dramatizes the impact of sacrifice and self-sacrifice upon the collective state. Taking his cue from a Jesuit culture of rhetoric that privileged ancient Rome as a model of heroism and magnanimity, the playwright represents the ordeal of the Horatii at the foundational birth of the republic, the pardoning of Cinna upon the birth of the empire, and the martyrdom of Polyeucte upon the rise of Christianity. Conversely, Racine dramatizes problems that issue from the concentration of power and domination in the hands of a single ruler during Rome's imperial age. In *Britannicus*, Rome is compromised when young Nero takes every opportunity to reinforce his personal control and self-control. In *Bérénice*, Rome compromises Titus when it bends him to its laws and customs, destroying his personal ambitions and his love for the heroine.

The nearly three hundred pages of this book that address topics in the Italian, French, and English Renaissance present fresh insights, arresting comparisons, and illuminating close readings. Grounding his analysis in scholarship, though not belaboring his own research, and refusing to construct a metanarrative that neatly resolves differences among its key players, Tripet offers us a long, sometimes provocative view of a long, always provocative history.

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Tommaso Rimbotti. *Rime*.

Eds. Dario Del Puppo and Lorenzo Fabbri. Archivi di Santa Maria del Fiore Studi e testi 1. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2005. xvi + 222 pp. + 14 color pls. index. illus. tpls. chron. bibl. €25. ISBN: 88-222-5469-4.

This first volume in the series directed by Lorenzo Fabbri, which aims to publish the rich documentary patrimony accumulated through the centuries in the

archives of the Capitolo Metropolitano and the Opera del Duomo in Florence, strikes the reader immediately for the exquisite care bestowed on the material, as well as the intellectual, aspects of the book, despite its being paperbound (with a paper jacket). The aesthetic qualities of the book reflect the ultimate, enduring gift of Tommaso Rimbotti (1565–1622), author of lyric poems written during his university years at Pisa (1578–84), who, at the end of a notable ecclesiastic career in Florence, bequeathed his wealth to Christ embodied in the Eucharist. The result was the beautiful ciborium that stands today, albeit modified, on the altar of the San Zenobi chapel in the Cathedral. The book is rich in ancillary information. It traces the Rimbotti family tree from the 1300s into the eighteenth century. The color plates reproduce manuscript pages showing the family coat of arms, the plan and elevation of the Rimbotti home, part of Rimbotti's will, the ciborium, his tomb, and, finally, the frontispiece and three sonnets from his *Rime*.

The book is in two parts, an historical introduction by Lorenzo Fabbri and the edition of the poems by Dario Del Puppo. The first part begins with a chapter on the family's origins and discusses important relatives in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A second chapter is devoted to Tommaso Rimbotti's life and death. There is also a mini-essay on the history of conserving the Eucharist by Alessandro Bicchi. The inclusion of this level of detailed research is typical of the thoroughness and rigor that the editors bring to their work. The second part of the book contains Rimbotti's adolescent poems, which came into the Duomo's archives as part of his bequest, with an introductory essay by Del Puppo and an index of first verses.

The poems (sonnets, madrigals, eclogues, *canzoni*, and sestinas) are here published for the first time. It seems a singular endeavor to present the work of a very young man who did not become a poet, but rather gave his life to the Church and to the work of charity under the influence of Vittorio dell'Ancisa (1536–98), a follower of San Filippo Neri, protagonist of the Counter-Reformation. However, the poems are of interest for several reasons. They show Rimbotti's maturation toward his ecclesiastical vocation and thus offer a view of an educated young man's spiritual development. They reveal the enthusiasms, artistic and literary, of a sixteenth-century adolescent Florentine immersed in Catholic Reformation culture. The poems also document the continued prevalence and penetration of Bembo's reading of Petrarch, even into adolescent writing. More particularly, the poems echo the work of G. B. Strozzi and Benedetto Varchi. Rimbotti's poems show, too, strong civic identity and pride, as in the paired sonnets (80 and 81) celebrating the discovery in 1583 of Giambologna's sculpture group, the *Rape of the Sabines* in the Loggia dei Lanzi. The youth, not given to the more erotic vein of Petrarchan lyrics, shifted the tradition of paired sonnets inspired by artists (Simone Martini in the case of Petrarch, Giovanni Bellini in the case of Bembo, and Titian in the case of Della Casa) from contemporary female portraits to a sculpture on a Roman historical theme, not surprising given Rimbotti's eventual ecclesiastical vocation.

Rimbotti's literary awareness and aspirations are revealed in his lament of Tasso's death (67) and a sonnet such as 68, "Odio la notte e sol desio la luce," playing on the theme of night, dear to many sixteenth-century Italian lyric poets, among them Michelangelo. As Del Puppo notes, "Come tanti altri poeti lirici dell'epoca, dal Varchi al Tasso, il Rimbotti e' ligio al modello pastorale, in cui dietro le parvenze di disimpegno e di tranquillita' idillica fervono ansie e dubbi che furono spesso repressi nella lirica post-tridentina" (97). The poems, and the figure of Rimbotti, give a picture of Catholic Reformation culture grounded in the life of a precocious Florentine youth who developed into an active citizen and committed prelate. Fabbri and Del Puppo's edition lavishes paleographic and editorial expertise on this writer in the interest of bringing to light the wider literary culture of late Cinquecento Italy. The result opens an intriguing new avenue in literary studies, as well as paying homage to a generous benefactor.

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Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati. *Laura Battiferra and Her Literary Circle: An Anthology*.

The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe. Ed. and trans. Victoria Kirkham. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006. xiv + 494 pp. index. append. illus. bibl. \$64 (cl), \$25 (pbk). ISBN: 0-226-03922-6 (cl), 0-226-03923-4 (pbk).

Laura Battiferra (1523–89) has had a good millennium so far. Practically out of print since 1694, in recent years her editorial fortunes have changed sharply, with new Italian editions of both her main works — *Il primo libro delle opere toscane* (1560) and *Sette salmi penitenziali* (1564), edited by Enrico Maria Guidi in 2000 and 2005, respectively — and now this ambitious and generously-annotated bilingual edition of selections of her complete writings by Victoria Kirkham, already the author of a series of groundbreaking studies on Battiferra, appearing since the mid-1990s. This reemergence is well-timed. During Petrarchism's long period in the wilderness, critical attention tended to be confined to poets capable of sustaining the label of "transgressive" (Gaspara Stampa, Michelangelo), or those with a narratable life (or death) capable of reflecting biographical drama onto the verse (Isabella da Morra). A poet as imitatively correct and biographically un-newsworthy as Battiferra had few hopes of engaging sustained interest — at most, she might aspire to some slim notice as the wife of the architect Bartolomeo Ammannati, or muse and sitter to Agnolo Bronzino. Recent trends have transformed this situation, however, with a growing interest in Petrarchism as a site of social negotiation and exchange, and an increasing openness toward non-erotic subgenres such as occasional verse and religious lyric. Battiferra, primarily active in these genres, is well-placed to benefit from both these