

some disappointment in the face of physical union, Lennon concludes that they depict the value of “fleeting moments” of love between humans (122), however imperfect they may seem at times.

Aldana also depicted the effects of love in mythological poems, the subject of Lennon’s fourth chapter. The texts analyzed in this chapter are Aldana’s version of the Angelica and Medoro story from Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso*, as well as two poems on the relationship between Venus and Mars. Lennon concludes that the mythological subjects (which include, for him, the episode in Ariosto because of its Ovidian sources) allowed Aldana the “critical distance” to talk about love with more complexity (164), which allows readers to make up their minds about the nature of love. In a brief coda Lennon gives a reading of Aldana’s version of the Hero and Leandro story, and concludes with a concise summary of his argument.

One of the challenges that Lennon’s study has to overcome is the incomplete and disordered nature of Aldana’s texts. Aldana didn’t publish any of his works in his lifetime, some of the early poetry he wrote in Florence was lost, and what has come down to us is almost entirely due to the poet’s younger brother, Cosme de Aldana, who published Francisco’s works in several editions beginning in 1589. In spite of these challenges, Lennon’s method of focusing on the theme of love across Aldana’s corpus, looking for revisions of prevailing Neoplatonic or Petrarchan codes of love, produces results; Lennon’s readings show a poet fully engaged in the intellectual and poetic currents of his time, in both Italy and Spain. An element missing from the study is a discussion of the Florentine humanist Benedetto Varchi, who is mentioned on the first page of Lennon’s study and never reappears. It would have been interesting to see whether Varchi’s attempts at applying Neoplatonic ideas to Petrarch’s poetry may have influenced Aldana (the two men knew each other while Aldana lived in Florence). On the whole, though, Lennon’s is an incisive and valuable study of a poet who continues to fascinate.

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*Poeti della corte di Federico II*. Donato Pirovano, ed.  
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The lyric poetry born at the court of Frederick II constitutes a fundamental starting point for the Italian poetic tradition, even though many of its aspects still remain difficult to define. In his ample introduction to the *Poeti della corte di Federico II*, Donato Pirovano discusses the main issues and provides new contributions.

A fundamental fact is the geographic: the poetic horizon of the Magna Curia (the Great Court) is traced back not only to Sicily and Palermo but also to a wider area that

takes account of the itinerant character of the Swabian court. Furthermore, Pirovano emphasizes that even the concept of Sicilianity must be reconsidered as purely cultural in the light of the disparate origins of these poets. He also believes that the label *Scuola Siciliana* (Sicilian School), coined in the late nineteenth century, is unsuited for defining the work of these poets. The role of poetic leader for Frederick II is downsized and deemed more suitable to the Notaro; yet, the sovereign himself understood how that peculiar linguistic and poetic combination could be a functional tool for his project of political unity and centralization. Moreover, the patronage of the sovereign is more extensively framed within the family tradition, starting with Frederick's father, Henry VI of Hohenstaufen, and passed down through his successors.

The creation of a new audience from scratch by writing in a purified Sicilian that, at the same time, was open to Occitan and Latin influence, constitutes the real challenge of the Federician initiative. And yet, as Pirovano warns us, we should not give excessive emphasis to the primacy of lyric poetry at court, since Frederick II's interests were more wide-ranging and multifaceted. In this anthology, according to a criterion that had already been adopted by Contini, all the poets who orbited around the *Magna Curia* are considered Sicilians, regardless of their origin. The reference code is the *Canzoniere Vaticano Latino 3793 (MS V)*. Indeed, Pirovano considers the textual criterion more reliable than the geographic and/or chronological one.

Despite the fact that Siculo-Tuscan poets are not included in this anthology, Pirovano, like Contini, believes that they should not be distinguished too clearly from the Sicilians. In general, the hope is that of a perspective that considers thirteenth-century lyric poetry by taking into account the limits of traditional schema. As for the main themes, love becomes exclusive in comparison with Provençal poets, and political issues are nowhere to be found; what is decisive is, then, the transition from an interpersonal dimension to one based on the inner analysis of the lyric subject, of which the Notaro, the greatest exponent of the group, is the master. Some contaminations (*trouvères*, strands of romance in the language of *Oil*, *Minnesänger*) lead us to consider the Occitanic influence as non-exclusive. Regarding the metric aspect, characterized by a marked experimentalism, Pirovano traces the fundamental creation of the sonnet. Another important novelty of the Sicilians is the so-called divorce between poetry and music, an aspect that Pirovano, however, invites us to consider with less rigidity. After a reflection on the language, the study focuses on the tradition and success of texts and codes.

The anthological section, which follows the bibliographic note, consists of 147 compositions. They include the entire production of Giacomo da Lentini and that of the poets associated with the court of Frederick II and his sons. An introductory profile is drawn up for each author. Each anthologized composition is followed by a commentary that initially traces the metric and thematic elements and then dwells in detail upon the individual parts of the text. In addition to facilitating reading with useful paraphrases, the commentary highlights the stylistic, thematic, lexical, and intertextual aspects,

taking into account the poets existing before and after the author himself. A substantial note on the texts highlights the novelties of this edition compared to the more recent critical editions. Both the index of paragraphs and the general index are placed at the end of the book. This impressive work by Pirovano is undoubtedly an essential tool for approaching, reading, and rethinking the Sicilian poets.

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*The Written World: Space, Literature, and the Chorological Imagination in Early Modern France.* Jeffrey N. Peters.

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One need only think of Vincenzo Coronelli's two gigantic globes, terrestrial and celestial, artistically crafted for Louis XIV in the 1680s, to be reminded of the close relationship among cosmology, space, and poetics in seventeenth-century France. At the center of Jeffrey Peters's eye-opening and beautifully written study lies the thesis that the principle of cosmological and spatial thinking was in a productive dialogue with literary production in seventeenth-century France. In what ways, Peters asks, do the articulations of physical space, ranging from Aristotelian physics, to the Cartesian *res extensa*, to the Lucretian idea of atoms and the void, inform a body of literature famous for its anti-materialism? To what extent is an inquiry into the origins of poetics always entangled with questions of distance, positionality, and, ultimately, cosmological origins? Peters calls this set of questions that he engages with from different angles "chorological imagination."

*The Written World*—structured in six chapters and including writers such as Corneille, Molière, Honoré d'Urfé, La Fontaine, and Madeleine de Scudéry—explores the question of poetic and spatial origination through the lens of the Platonic idea of *chora*, a necessary *triton genos* (third paradigm) Plato introduces to complicate binary oppositions such as model and copy. Plato discusses *chora* after the "likely story" (*eikos logos*) of Atlantis, a place of origin defined by its constitutive absence. *Chora*—both necessary and likely—therefore dovetails with the two key principles of French classical literature: *le nécessaire* and *le vraisemblable*, neither of which is typically studied through the joint prism of spatial, cosmological, and poetic origination. One of the striking features of *chora* is, Peters contends, that it encapsulates the opposition between mythos and logos, thus challenging traditional definitions of *classicism*. Peters calls this "ineffable principle of cosmology that gives shape not only to the universe itself but also to the stories that tell of the world and its becoming" (19) *chora's* "locationless location" (13). The chapters in *The Written World* explore the different articulations of *chora* understood as an originating force making space for all becoming without being place itself.