Karl A.E. Enenkel and Jan Papy (eds.), *Petrarch and His Readers in the Renaissance*. Intersections. Yearbook for Early Modern Studies 6, Leiden: Brill, 2006. 334 pp. ISBN 90 04 147667.

This volume is the outcome of a conference held at the University of Leiden in 2004, and it contains 12 articles which are divided into five sections: 'Petrarch and his 14th century readers'; 'Petrarch in 16th century Germany: the case of the "Petrarch master"'; '16th century Italians reading Petrarch: Bembo and Cardano'; 'Petrarch read and imitated in 16th century France'; 'Petrarch translated and illustrated in the Low Countries'. It is clear, then, that the reception of the works of the great poet, rhetorician, and moral thinker Francesco Petrarca[1] (1304-1374), the most influential figure among the relatively new group of intellectuals that emerged in central and northern Italy since the mid-13th century (whom modern scholars call "the humanists"), stands at the centre of the studies here. This, in itself, is a welcome contribution to scholarship: the reception of the humanists by contemporary and later readers all over Europe is an important theme which has not always attracted enough scholarly attention. This theme is closely related to two other important themes: the reception of classical (both pagan and Christian) authors, and that of scholastic authors in the early modern era.

In the introduction, the editors present their rationale for the conference and the volume. Although admitting that 'we are far from having a clear picture of the way in which the reception of Petrarch actually worked' (2), which is a good enough reason for more detailed studies on the subject, the editors do not seem to be happy without paying tribute to some theory, in this case, the 'modern reception theory' (ibid.), which emphasizes the role of the reader. Criticizing what they see as some conceptual rigidity in this theory (3-4), basically the distinction between "fictional and non-fictional" texts and the notion of the "impliziter Leser", and mentioning yet another theoretician, Michel Foucault (5), the editors offer to replace the notions of "influence" and "author's intention", with 'the active and independent role of the reader' (6-8). One could still ask whether "influence" is not included in 'the active and independent role of the reader' (since he is still a reader of something), and whether, while focusing on the role of the reader, we may miss the whole issue of reception, ending up only with studies of different readers in different contexts. Since we are going to encounter these problems in action, let us move on now to discuss some of the studies in this volume.

Jan Papy in his 'Creating an "Italian" Friendship: From Petrarch's Ideal Literary Critic "Socrates" to the Historical Reader Ludovicus Sanctus of Beringen' (13-30), reconstructs the historical figure of Ludovicus Sanctus of Beringen, one of Petrarca's closest friends to whom he referred in his letters as 'Socrates'. Papy focuses on the disparity between the image of Ludovicus created by Petrarca, and the "real" historical Ludovicus as he appears in his own writings. Papy's formulation of this gap reveals an interesting assumption: 'When reading numerous eulogistic passages in Petrarch's writings praising Socrates's character (his loyalty, open mind, mature judgement and prudence) and intellectual development (his multifaceted cultural education and learning), one wonders, especially when confronted with Sanctus's own "medieval" wrtitings, what kind of erudition and education Petrarch had in mind when praising his northern friend to the skies' (15). It is clear from this citation that Papy is using the adjective 'medieval' as a pejorative term, which, automatically and without further explanation, is contrasted with

[1] I am using the Italian form of the name, to avoid the form 'Francis', which can be found, e.g., on p. 1 of the volume under review. It is impossible to be fully consistent in translating Italian names into English. What should we do with names like Coluccio Salutati or Cristoforo Landino? I would leave the Italian names in their Italian forms, but apparently the editors thought otherwise, although without much consistency either, since we do find the name Aegidius Romanus, and not Giles of Rome, in n. 51 on p. 48, for instance.

"erudition" and "education". Apparentlly, while focusing on Petrarca's image of Ludovicus, Papy himself embraced the old scholarly image of the Middle Ages as Dark Ages, even concerning the 14th century, and after several decades of scholarship on medieval intellectual achievements.[2]

The discussion of the literary friendship between the two men is convincing, and it is reconstructed through a close reading, mainly of Petrarca's letters and other writings. Papy manages to bring out Petrarca's unique and personal voice as it is echoed in the letters addressed to Ludovicus, letters which are full of references to ancient Roman authors as well as to biblical passages and the Church Fathers, thus revealing the similar upbringing and education of the two friends. Indeed, references to many classical and medieval authors are found in Ludovicus' own work on music, entitled *Sentencia subiecti in musica sonora*. Once again Papy emphasizes Ludovicus' scholastic style and the fact that he 'applied Aristotelian and Scholastic thought in his own musical reasoning' (25), and that he 'remained a medieval man and is to be considered as the prototype of those numerous northerners who came into contact with Petrarch's person and work but only drew the medieval elements from it or what could be considered as such' (26). These words reveal Papy's commitment to the notion of a sharp contrast between "scholasticism" and "humanism", or between an ideal image of scholasticism, and an ideal image of humanism. It is not clear exactly what phrases such as 'medieval man' or 'medieval elements' mean for Papy, although one can sense some pejorative flavour in them too. But since Papy has commited himself to this contrast he cannot see how Petrarca ascribed to his friend 'characteristics such as loyalty, fidelity, open-mindedness and multifaceted cultural education and erudition' (27), as if all these characteristics cannot be found, by definition, in a scholastic intellectual. It is clear, then, that in light of such prejudical assessments regarding "scholasticism", "humanism", and a sharp contrast between these two movements, one can easily miss the complex relations between scholastic thinkers like Ludovicus Sanctus of Beringen, and humanist thinkers like Francesco Petrarca.

It seems that Marc Laureys ('Antiquarianism and Politics in 14th Century Avignon: the Humanism of Giovanni Cavalini') is more successful in his discussion of Giovanni Cavallini's 'survey of the topography, institutions, and notable historical events of pagan and Christian Rome' (35). He points out a significant change in the nature of the historical accounts of Rome between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; this change consists of 'the growing acquaintance with a steadily expanding body of source material, both literary and archeological evidence, and the concomitant advance of historical consciousness and method' (ibid.). But the focus here is mainly on the political dimension of Cavallini's historical account, and not so much on its scholarly merits — that is, the role it played in pleading for the return of the Holy See from Avignon to Rome. While comparing Petrarca's 'new understanding of world history, focussed on the moral values and political prerogatives enshrined in Classical Rome' (50), to the way Cavallini is using classical learning 'to find new arguments for endorsing the unlimited and unconditional supermacy of papal power' (ibid.), Cavallini, according to Laureys, had found a new argument for connecting the papacy to Rome: associating the pope with the office of the *flamen dialis*, the priest of Jove who 'was obliged to reside in Rome' (48).

Laureys' elegant discussion offers two different ways in which the historical accounts of Livy and Valerius Maximus were read and used by two Renaissance intellectuals in a very specific political context — although, as he himself admits (38 n. 22), there is no historical evidence that Petrarca and Cavallini ever met or knew each other. Nevertheless, a connection between Petrarca

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2 A good starting point for this issue, with further references, is provided in M.W.F. Stone, 'Scholastic Schools and Early Modern Philosophy', in Donald Rutherford (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge 2006), 299-327. For the late medieval tradition see Christopher Schabel (ed.), *Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages. The Fourteenth Century* (Leiden 2007). On late scholastic schools in Italy see Cesare Vasoli, *Le filosofie del Rinascimento*, ed. Paolo Costantino Pissavino (Milano 2002), 93-132 (by Luca Bianchi), and 154-174 (by Cesare Vasoli).

and Cavallini is highly probable, since Petrarca was quite famous not only in Italy but also in other places and in intellectual centres in Europe, such as Prague, as shown in Ugo Dotti's article which focuses on the correspondence between the Italian humanist and the imperial chancellor Johann von Neumarkt. The blend of politics and diplomatic issues on the one hand, and cultural concerns on the other, emphasized here by Dotti (e.g., 78-79), is remarkable. Dotti shows how Petrarca employed his epistolary relations with Bohemian circles to create his own image as the first humanist, thus promoting 'the triumph of humanism in Europe' (83).

The reception of some of Petrarca's ideas in the 1532 German translation of *De remediis* is examined in the light of 261 woodcuts which were made by an anonymous artist especially for that publication, and discussed in terms of 'pictorial rhetoric' and 'pictorial narrative' (e.g., 174-175) by Reindert Falkenburg. This follows a long discussion by Karl A.E. Enenkel of the same anonymous 'Petrarca-Meister' and the role he played in the reception process of the Italian humanist. Falkenburg argues, for instance, that 'These woodcuts, therefore, do not straightforwardly express a self-contained truth value — the value system they represent, within the composition of the book as a whole and in the context of each individual chapter, fundamentally undermines a "positivist" reading of their form or content. Their true subject matter is not the point of view represented in the image, but the insight and self-knowledge that the viewer forges in his speculation on the image. The pictorial rhetoric does not allow for a stable type of reading either' (174-175), suggesting complex and dynamic relations between the text, the images, and the reader/viewer, in which, 'The image "remedies" the viewer (as much as the text) by letting him take the medicine of insight against the illness of quick and superficial judgment regarding good and bad fortune, to which mankind is inclined to succumb' (184).

The role of Pietro Bembo as one of the interlocutors in Castiglione's dialogue *Il libro del Cortegiano* (published in 1528), representing 'neoplatonist Petrarchism', through which we find 'an evolution from love as a social and courtly category … towards love as a spiritual and ethical category' (199), is discussed by Bart Van Den Bossche, and compared to the "historical Bembo" (201-207). As Petrarca's editor and a specialist in his work, Bembo is definitely a good case-study of the reception and influence of Petrarca's notions of love in the 16th century. However, to take only one example, it is impossible to discuss 'Bembo's definition of love as a cosmic force creating a hierarchical order in the universe' (200) only in terms of "Petrarca's reception and influence", and only from the perspective of Petrarca's rather immature and limited version of Neoplatonism, without at least mentioning the enormous influence of Marsilio Ficino and his famous 1469 commentary on Plato's *Symposium*, written both in the vernacular and in Latin, where the Italian title reads: *El libro del amore*.[3] And what about Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and his commentary on Girolamo Benivieni's *Canzona de amore*?[4] How can the phrase *sacro furor amoroso* in Bembo be discussed (206, and in n. 37 there), without referring to Ficino's treatment of *furor divinus* in his famous letter and in his commentary on Plato's *Ion*?[5] Despite the fact that this volume focuses on Petrarca's "reception and influence", they cannot be truly

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3 Marsilio Ficino, *El libro dell'amore*, ed. Sandra Niccoli (Firenze 1987). For the Latin version see Pierre Laurens (ed.), *Commentarium in convivium Platonis, de amore* (Paris 2002).

4 Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Commento dello illustrissimo signor conte Joanni Pico Mirandolano sopra una canzona de amore composta da Girolamo Benivieni cittadino fiorentino secondo la mente et opinione de' Platonici*, in Eugenio Garin (ed.), *De hominis dignitate, heptaplus, de ente et uno, e scritti vari* (Firenze 1942).

5 On the theme of divine frenzy in Ficino see Sebastiano Gentile, 'In margine all'epistola "De divino furore" di Marsilio Ficino', in *Rinascimento* XXI (1981), 33-77. Ficino's commentary on *Ion* can now be found in Michael J.B. Allen (ed. and trans.), *Marsilio Ficino. Commentaries on Plato vol. 1* (Cambridge, Mass. 2008), 194-206. On the theme of holy madness in the poetry of the Renaissance see Lauro Martines, *Strong Words. Writing and Social Strain in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore 2001), 52-58.

understood without a serious attempt to contextualize them, thus bringing into the discussion other important and relevant factors which are no less important than a theoretical awareness of the active role of readers in the process of reception.

The complexity in defining the Renaissance intellectuals is nicely presented in Dóra Bobory's discussion of Cardano's horoscope of Petrarca: ' … Gerolamo Cardano was a very prominent and characteristic example of the Renaissance polymath, dealing with the most diverse things, criticizing the ancient authorities yet, while claiming to offer new solutions, still being deeply rooted in ancient and medieval traditions' (210). Such a description requires its author to be a scholar who is at home both in classical pagan and Christian antiquity, and in medieval — and most important — late medieval thought, in order to be able to distinguish between rhetorical gestures and real arguments, false and true innovations. The author is aiming at treating astrological horoscopes as historical sources (211), suggesting an interesting connection between the astrologer's and the historian's act of choice (out of collected data) which is essential in both practices (yet still one needs to emphasize the historian's commitment to some scholarly methods). Thus, it is very easy, as happened in Cardano's case, while correcting an erroneous horoscope at a later stage, to end up writing a biography, or in the case of his own horoscope, an autobiography.

Focusing on Petrarca's horoscope prepared by Cardano and printed three times without any change (217-219), Bobory examines this horoscope as a case-study of the reception of the famous poet almost two hundred years after his death (221). A comparison to two other horoscopes of Petrarca by Cardano's contemporary astrologers (223-225) suggests that Petrarca became an easy target for this genre of horoscopic biographies, since he was famous, successful in different endeavours and lived a long life. But all in all, the author has practically nothing substantial to say about the reception of Petrarca in the 16th century based on the poet's horoscope cast by Cardano. Petrarca's erudition, his philological skills, some details concerning his private life and habits, and his European reputation were known already in his own time. This article focuses on Cardano and the relation between astrology and biography; Petrarca's reception is less than marginal here and it is obviously forced in an effort to address the title of the present volume. In this case we can say that the active role of the "reader" Cardano completely blurred the main concern of this book.

A more "traditional" approach to the question concerning Petrarca's reception and influence in 16th century French poetry is taken by Reinier Leushuis in his discussion of Joachim Du Bellay's *Songe, ou Vision*, focusing on the role of the lyrical *persona* in both poets. The shift from an 'imitation of Petrarch the "lover-poet"' towards an influence 'by the inner ethical conflicts typical of the "philosophical" Petrarch' (246) seems indeed like an important point, and it is very likely that poets in the French Renaissance were also inspired by Petrarca's Latin speculative prose works like the *Secretum* and the *De remediis utriusque fortune*. In Dina De Rentiis' discussion of the poetical theory of Du Bellay we can even find a nice response to some recent theories in pedagogy, contrasting "imitation" and "creativity": ' … petrarchist imitation does not preclude the possibility and capability of creating "one hundred thousand" new poetical *verba*. The issue in *Contre les pétrarquistes* is not opposing, negating or abolishing (Petrarchist) imitation, but exploring a very important philosophical consequence and implication of literary imitation' (257).

The same approach is found in Jean Balsamo's fascinating study, showing the close relations between poetry and politics in French-Italian relations in 16th century France. It is in this study that we find the most interesting aspects of the reception and influence of Petrarca: 'Through the eminent politics displayed at the discovery of Laura's tomb, a discovery which would be detailed in editions of the *Rime* for many of the following decades, the two Francis — the king and Petrarch — became decisively linked: the king was heir and successor of the famous Tuscan poet whom he celebrated. Again in 1574, a French traveller visiting Petrarch's tomb in Arquà, remembered the Avignon episode and copied the verses of Francis I into his own diary and added a full commentary. The celebration of Petrarch in these places was a pretext for a nostalgic

celebration of the “grand roy François, père des lettres et amateur des hommes doctes”’ (274); ‘Hence Petrarch sponsored a sort of mystic union, fulfilling an old imperial dream of the kings of France, which considered his *Rime* as being fit for royal reading’ (277).

This volume reflects, on the one hand, the richness of Renaissance culture, while also focusing on the different aspects and contexts where Petrarca’s works were “received” in Italy, Germany, France, and the Low Countries between the 14th and the 16th centuries. Thus, history, historiography, antiquarianism, art and its function in the reception of moral speculative notions, words and images, astrology and biography, poetics, poetry and politics, are among the central themes discussed in the different studies here. At the same time, this volume exhibits the different methodological and scholarly approaches to the question of reception. The author of the present review still regards the traditional approach concerning the question of reception and influence most relevant and sufficient, if the philological and historical methods are rightly applied and used in the reconstruction of the relevant context, without any need for a theory. On the basis of this criterion, I have pointed out some scholarly limitations and problems in some of the articles included in the volume under review. Paraphrasing the words of the editors in their introduction (2) — cited at the beginning of this review — we can say that we are still attempting to have a clearer picture of the way in which the reception of Petrarca actually worked, and this volume is yet another attempt in this direction.

Amos Edelheit The National University of Ireland, Maynooth