This book is the first full-length study of the relationship between Chaucer and Petrarch. While acknowledging the important work of (among others) Piero Boitani, David Wallace, and Warren Ginsberg, William T. Rossiter points out that previous work does not amount to a unified, sustained examination of the relationship between these figures, and he aims to fill this gap. His book is a thorough and scholarly consideration of the subject, and, despite its focus on the two poets of the title, it also has much to say about Boccaccio and Dante, essential participants in the Chaucerian/Petrarchan intertext. Although he aims to place Chaucer’s reading of Petrarch within its social and historical context, Rossiter has a specific interest in literary history and in ‘restor[ing] a poetic basis to Chaucer’s understanding of Petrarch’ (pp. 2f.), something which is achieved through some admirably precise stylistic and linguistic analysis.

The introduction discusses Chaucerian and Petrarchan theories of translation, and concludes that for both, *translatio* is received, descending from classical and medieval sources; that both regard translation as characterized by multiplicity, of sources and of method, and that both see translation as essentially periphrastic, neither poet viewing *literatim* translation as superior or even possible.

The first chapter maps Chaucer’s experience of Italy, and of its language, literature, and culture, exploring whether his knowledge of Italian pre-dated his embassies to Italy. It considers the question of whether Chaucer met Petrarch in person, a question which has continued to intrigue readers over the last century; Rossiter rejects the idea, being sceptical that such a meeting would not have found its way into any of Petrarch’s letters. There is also an examination of the relationship between Petrarch’s *De viris illustribus*, Boccaccio’s *De casibus*, and the Monk’s Tale (which Rossiter considers a quasi-humanist text).

The second chapter considers the relationship between Petrarch’s *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, Boccaccio’s *Filostrato*, and *Troilus and Criseyde*. Rossiter argues that Petrarch’s lyrics influenced Boccaccio’s narrative, leaving telling traces, and that although Chaucer does not always take up Boccaccio’s specific uses of Petrarch, nevertheless the existence of these Petrarchan traces enables Chaucer to insert Petrarchan lyrics into his Boccaccio-based narrative without creating stylistic disconnection. The third chapter focuses on the *Canticus Troili* which Chaucer translates from Petrarch’s sonnet ‘S’amor non è’. This contains some careful and stimulating comparison of the lyrics, and a particularly interesting consideration of the relationship between the sonnet form and rhyme royal; Rossiter convincingly argues that Chaucer’s lyric lays the formal foundations for the English sonnet, with its use of iambic pentameter, the rhyming couplet, and its expanded refiguring of the sonnet structure within its twenty-one lines.

The fourth and fifth chapters consider the story of Griselda, focusing first on Petrarch’s version of Boccaccio’s tale, and then on Chaucer’s translation of Petrarch’s text in the Clerk’s Tale. Rossiter sees the heteroglossia of the Clerk’s Tale as a response to the ‘hermeneutic potential’ (p. 190) which Petrarch
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absorbs from Boccaccio, each text favouring plurality of interpretation. The book closes with a discussion of Chaucer and Petrarch as sites of periodization struggles, discussing attempts to construe each of them as variously ‘medieval’ or ‘Renaissance’ figures. Rossiter’s book is not only a careful consideration of the relationship between Chaucer and Petrarch, but its reach beyond that narrow focus also makes it a valuable addition to the wider field of work on Chaucer and the *tre corone.*

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No medieval authors make readers laugh more than Boccaccio and Chaucer. Yet, as Carol Falvo Heffernan says, few studies have directly addressed the comic in their works. She therefore examines tales that bear some relation to fabliaux in the *Decameron* and *The Canterbury Tales.* Instead of a philosophically inflected, sociologically nuanced comparison of their humour, however, *Comedy in Chaucer and Boccaccio* is fundamentally a slim, debatable examination of sources and influence. Like many others, Heffernan believes Chaucer knew the *Decameron*; more than most, she lets speculation pass as evidence. In her first two chapters, Heffernan wants to establish the comic literary tradition Boccaccio and Chaucer shared. She begins, though, by tracing Chaucer’s *fortuna* in Italy. This history is interesting, but the only way Heffernan can connect it to her real subject, Chaucer’s reception of Italy and its writers, is to imagine that he brought his poems on his journeys. In Milan, Chaucer left them to the Visconti libraries; in Florence, he gave them to Boccaccio. Complete lack of evidence hardly deters these flights of fancy; neither do facts or geography. The Apennines notwithstanding, we read, for instance, that Chaucer could have met Petrarch at Padua on his way from Genoa to Florence (p. 10); Dante comes onstage as a Ghibelline exile (p. 18)! Heffernan goes on to gather ancient and medieval ideas about comedy, which she uses to situate her readings of parallel tales.

After preliminary remarks about the fabliaux, Chaucer’s use of them, and an unnecessarily circuitous argument that Boccaccio knew them (something few doubt), Heffernan turns to Canterbury tales that have analogues in the *Decameron.* Unlike Peggy Knapp, Heffernan does not analyse the aesthetic, ethical, and social effects of laughter in these tales; she tries instead to show that Chaucer incorporated details from the novella of Pinuccio (IX.6) in the Reeve’s Tale, Dom Felice (III.4) in the Miller’s, Lidia (VII.9), via Vendome’s *Comedia Lydie,* in the Merchant’s, and Gulfardo (VIII.1) and Monna Belcolore (VIII.2) in the Shipman’s. I found none of Heffernan’s arguments convincing, chiefly because none accounts for the absence of any verbal correspondence between Italian and English texts. So sure is Heffernan of Chaucer’s borrowings, she doesn’t