

L'evo e il tempo del "Canzoniere." Raffaele Morabito.

Biblioteca dell'“Archivum Romanicum,” Serie I: Storia, Letteratura, Paleografia 441.
Florence: Olschki, 2015. 72 pp. €19.

In this slim volume, Raffaele Morabito situates Francesco Petrarch's position within an early modern polemic concerning the issue of *evo* (periodic time) versus *tempo* (tensed time). Morabito's methodological approach to this debate within the philosophy of time, as it is figured in Petrarch's vernacular *Canzoniere*, is to historically contextualize certain poems within the broader philosophical and theological approaches to time and temporality that had gained traction during the Italian Middle Ages. He ultimately concludes that within the *Canzoniere* one can trace the shift between Petrarch's earlier conception of time as natural (astronomical) to the idea that time is artificially constructed by man and relative to each person's individual subjectivity.

L'evo e il tempo is divided into fourteen short sections ranging in length between one and nine pages. Each section provides a brief overview of various philosophical, theological, and poetic approaches to the problem of *evo* and *tempo*, with occasional citations of Petrarch's poetry. Morabito summarizes several prominent theories of time, including those of Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, Augustine, Aquinas, Ockham, Campanella, Cellini, and Leopardi. The succinctness of the sections and their summative quality make the book feel more like a reference guide than a critical evaluation of an evolving philosophy of time. One unfortunate consequence of this organizational approach is that it prevents a sustained or focused examination of Petrarch's complex engagement with time and temporality in his poetry. Each of Morabito's sections include a series of quotations from primary philosophical and/or theological texts that are said to have had an impact on Petrarch's thought, but the path from the philosophy Petrarch inherited to his poetic composition is not given to the reader. Without such connections, it is difficult to appreciate the impact of these philosophies on Petrarch's conception of time (as both periodic and tensed) in the *Canzoniere*.

There are exceptions, however, where Morabito makes the connections more explicit through close readings of Petrarch's poetry. One example is section 2, "L'evo di Petrarca" (5–6), in which Morabito examines the idea of the unstoppable passage of time in two Petrarchan poems. He cross-examines *RVF* 272, "La vita fugge, et non s'arresta una hora," in which we find references to the past, present, and future, with *RVF* 90, "Erano i capei d'oro a l'aura sparsi," in which only the past and present seem to be figured. Morabito, however, shows how the description of the beloved Laura as an "angelica forma" ("angelic form") looks forward to a Christian future since the analogy between the human and angelic refers to the third dimension (*aevum*) where the angels and saints reside for all eternity. In most other sections, however, Morabito does not provide the Petrarchan text or a close reading of it, instead opting to summarize a philosophical subtext, and then pointing the reader to a Petrarchan poem that was potentially influenced by it. This is particularly noted in section 5, "L'evo dei filosofi e l'evo dei poeti" (16–23), in which Morabito provides an overview of Thomas Aquinas's and Alberto Magno's similar definitions of *aevum* as a dimension of existence within itself that is distinct from the concept of eternity. He applies this definition of *aevum* to Petrarch's poetry through a cursory reference to the objectivity of time as figured in Petrarch's *RVF* 35, "Solo e pensoso" (whose verses he regrettably does not cite or analyze). Within the book, there is an abrupt shift in focus from the philosophical debate on periodic versus tensed time to a theme often discussed in Petrarch studies: chronological and liturgical time in the *Canzoniere* (sections 9–11, 33–47). Morabito's contribution to the scholarship on that particular topic is in his intriguing discussion of the coming together of the Platonic theory of *amnesis* and religious epiclesis in Petrarch's poetry.

Due to the organizing principle of this book, *L'evo e il tempo* reads more like a series of short ruminations rather than a sustained, critical examination of a complex philosophical issue. Nevertheless, Morabito's short volume does contribute to Petrarch studies a valuable historical breadth with regard to the philosophical and theological question of time and

temporality. His historical overview of the philosophy of time from Aristotle to Leopardi helps to contextualize Petrarch's own grappling with the topic within the broader historical narrative of Western European thought. For this reason, *L'evo e il tempo* would be a useful resource for beginning students of Petrarch with advanced reading skills in Italian, and scholars of the intersections between medieval literature and philosophy.

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