

## Refracting the canon: lists of vernacular authors in the fifteenth century

Our current conception of the history of the early Italian lyric tradition is heavily informed by Dante's works, and in particular his *De vulgari eloquentia*.<sup>1</sup> It has not always been the case. Before the rediscovery of this text in the early sixteenth century, other works were far more influential in presenting authors who made up Italian vernacular literature and offering judgments on them. Among these writings, a prominent position must be accorded to Petrarch's works, above all the list of vernacular love poets found in *Triumphus Cupidinis* (IV 28-42), alongside the mention of five of these in the sonnet on death of one of them, Sennuccio del Bene (*Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* 287).

Such passages continue to be relevant well into the sixteenth century, and they also play a key role in Poliziano's introductory *Epistola* to the *Raccolta Aragonesa*.<sup>2</sup> That *Epistola* – as is well known – represents one of the most important late Quattrocento contributions to the historical assessment of the earlier vernacular poetic tradition, and it continued to be influential well into the sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup> This essay is concerned with texts that precede Poliziano's *Epistola* and that have not been closely examined for the information and judgments they provide on the earlier



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 840772.

<sup>1</sup> Claudio Giunta, *La poesia italiana nell'età di Dante. La linea Bonagiunta-Guinizelli* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998), pp. 21–31.

<sup>2</sup> Maria Clotilde Camboni, 'La formazione della Raccolta Aragonesa', *Interpres*, 35 (2017), 1–32; Giuliano Tanturli, 'La Firenze laurenziana davanti alla propria storia letteraria', in *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il suo tempo*, ed. by Gian Carlo Garfagnini (Firenze: Olschki, 1992), pp. 1–38 (p. 31).

<sup>3</sup> For its influence e.g. on Bembo's *Prose*, see Maria Clotilde Camboni, 'Paradigms of Historical Development: The *Raccolta Aragonesa*, Landino, and Bembo's *Prose*', *Modern Language Notes*, 134.1 (2019), 22–41.

vernacular tradition. Our focus is on fifteenth-century texts that contain lists of authors and which appear more or less heavily influenced by Petrarch's one. The aim of the analysis is to bring to light the number and range of these writings and to consider the divergences between them and their model in order to shed light on changing canons and attitudes towards the poets that are both included or excluded. We will be concerned especially with the ways the texts reveal a knowledge and appreciation of pre-Petrarchan vernacular authors during the period from 1400-75, or to be more precise with the ways they reveal a lack of such a knowledge, since these lists of names do not necessarily show close acquaintance with the authors named.

Before undertaking the analysis, some preliminary remarks are in order. First, it should be noted that the passages that will be analysed are those in which several pre-Petrarchan poets are mentioned; if a single poet is mentioned we have excluded these texts.<sup>4</sup> There are also a good

---

<sup>4</sup> I have also decided not to include a couple passages from Leonardo Bruni's *Vita di Dante* (1436 circa) and Giannozzo Manetti's unfinished *Adversus Iudaeos et gentes* (1448-1459): Bruni's biography draws on Dantean sources, while Manetti's work contains numerous biographies, among them several of pre-Petrarchan authors. All the poets mentioned by Manetti are nevertheless already present in Filippo Villani's previous work *De origine civitatis Florentie et de eiusdem famosis civibus* (1375-1404), a work that we will consider given that it acted as a source for many of the texts we will analyse. We have also excluded some fourteenth-century works that are based on completely different principles and deserves separate consideration. The primary example here is the *Leandreide* by Giovanni Girolamo Nadal; but we could mention also the unpublished *canzone Gregorio mi piacque col suo detto*, which praises the eloquence of Pandolfo di Guido – i.e. Pandolfuccio di Guido di Pandolfo de' Franchi, who died in 1354 (see Alessio Decaria, 'I confini della lirica italiana del Trecento', in *I confini della lirica. Tempi, luoghi, tradizione della poesia romanza* (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, 2017), pp. 67–90



come ogni uom vide; e poi v'era un drappello

di portamenti e di volgari strani:

fra tutti il primo Arnaldo Daniello, 40

gran maestro d'amor, ch'a la sua terra

ancor fa honor col suo dir strano e bello.<sup>6</sup>

Our study will examine seven texts or passages in total. Not all of them are intended to be canons, that is, to establish for readers a list of authors who are considered to be the best and most important ones. This is however the case for the first text, which is a sonnet by the Florentine poet and teacher of rhetoric Cino Rinuccini (1350 ca – 1417).

Tal donna già non vide il mio Petrarca

quando Laura sua leggiadra e bella

temé che Dio non la facesse stella,

anzi nel cielo un sol, perché poi scarca

di sì dolci pensier' fosse sua barca 5

qual è costei, che 'l core or mi martella

e l'arco e la faretra e le quadrella

tolto ha a Cupido e sì signoril varca.

Né pure Smirna, Mantova e Arpino,

Atene, ma se stesso e 'l suo concive 10

Dante, Guitton, Sennuccio e Franceschino

---

<sup>6</sup> *Triumphus Cupidinis*, IV 28-42: Francesco Petrarca, *Trionfi*; *Rime estravaganti*; *Codice degli abbozzi*, ed. by Vinicio Pacca and Laura Paolino (Milano: Mondadori, 1996), pp. 188–90.

Arnaldo, Guido, Fazio e, se altri vive  
 e visse, are' chiamato, e Messer Cino  
 nelle lode di questa, e nove dive.<sup>7</sup>

In order to celebrate his beloved, Rinuccini states that not even Petrarch ever saw such a woman as her, and if he had, he would have summoned to praise her not only Homer, Virgil, Cicero and Demosthenes (all referred to by their birthplaces in lines 9-10), but a gathering of vernacular poets. Before getting to their names, it is worth pointing to the fact that they are associated with classical ones. This is a recurring feature in several of the texts that will be analysed, and one shared also by Petrarch, for, it should be remembered that the lines immediately preceding *Triumphs* IV, 28-42, record the encounter with Orpheus, Virgil, the elegiac poets including Catullus, and an array of ancient Greek ones. However, of main interest here are not the differences between the classical authors in Petrarch and those in Rinuccini, but the disparities concerning the vernacular ones, even though the list of authors in *Tal donna già non vide il mio Petrarca* is strikingly close to that encountered in the *Triumphs*.

Petrarch's *Triumphus Cupidinis* goes on to list a number of other Troubadour poets after Arnaut Daniel, but Rinuccini by contrast omits all of them. While the omission is understandable at one level given the constraints of space and the focus on the Italian vernacular, the presence of Arnaut Daniel is striking, and probably due in large part to a passive imitation of the *Triumphs* with the contribution of Dante's celebration of Arnaut.<sup>8</sup> The knowledge of the Troubadours had in fact

---

<sup>7</sup> Cino Rinuccini, *Rime*, ed. by Giovanna Balbi (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1995), p. 89.

<sup>8</sup> For Rinuccini's admiration of Dante and his intimate knowledge of the *Commedia*, see Simon A. Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 78–82.

been in a steep decline,<sup>9</sup> and it is therefore not surprising that we will encounter *Arnaldo* in only one further text considered here. Sennuccio del Bene and Franceschino degli Albizzi receive even less attention in subsequent texts, though again this is not surprising when one considers their limited diffusion.<sup>10</sup> Their presence in Rinuccini is a further testimony to the Petrarchan matrix that informs the sonnet. The subtle changes carried out by Rinuccini with regard to the *Triumphs*'s list of Italian vernacular authors involve the addition of 'Fazio', i.e. Fazio degli Uberti, the disappearance of Onesto da Bologna and the Sicilians, and the quiet reduction of Petrarch's two *Guidi* into one.

Concerning the first author, we could hypothesize an influence of the *De origine civitatis Florentie et de eiusdem famosis civibus* by Rinuccini's fellow Florentine Filippo Villani, where the

---

<sup>9</sup> Santorre Debenedetti, *Gli studi provenzali in Italia nel Cinquecento* (Torino: Loescher, 1911), pp. 5–18.

<sup>10</sup> We only have two ballads of Franceschino di Ricco degli Albizzi, a friend of Petrarch, and they are preserved by only one manuscript, dating to the late fourteenth-early fifteenth century. There are another two ballads, written by his grandfather Franceschino di Riccardo degli Albizzi. He was mistaken for his grandchild, and as a result of this misunderstanding these two texts were copied in the *Raccolta Aragonese* and can therefore be found in several manuscripts deriving from this famous anthology (thus post-1477). Besides this group of manuscript, the ballads are preserved only by one and two other witnesses respectively (see Daniele Piccini, 'Franceschino degli Albizzi, uno e due', *Studi petrarcheschi*, 15 (2002), 129–86.). Sennuccio del Bene has a slightly better dissemination: of his fourteen texts, three are only transmitted by one late fourteenth-early fifteenth century manuscript; half a dozen of the others (including the two surviving sonnets exchanged with Petrarch) are transmitted by a handful of manuscripts; the five remaining ones entered into the *Raccolta Aragonese* and as in the case of Franceschino a great deal of their witnesses derives from this anthology (Daniele Piccini, *Un amico del Petrarca: Sennuccio del Bene e le sue rime* (Roma: Antenore, 2004)).

chapter dedicated to Fazio immediately precedes that on Guido Cavalcanti, and where both are described as dedicated writers of vernacular poetry. Whether Rinuccini's mention of Fazio is due to Villani's mediation, or not, there are no doubts that the surviving Guido is Guido Cavalcanti. Guinizelli's disappearance from *Tal donna già non vide il mio Petrarca* is less surprising than the continued presence of the four authors following Dante, especially the first, Guittone. Even less surprising is the disappearance of Onesto and the Sicilians, who will be encountered in none of the texts here analysed. After all, their absence here fits with our understanding of how such early vernacular poets quickly stopped circulating and were very little read or known.<sup>11</sup> One indicator, by

---

<sup>11</sup> It is well known that Guittone's texts are mostly transmitted by five late thirteenth-early fourteenth century manuscripts, especially the three that account for almost all our knowledge of thirteenth-century Italian lyric poetry. Only three of Guittone's *canzoni* were copied in the *Raccolta Aragonesa* and consequently enjoyed a wider dissemination: see Lino Leonardi, 'Per l'edizione di Guittone d'Arezzo: "Amor, non ò podere"', *Studi di filologia italiana*, 72 (2014), 37–60 (pp. 52–54). Some scattered sonnets can be found in a handful of fifteenth-century manuscripts: for a list of witnesses see Sara Natale, 'Guittone d'Arezzo (GuAr)', in *Mirabile. Archivio digitale della cultura medievale* <[http://www.mirabileweb.it/author-rom/guittone-d-arezzo-n-1230-1240-m-21-8-1294-author/TRALIRO\\_238749](http://www.mirabileweb.it/author-rom/guittone-d-arezzo-n-1230-1240-m-21-8-1294-author/TRALIRO_238749)> [accessed 7 February 2020]. After Avalle's seminal work on Guinizelli's tradition (d'Arco Silvio Avalor, 'La tradizione manoscritta di Guido Guinizelli', *Studi di filologia italiana*, 11 (1953), 137–62) other manuscripts have been signalled by *Poeti del Duecento*, ed. by Gianfranco Contini (Milano-Napoli: Ricciardi, 1960), pp. 897–98, and Marco Berisso, 'Su una recente edizione guinizelliana', *Italianistica*, 32.3 (2003), 419–35 (pp. 433–34): about a dozen fifteenth-century witnesses of Guinizelli's texts survive in total. Eleven of the twenty-four texts preserved under the name of Onesto da Bologna are transmitted only by one witness, and another four by only two; to the list of manuscripts (just three fifteenth-century) provided by Sandro Orlando in Onesto da Bologna, *Le rime di Onesto da Bologna*, ed. by Sandro

the late 1460s, of the lack of attention to Guinizelli is found in early commentators on Petrarch's passage, such as Bernardo Illicino's, where the astrologer Guido Bonatti is mistaken for Guido Guinzelli, as Dionisotti has shown.<sup>12</sup> If anything, Rinuccini's sonnet seems to confirm that Guinizelli was already moving out of literary and cultural circles in Florence of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century.

Unsurprisingly, then, Guinizelli is also absent from the following text, the epicedium of the poet Buonaccorso da Montemagno (died 16<sup>th</sup> December 1429) penned by Mariotto Davanzati, one of the competitors in the *Certame coronario*, the vernacular poetic contest organized by Alberti in 1441. Albeit not so explicitly as the preceding sonnet, it also presents a canon.

Erano ambe già l'ale all'aura sparte  
del nostro Bonaccorso al ciel volando  
di gentilezza pieno e d'amor, quando  
ruppe Antropòs da sé l'infima parte.

Lasciocci in terra le vergate carte 5

---

Orlando (Firenze: Sansoni, 1974), only a couple of witnesses can be added: see Alessio Decaria, 'Onesto Da Bologna (OnBo)' in *Mirabile. Archivio digitale della cultura medievale* <[http://www.mirabileweb.it/author-rom/onesto-da-bologna-n-1240-ca-m-pq-1301-aq-1303-author/TRALIRO\\_238777](http://www.mirabileweb.it/author-rom/onesto-da-bologna-n-1240-ca-m-pq-1301-aq-1303-author/TRALIRO_238777)> [accessed 14 February 2020]. It is well known that almost all poems of the Sicilians have been transmitted to us only by the above-mentioned three manuscripts that account for almost all our knowledge of thirteenth-century Italian lyric poetry (*I poeti della Scuola Siciliana. Edizione promossa dal Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani. II. Poeti della corte di Federico II*, ed. by Costanzo Di Girolamo (Milano: Mondadori, 2008), pp. CV–CIX).

<sup>12</sup> Carlo Dionisotti, 'Fortuna del Petrarca nel Quattrocento', *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, 17 (1974), 61–113 (p. 72).



e lui, già nudo spirito restando,  
 gito se n'è, dove qua giù sperando  
 volti avea gli ochi sua natura et arte.  
 Già l'anima gentile in terza spera  
 era arrivata, quando Cino e Dante                      10  
 per man lo prese, e la sacrata schiera,  
 Francesco, el Certaldese, el Cavalcante,  
 Guitton, con cui vede or la gloria vera,  
 fruendo il premio di sue opre sancte.<sup>13</sup>

Here Petrarch's influence is also evident in the textual genre selected, since we are dealing with a sonnet written following the death of a poet, as is the case in *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* 287, *Sennuccio mio, benché doglioso et solo*. Moreover, the extent of the debt to Petrarch is revealed in the way that the tercets in *Erano ambe già l'ale* reuse the same rhymes as Petrarch's sonnet, as well as several rhyme words or even syntagms, all of which are found in the same position in each text.

Ma ben ti prego che 'n la terza spera  
 Guitton saluti, et messer Cino, et Dante,                      10  
 Franceschin nostro, et tutta quella schiera.  
 A la mia donna puoi ben dire in quante  
 lagrime io vivo; et son fatt'una fera,

---

<sup>13</sup> Guglielmo Gorni, 'Un canzoniere adespoto di Mariotto Davanzati: metrica e filologia attributiva', *Studi di filologia italiana*, 33 (1975), 189–220 (pp. 205–6).

membrando il suo bel viso et l'*opre sante*.<sup>14</sup>

As for the choice of poets and the likely sources for them (which in this case, again following the model of *Sennuccio mio*, are only vernacular ones), besides Petrarch, who we find already in Rinuccini's sonnet, Davanzati adds Boccaccio, who again perhaps unsurprisingly will be a constant presence in all the other texts here considered. We could even suppose that Rinuccini avoided naming him because praising a woman – or, writing lyrical poetry – was not perceived as his greatest virtue and so would not justify Petrarch summoning him for help with such a task. As anticipated, Franceschino and Sennuccio have disappeared; Cavalcanti remains, integrated from the *Triumphs*, and he is even better identified by his family name. Cino and Guittone also persist: however they seem to be mere relics left by the weight of Petrarch's authority (especially considering that they are both quoted in the passage of *Triumphus Cupidinis* and in Sennuccio's sonnet as well). In fact during the fifteenth century there was a very limited circulation of Cino's texts<sup>15</sup> and his influence on following poets was already waning by the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>16</sup> Guittone fares even worse. *Erano ambe già l'ale all'aura sparte* seems therefore to be

---

<sup>14</sup> Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, ed. by Marco Santagata (Milano: Mondadori, 2004), p. 1145, italics my own.

<sup>15</sup> See Emilio Pasquini, 'Cino da Pistoia e i lirici del Quattrocento', in *Colloquio Cino da Pistoia*, 1976, pp. 87–127; Tanturli, 'La Firenze laurenziana', p. 29, also for the absence of previously cited poets in Florentine manuscripts of XV century.

<sup>16</sup> Armando Balduino, *Boccaccio, Petrarca e altri poeti del Trecento* (Firenze: Olschki, 1984), pp. 199–206.

the result of a compromise between the canon of Davanzati – although probably more a canon of his time than a personal one – and the one inherited by his authoritative texts.<sup>17</sup>

The fact that Cino and Guittone by the mid-fifteenth century were not read anymore finds confirmation in their absence from a text written a mere decade later than Davanzati's sonnet on death of Buonaccorso, the *canzone* composed and performed for the already mentioned *Certame coronario* of 1441 by Anselmo Calderoni, *Benché si dica che nel volgar parlare*. The relevant passage comes in the second *stanza*.

Così come del greco fu Omero	
solo, simil Vergilio nel latino,	15
e Dante fiorentino	
nobiltà questo nostro idioma.	
Boccaccio, in prosa e in rima sincero,	
e ser Brunetto, fulgente rubino,	
Guido e Guido, ognun fino,	20
e Fazio, almen quel che trattò di Roma,	
Bindo Bonichi, che moral si noma,	
Petrarca, l'Aretino e 'l Salutato	
e molti hanno trattato,	
oltre al greco e latino, in bel vulgare:	25

---

<sup>17</sup> It should also be remarked that in another text by Davanzati, the sonnet *L'ultimo giro della folle rota*, only Dante and Petrarch are mentioned when Davanzati speaks of how his beloved eclipses their own, in a passage which amounts to another reproposal of the canon of the 'due soli'.

or vedi a che speranza i' posso stare.<sup>18</sup>

We are here confronted with a clear-cut need for providing as many credible model authors in the vernacular as possible – which is rather understandable, given the context of the composition (and public performance) of the poem.<sup>19</sup> This results in the second longest list of Italian writers among all the texts here considered, and one where we encounter some rather surprising names. It is known that Leonardo Bruni ‘l’Aretino’ wrote little in the vernacular (the lives of Dante and Petrarch, a couple poems, and the *Novella di Antioco*, plus some works written for diplomatic purposes), and Coluccio Salutati’s half a dozen vernacular sonnets cannot really be considered the main credential for his presence in this list. Coluccio is, however, one of the remarkable fellow citizens of Florence graced with a biography in Villani’s *De origine civitatis Florentie et de eiusdem famosis civibus*, along with Fazio degli Uberti and Brunetto Latini.<sup>20</sup> We can therefore suggest again the likely influence of the biographical portraits and related information found in this work. The main author for whom Villani cannot be considered as a source is Bindo Bonichi, but his production is preserved in a good number of fifteenth-century manuscripts, especially Florentine ones.

The hypothesis that Villani was utilized as an authoritative source is supported by the fact that Calderoni’s passage also exploits Petrarch’s list of poets: the mention of ‘Guido e Guido’ is

---

<sup>18</sup> *De vera amicitia: i testi del primo Certame coronario*, ed. by Lucia Bertolini (Modena: Panini, 1993), pp. 285–86.

<sup>19</sup> The aim of this literary contest modelled on ancient ones was to promote vernacular literature attempting to establish it on humanistic grounds; in this scenario the parallel of Homer, Virgil and vernacular authors, each perfecting his respective language, leaves no doubts about Calderoni’s intentions. The comparison Homer-Virgil-Dante in particular becomes a traditional one: see Gilson ad index.

<sup>20</sup> Davanzati also owned a copy of Fazio’s major work, the *Dittamondo*: see Bertolini, p. 286.

quite unambiguous, and considering the poems analysed above and our earlier discussion of how some early vernacular lyric poets disappeared from circulation, it appears highly probable that Calderoni had no first-hand information about at least one *Guido*. He seems to be bringing together two authoritative sources, Villani and Petrarch, selecting what seems to suit best his purposes and adding the names of other authors who were well known (Bruni) or whose vernacular poems were circulating in that moment (Bonichi). The fact that he erases Cino and Guittone is then a testament to the fact that in that moment and context they could not be mentioned as model writers. Indeed, it may well be the case that among the assembled public and judges of the *Certame* not a single one could remember ever having read a single line by them.

In spite of this context of his limited reception and indeed erasure, some mentions are made of Cino but these are done on the basis of Petrarch's authority. An example is in the *canzone* by the Paduan Jacopo Sanguinacci (born around 1400) *Amor, io vorei dire, ma non so come*.

E ben che io non sia digno di tal schiera,  
 per dirte dei moderni, vidi aflito  
 Dante; vidi sconfitto 110  
 <mi>ser Francesco, el bon poeta novelo;  
 vidi el Bocazo, Cino, il qual(e) dir belo,  
 e tanti altri che a dirli non è modo -  
 anzi più stretto nodo  
 de afani riligai dintorno il cuore. 115<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Alessandro Boccia, 'Una raccolta di poesia volgare della seconda metà del Quattrocento dall'archivio Simonetta', in *In margine al Progetto Codex. Aspetti di produzione e conservazione del patrimonio manoscritto* (Pisa: Pacini, 2014), pp. 1–28 (pp. 15–16).

As in Davanzati's sonnet, here Petrarch's model is easily perceptible. We have in fact a list of poets who have been overpowered by love, just as in Petrarch's *Triumphus Cupidinis*. Sanguinacci's poem is a tirade against Eros, while in the *Triumphus Cupidinis* we have a parade/catalogue of people vanquished by him. Sanguinacci says that they are so many that it is impossible to list them all, and so he only mentions four: the predictable "three crowns", and the lone Cino. The latter's reappearance is probably due not only to the fact that in both relevant Petrarch's passages he seems to be on a par with Dante, but also to his having a sonnet written on his death by Petrarch (*Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* 92) which easily allows readers to identify him as a poet and more specifically one of love material. Despite this fact, his name is preserved only by one of the two extant manuscripts of Sanguinacci's poem, the Canon. Ital. 81 of the Bodleian Library of Oxford. In the other witness, a fifteenth-century manuscript currently owned by Professor Alberto Simonetta, his name disappears and that line reads 'Bechazo omo il qual(e) dir vero'.<sup>22</sup> Such a trivializing amendment is not surprising: a copyist misreading the name of an author which for him carried little meaning could easily make such a mistake, even with a text that is not particularly difficult to read.

Cino can be found, along with Guittone, Arnaut, and several others, in the longest list of vernacular authors here considered, the one which is included in the 'epistola seconda', 'liber quartus' of Benedetto da Cesena's *De honore mulierum*. This work is a *terza rima* poem of 46 *epistole* divided in four books, consisting in a discussion between the poet and his beloved. The text, composed around 1453-54, enumerates a wealth of historical characters, events, and writers as *exempla* for the young Malatesta (1449-1458), the son of Sigismondo Pandolfo and Isotta degli Atti. The poem imitates Dante's *Commedia* and is also strongly influenced by Petrarch's *Triumphus*: Sara Ferrilli has remarked that the combined presence of these two models is quite unusual, however it remains in keeping with the general attitude of Benedetto towards his numerous sources, and which she

---

<sup>22</sup> Boccia, p. 16.



The line on Guittone is clearly modelled on Dante's judgement about him in *Purgatorio* XXVI 121-126, which is in its turn prompted by the incorrect opinion about the relative merits of Arnaut Daniel (mentioned immediately before in both texts) and Giraut de Bornel.

A voce più ch'al ver drizzan li volti,                      121  
e così ferman sua oppinione  
prima ch'arte o ragion per lor s'ascolti.  
  
Così fer molti antichi di Guittone,  
di grido in grido pur lui dando pregio,                      125  
fin che l'ha vinto il ver con più persone.<sup>26</sup>

However, the sparse information provided by Benedetto about Arnaut Daniel seems to be based on Petrarch's 'gran maestro d'amor' (*Triumphus Cupidinis* IV 41, though perhaps with an echo of Benvenuto da Imola's enigmatic statement, in his Dante commentary, that from Arnaut 'Petrarcha fatebatur sponte se accepisse modum et stilum cantilenae de quatuor rhythmis, et non a Dante').<sup>27</sup>

---

*letteratura italiana*, 49/50,1/2 (2017), 57–70. Every quotation from early prints has been edited in a conservative manner: abbreviations have been expanded, *v* has been distinguished from *u*, words have been separated and accentuation, capitalization and punctuation have been modified. The numbering of lines is also my own.

<sup>26</sup> *Purgatorio* XXVI 121-126: Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, ed. by Giorgio Petrocchi, 4 vols (Milano: Mondadori, 1966), III, p. 454-455.

<sup>27</sup> *Benevenuti de Rambaldi de Imola Comentum super Dantis Aldigherij Comoediam, nunc primum integre in lucem editum sumptibus Guilielmi Warren Vernon*, ed. by Jacobo Philippo Lacaita, 5 vols. (Florentiae: G. Barbèra, 1887), IV, 134.





Guido Guinizelli (68); *Alcuin* (70); *Riccobaldo da Ferrara* (70-71); *Benvenuto da Imola* (71); *Brunetto Latini* (72); Arnaut Daniel (73-74); Guittone d'Arezzo (74-75); Folquet de Marselha (76-78); *Cecco d'Ascoli* (79-84); Robert 'The Wise' I of Anjou, king of Naples (85-87); *Giovanni di Bonandrea* (88); *Simone Serdini da Siena* (89-90); *Antonio Beccari da Ferrara* (91); *Malatesta Malatesta 'dei sonetti'* (92-93); *Carlo Malatesta* (uncle of the previous Malatesta: 94-96); *'Lodovico' 'da Santerno'* (100-105); *Giusto de' Conti of Valmontone* (115-124).

Some of these names were already in Calderoni's text, such as Coluccio Salutati and Leonardo Bruni, and it seems possible that Benedetto could have been influenced by the other source that I have mentioned for Calderoni, Filippo Villani. In the series of biographies found in the *De origine civitatis Florentie*, in fact, the life of Claudian immediately precedes those of Dante and Petrarch, and the *De honore mulierum* repeats the same scheme – albeit in an abbreviated way – in its sequence of authors (in Villani's series the biography of Boccaccio also follows that of Petrarch, but in-between these two there is a section dedicated to Zanobi da Strada). Villani's work could also be the source behind Benedetto's statement that Brunetto Latini wrote in French (it should be remarked that the verb 'cantò' seems to imply that he wrote verse in that language, while Brunetto's French work is in prose): however, this information could also come from the exegetical tradition of the *Commedia*. Once more Benvenuto da Imola may be one likely source,<sup>31</sup> for Benvenuto is named by Benedetto immediately before Brunetto Latini; and Benvenuto's commentary could also be the text from which Albertino Mussato's name is derived a few lines before. In the same passage, we can see how Benedetto uses the *Commedia* and its exegetical tradition for expanding upon the names found in the *Triumphs*: the cases of the two "Guidos" are quite clear in this regard, as is that of Guittone.

---

<sup>31</sup> *Benevenuti de Rambaldi*, IV, p. 526.

De i Cavalcanti Guido ancor te parlo,                    61  
 Coluccio, el pistoiese meser Cino,  
 che scripse quel che molti pò chiosarlo.

Nel tempo nostro io trovo lo Aretino                    64  
 ch'oggi fa terra; io dico Leonardo;  
 lassol però, che 'l mio parlar festino.

Tornando aretro al tempo a nui più tardo                67  
 trovo Musactò e Guido Bolognese,  
 che ritimò de lo amoroso dardo;

e Alcuin più antico, e el Ferrarese                    70  
 (de Aricobaldo dico); e Benvenuto;  
 Brunecto che cantò in lingua francese.

However, it is also clear that the *De honore mulierum* draws from several other sources, including its author's personal knowledge and acquaintances, as is shown most clearly in the two tercets dedicated to the quite obscure figure of Lodovico da Santerno.

Tu da Santerno, o Lodovico, ch'io                    100  
 vidde in mia fanciullezza nel tuo stato,  
 possia desfatto e col vestito pio.

De l'alte Muse fosti innamorato;                    103  
 poi mendicando col cordon discalzo  
 cercasti el ben ch'a veruno è negato.

The final result is a startlingly rich list of characters, though one that is rather limited in its coherence and logical consistency as well as in its historical awareness, even if one allows for the correct relative chronological placement in ‘previous times’ of the writers mentioned after his contemporary Leonardo Bruni. The *De honore mulierum* is also clearly not a work that presents a canon, because not all authors mentioned are considered the best ones. With regard to Cecco d’Ascoli, it must be remarked that Benedetto da Cesena does not have such a good opinion of his production. According to him, the wide circulation of Cecco’s work is not a phenomenon linked to its poetic quality, and his judgement of the author is even harsher than that on his writings. Moreover, this is clearly not a “catalogue” specifically dedicated to vernacular poets. Its heterogeneity is apparent at several points. The Latin historian and geographer Riccobaldo<sup>32</sup> has little in common with the vernacular poet Guinizelli. What is more, Alcuin lived more than four centuries before the other figures mentioned and mostly beyond the Alps. Another jarring juxtaposition is that of Apuleius and Bede (in the same line). Quite incongruous too, and especially for the modern sensibility, is the mention of Petrarch’s examiner for his *laurea*, Robert of Anjou, who composed mostly sermons and theological treatises<sup>33</sup> – his presence is even more striking given the fact that he is presented as an heir of Euterpe, the muse of flutes and lyric poetry. One

---

<sup>32</sup> On this author, see Massimo Giansante, ‘Riccobaldo da Ferrara’, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 87 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2016), 384–86.

<sup>33</sup> See Jean-Paul Boyer, ‘Roberto d’Angiò, re di Sicilia-Napoli’, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 87 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2016)

<[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/roberto-d-angio-re-di-sicilia-napoli\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/roberto-d-angio-re-di-sicilia-napoli_(Dizionario-Biografico)>)  
[accessed 24 January 2020].

further incongruity that might be adduced is that of Carlo Malatesta who is remembered for his role at the Council of Constance, where he announced the abdication of Gregory XII.<sup>34</sup>

All in all, then, in the *De honore mulierum*, the work in which we find the most extensive list of earlier pre-Petrarchan vernacular poets, there is a deeply heterogeneous list of characters, one mixing Classic, Late Antique, Early Medieval, and contemporary ones, figures who are not only historians, poets in either Latin or vernacular languages, commentators, authors of treatises or political rulers, but also personal acquaintances, canonical authors (Dante, Petrarch) or widely known ones (this is the case of Cecco d'Ascoli, Simone Serdini da Siena, and Antonio Beccari da Ferrara, widely transmitted by mid-fifteenth century manuscripts). What is more, Benedetto also provides names that appear to be slavishly copied from other sources, or at times contain misunderstandings that do not allow us to identify who is being mentioned (such as seems to be the case with 'Lutio pisso', that I have been unable to identify). Leaving aside Cecco d'Ascoli, Giovanni di Bonandrea<sup>35</sup>, and obviously Dante, all mentions of pre-Petrarchan poets seem to fall in this last category: Benedetto is repeating names mostly found in Petrarch's *Triumphs*, and attaching to them some minimal second-hand information.

---

<sup>34</sup> See Anna Falcioni, 'Malatesta, Carlo', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 68 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2007), 17–21.

<sup>35</sup> This author also wrote a short vernacular poem, but he is probably mentioned here thanks to his major work, a handbook of *ars dictaminis*. The clause 'de i tempi autore' does not seem to me to refer to one of his works but rather to the fact that he was a contemporary of the two previously mentioned characters, Cecco d'Ascoli and Robert of Anjou. See Franco Lucio Schiavetto, 'Giovanni di Bonandrea', *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 55 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2000), 726–29.

Several vernacular poets (albeit not so many as we find in the *De honore mulierum*) are mentioned in Nicola da Montefalco's *canzone Entra tue fiamme vive, amor, me veggio*, one of the poems which constitute his poetic collection *Filenico* (post 1479, but clearly several poems have been composed before). The work, transmitted by only one manuscript currently preserved at the Classense library in Ravenna, is heavily Petrarchist. It narrates the story of the poet's love for a woman, Filena, with whom the author falls in love after meeting her in a church, as Petrarch had done with his beloved Laura. Like Laura, Filena dies, and her death as well as the death of Nicola's patron is recorded in the book, a book that – like the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* – is punctuated with anniversary sonnets of the first encounter between the poet and Filena, dated 1467.<sup>36</sup>

*Entra tue fiamme* presents some similarities with the poem by Sanguinacci that we considered above: it is in a similar way addressed to Eros, which is here however praised as a positive force and beseeched to help the poet perfect his art, allowing him to reach the same level as his predecessors. Several vernacular poets are mentioned, one in each of the six strophes following the first. The following quotation reproduces the last lines of strophes II to VI.

[...]

fa la mia man sì degna,  
che tracti de' bell'ochi suoi pudice,  
qual Danti disse de suo Beatrice.

[...]

---

<sup>36</sup> See Andrea Comboni and Tiziano Zanato, *Atlante dei canzonieri in volgare del Quattrocento*, Edizione nazionale I canzonieri della lirica italiana delle origini, 7 (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2017), pp. 407–12, and Nicola da Montefalco, *Filenico: canzoniere*, ed. by Silvestro Nessi (Perugia: Effe, 2005).

doname intelligentia,  
 che scriva qual Francesco a Llaura scripse,  
 per fin ch'al mondo techo amando visse.

[...] facci mia opera perfecta,  
 como el Boccaccio de Maria Fiammecta.

[...]  
 su la porrà [i.e., the poet's beloved] tra gratiose dea,  
 non men che l'Asculan fe' d'Elisea.

[...]  
 tale che scia cognosciuta  
 la penna mia tra ciaschun dir anticho,  
 como Risbena el vesco<vo> Federico.

[...] or si' mie guida,  
 qual che fusti e più fida  
 ad Sinibaldo, Cino et Perusino  
 de Gilia tractando in suo camino.<sup>37</sup>

In each passage, we encounter the same rhetorical device: the poet wishes to achieve the same results as a previous vernacular author, whose beloved is mentioned besides him. No issues arises for the first three, each respectively naming one of the three crowns. In the fourth passage, we

---

<sup>37</sup> Nicola da Montefalco, pp. 107–9.

encounter Cecco d'Ascoli with a mysterious 'Elisea'. The biographical identity of the woman praised by Cecco is unknown and Nicola's source for her name cannot be currently determined, but considering the success of Cecco's poem *L'Acerba* and its dissemination, a mention of this author is not that surprising. In the fifth strophe Nicola makes reference to Federico Frezzi, bishop of Foligno from 1404 to 1416 and previously author of the *Quadriregio*, another poem in *terza rima* strongly influenced by Dante's *Commedia* and also quite successful and widely diffused with approximately thirty surviving manuscripts and four *incunabula*.<sup>38</sup> Lisbena is the name of one of the nymphs he interacts with in his poem (the first is named Filena as the beloved in the *Filenico*, and here clearly showing another influence). The last passage is the most problematic. According to Nessi, who published the poem, and Cremonini,<sup>39</sup> three different poets are quoted at this point: Sinibaldo da Perugia, Cino da Pistoia, and an unknown 'Perusino'. Gilia should be the equally unknown beloved of the latter. However, this hypothesis is at odds with the fact that in all preceding passages only one poet and one woman are named.

The difficulty might be solved by hypothesising that in one of the sources from which Nicola da Montefalco was able to gather the name and existence of a poet from Perugia (and this provenance was probably quite relevant for him, considering his geographical area of activity and the fact that his patron was the unofficial ruler of Perugia, Braccio Baglioni),<sup>40</sup> there was a poem with two attributions which Nicola conflated into a single name. One hypothesis could be, for instance, that in a caption originally attributing the poem to Cino there was added the alternative authorship of Sinibaldo da Perugia inserting 'Sinibaldo' on the left and 'perusino' on the right side of the original attribution. Nicola could have interpreted and then written in his poem 'Sinibaldo

---

<sup>38</sup> Simona Foà, 'Frezzi, Federico', *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 50 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1998), 520–23.

<sup>39</sup> Nicola da Montefalco, p. 109; Comboni and Zanato, p. 411.

<sup>40</sup> Comboni and Zanato, p. 409.



cino perusino'; and the copyist of the only extant manuscript of the *Filenico* would be responsible for adding the conjunction (and this would have happened even more easily if that was inserted as a Tironian note).<sup>41</sup> As for Gilia, which was a legitimate feminine name in that period, we are confronted with the same difficulties already encountered with Elisea. We have no other elements concerning the name of Sinibaldo's beloved. It may be that Nicola was integrating the information that he had with inventions of his own, and this seems far more plausible than the possible hypothesis of a misreading of Selvaggia (the name of Cino's beloved).

According instead to my hypothesis that Nicola in the last passage referred to just one poet, Gilia's lover, which he identified with Sinibaldo da Perugia, Nicola's canon is a composite one but not so incoherent as that of Benedetto da Cesena. As well as the three crowns, we have in fact two authors of widely circulating fourteenth-century poems; one local glory of the second half of the same century;<sup>42</sup> and the most famous vernacular poet of the first half of the fifteenth century, Giusto

---

<sup>41</sup> See also Cremonini's remark about the copyist, 'ammesso che abbia avuto a disposizione gli originali, dà in vari casi l'impressione di non avere saputo leggerli correttamente', in Comboni and Zanato, p. 407.

<sup>42</sup> Sinibaldo is mentioned immediately after Petrarch (in a wider heterogeneous group comprising mythological, biblical, historical and literary characters) also in an anonymous XV century poem, inspired by Petrarch's *Triumphs* as well (in the only known manuscript, the n. 524 of the Library of the Earl of Leicester at Holkham Hall, copied in 1469, the caption at f. 1r reads 'Incomincia ilibro chiamato lonorato cioe trionphi nuovi'; see also Sinibaldo di Berardello, *Sinibaldo da Perugia: un poeta del Trecento e la sua opera*, ed. by Daniele Piccini, Biblioteca della Deputazione di storia patria per l'Umbria, 4 (Perugia: Deputazione di storia patria per l'Umbria, 2008), pp. XXXIX–XL); I have not found in it other vernacular poets besides these two.

de' Conti di Valmontone.<sup>43</sup> Despite the deep and abiding influence of Petrarch on Nicola, in his *Entra tue fiamme vive, amor, me veggio* we encounter the presence of *Triumphus* passage is here at its weakest when we consider all the texts analysed in this essay. Indeed the lack of contact with *Triumphus Cupidinis* IV, 28-42 is even more notable given the fact that Cino in effect disappears. A further absence, that of Guido Cavalcanti, is especially remarkable, given that his production was being intensely recovered in Florence during this same years (1460s-1470s).<sup>44</sup>

Guido Cavalcanti seems to be quoted instead in the last text that will be analysed in this article, that is, in a passage from a Latin letter that Francesco Filelfo addressed to Lorenzo de' Medici in 1473 (29 May). Filelfo's letter is concerned primarily with the debate about the linguistic variety spoken in ancient Rome, a debate where the main contenders had been much earlier Leonardo Bruni and Flavio Biondo.<sup>45</sup> Filelfo's opinion opposed Bruni's own thesis that the vernacular had always existed: had this been the case, according to Filelfo, we should have some texts from ancient Rome

---

<sup>43</sup> 'Giusto già tocco dal tuo fermo strale | dorato et cinto in amor de victoria, | da te tanta memoria | hebbe, che prese in gratioso verso | ad laudarla, et sì gli alzasti l'ale, | ch'a tucta Italia fie nota sua storia. | Per mio bene et suo gloria, | famme ardito nel dir<e> limato et terso': Nicola da Montefalco, p. 109.

<sup>44</sup> Giuliano Tanturli, 'Proposta e risposta. La prolusione petrarchesca del Landino e il codice cavalcantiano di Antonio Manetti', *Rinascimento*, 32 (1992), 213–25; Giuliano Tanturli, 'Filologia cavalcantiana fra Antonio Manetti e Raccolta Aragonese', in *Sotto il segno di Dante. Scritti in onore di Francesco Mazzoni*, ed. by Leonella Coglievina and Domenico De Robertis (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1998), pp. 311–20.

<sup>45</sup> Giuseppe Marcellino and Giulia Ammannati, *Il latino e il volgare nell'antica Roma: Biondo Flavio, Leonardo Bruni e la disputa umanistica sulla lingua degli antichi romani* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2015).

written in the vernacular, such as the numerous works written with great wisdom and elegance by recent authors in this language. He names a few of them, adding that there are several others, and that their works are strongly printed on our memory.

Et omnium primum illud mihi videor indubitato posse ac dilucide affirmare: nihil magis abhorruisse a communi loquendi Romanorum consuetudine quam hanc vulgarem linguam, qua nunc omnis utitur Italia. Nam si huiusmodi sermone prisci Romani illi essent usi, extarent aliqua eorum scripta, aliqui libri aut versu aut soluta oratione, qualia videmus hac tempestate volumina plurima perdocte et eleganter scripta ab iis, qui proximis temporibus claruere: duobus Guidonibus Florentinis, Dante Aldigerio, Francisco Petrarca, Iohanne Boccacio et Asculano Ciccho aliisque quamplurimis, quorum monumenta nulla unquam memoria obscurabit. Itaque lingua haec vulgaris, qua nunc universa loquitur Italia (tametsi in alia quam in alia eius regione deterius), nihil habet omnino comunque cum vetusto illo sermone, qui Ciceronis memoria erat in usu.<sup>46</sup>

Looking at the list of names, Filelfo's statement sounds almost ironic. As usual, there are the three crowns, and at the end of the list encountered name we have already met twice before, Cecco d'Ascoli. According to Paolo Viti, Filelfo could have inserted the latter among the Florentine writers in order to stake out the contribution to the vernacular of an author coming from his geographical area.<sup>47</sup> But this explanation is unnecessary, considering the broad dissemination of Cecco's work. The *editio princeps* of his poem *L'Acerba* was being printed in Brescia more or less

---

<sup>46</sup> Francesco Filelfo, *Collected letters: Epistolarum Libri XLVIII*, ed. by Jeroen de Keyser, (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2015), p. 1560.

<sup>47</sup> Paolo Viti, 'Filelfo, Francesco', *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 47 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1997), 613–26 (p. 620).

at the same time when Filelfo was writing his letter to the Magnificent, and this Brescian print was only the first one of at least a dozen others before the end of the century. It is also the case that, as we have seen, Cecco is mentioned also in other fifteenth-century lists of authors. Far more striking is the opening of Filelfo's list, where he quotes *duobus Guidonibus*, according to him both from Florence.

This misconception of Guido Guinizelli being a Florentine can be found elsewhere, even though it could be easily corrected by consulting almost all the available commentaries of the *Commedia*. Benedetto da Cesena's *De honore mulierum* is a good case in point in this regard. The same operation of comparing and integrating different sources could have been done by others, since the *Triumphs* and Dante's exegetical tradition were not at all beyond reach. Filelfo clearly did not have any interest in doing this kind of work: his "canon" of vernacular authors is composed quite superficially, mostly assembling very renowned names or authors of widespread texts and in part uncritically relying on the authority of Petrarch's list of poets in the *Triumphus Cupidinis* – the *duobus Guidonibus Florentinis* are again quite revealing in this regard. Indeed, we cannot even say for sure that Filelfo was able, or even ever made a mental effort, to identify the more ancient Guido, Guinizelli. It is possible and even plausible that he simply repeated Petrarch's formula. In light of this fact, it is then interesting that he left out all the other authors named in the *Triumphus Cupidinis*, and especially Cino da Pistoia. In his commentary to the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* in fact Filelfo deals quite extensively with this author, especially when commenting upon sonnet 92, when he clearly states that besides an excellent law scholar Cino was also a poet and a quite good one.

Costui fu non solo in legge & in ragion canonica doctore singulare quanto alchuno altro più eccellente fusse in quella etade, ma etiandio nelle arte. E dilectavassi di scrivere in rima & in versi, e dicea assai limato secondo la eloquenza di quell tempo.<sup>48</sup>

The fact that Cino was a poet could be easily derived from Petrarch's sonnet 92 (especially line 9), but Cino is mentioned by Filelfo, while disproving the hypothesis that *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* 91 had been written for the death of his beloved, and also when commenting on *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* 25, which, for Filelfo, Petrarch had written and sent to Cino believing that the latter had died. In this last passage, Filelfo states again that Cino had been a 'famosissimo doctor di leggie'. His absence from the list of vernacular authors in Filelfo's letter to Lorenzo de' Medici is perhaps not so surprising at one level, since in the eccentric presence of a second Florentine Guido we can see what might be described as Filelfo's freewheeling attitude towards the vernacular tradition.<sup>49</sup>

The carelessness of Filelfo is all the more remarkable considering that the recipient of his letter was playing a leading role in the promotion of vernacular culture, and in a few years' time would sign the introductory *epistola* of the *Raccolta Aragonesa*, one of the chosen limits for the scope of this essay. Filelfo's letter arrived in an environment where vernacular literature had progressively acquired more and more prestige and was on a rising trajectory. A rather different picture emerges from the seven texts that have been analysed in this article, especially when we consider them from the perspective of how much knowledge of the previous vernacular tradition and especially the pre-

---

<sup>48</sup> This and the following quotation are taken from Francesco Filelfo, *Commento a Rerum vulgarium fragmenta 1-136*, ed. by Michele Rossi (Treviso: Antilia, 2018), pp. 102r-v and 42r, and edited following the already stated criteria.

<sup>49</sup> Filelfo's carefree and uncommitted attitude in this regard can be constated also in his Petrarch commentary: see Dionisotti, pp. 79–85.

Petrarchan one they demonstrate, and to what extent there was an historical awareness in this regard. With the partial exception of Benedetto da Cesena's *De honore mulierum*, we find a pronounced tendency over time to make reference to ever fewer pre-Petrarchan authors. Moreover, despite the presence of a central core of writers (though this is itself quite small and limited and not even found in our first text), a second notable tendency is for there to be significant variability in the names mentioned. Cino alternates with Guido, the latter occasionally doubling as two poets with the same name; Fazio degli Uberti alternates with Cecco d'Ascoli; now and again an author puts in an appearance never to be seen again (see Bindo Bonichi, or Federico Frezzi). Even where there are explicit (or implicit) canons, these canons seem shifting and unstable, and appear rather makeshift ones than the result of widespread consensus or deep critical reflection. As such these findings seem the obvious consequence of the subordinate role of vernacular literature, which was also at the root of a loss and a consequent lack of knowledge concerning a great number of vernacular authors. As we have seen throughout, mentions of them are often no more than repetitions of names found in previous sources, especially Petrarch's *Triumphus Cupidinis* whose pervasive, though not entirely even, influence we have tracked and demonstrated throughout this essay. This is, of course, far from surprising considering the remarkable success and dissemination of Petrarch's poem in the fifteenth century. In a landscape where the familiarity with the earlier Italian tradition seems to have been quite scarce and historical consciousness of its figures non-existent, Petrarch's lines attain a privileged status as primary source material in this regard. What is more, most mentions of pre-Petrarchan poets other than Dante are found in contexts heavily influenced by Petrarch and the view on the most ancient Italian poets seems to be filtered through a Petrarchan lens.

While the influence of Petrarch's passages can be traced in several other later works, including Poliziano's accompanying letter to the *Raccolta Aragonesa*, this last text marks a real turning point. It is in fact a serious attempt at a real critical and historical reconstruction, comprising even a short history of vernacular poetry. The *Raccolta* in no way offers a more or less refashioned version of previous canons including authors not influential, read, or even known

anymore. The novelty of Poliziano's operation – which emerges with greater clarity when studied against these earlier texts – is particularly apparent when looking at Benedetto da Cesena's *De honore mulierum*. Here, the integration of Petrarch's *Triumphs* and the *Commedia* along with its exegetical tradition seems to anticipate Poliziano's approach to his sources, when we consider that a great part of Laurentian Florence's knowledge concerning the most ancient vernacular poetry came from these same texts. And yet, as we have seen, Benedetto appears to be uncritically amassing names and collecting information about them, without any real critical assessment and in all likelihood without having read any texts of several writers that he mentions. Poliziano's judgment on Cino as being apparently better than Dante and his deep appreciation of Cavalcanti is instead the result of a first-hand reading of their poems. The novelty of the historical and critical perspective in the introductory *Epistola* of the *Raccolta Aragonesa* is in fact driven by the recovery of older, and in that moment, unknown texts, and it is even more remarkable considering that the anthology contained two of the poems here analysed, the sonnet by Cino Rinuccini (actually transmitted to us only by copies of the *Raccolta Aragonesa*) and the *canzone* by Anselmo Calderoni. The stark break with this kind of tradition that is represented by Poliziano's letter is what makes that defining *Epistola* a fitting demarcation point for this survey.

University of Oxford, Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages

Maria Clotilde Camboni, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow

88 The Heyes, Gloucester Green

OX1 2BU Oxford (UK)

[mariaclotilde.camboni@gmail.com](mailto:mariaclotilde.camboni@gmail.com)