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Review Essay: Gloria Allaire. *Andrea da Barberino and the Language of Chivalry*

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grow them at home. And if one cannot, extensive trade links make it easier to obtain them. The spice trade certainly reached northern Europe, but supplies must have been unreliable and for most people prohibitively expensive, until the “voyages of discovery” brought the trade under western European control. Secondly, it is clear that the picture of fashions, including culinary ones, moving in a fairly straightforward manner from Italy to France and from France to England is hopelessly over-simplified. Some seem to have jumped straight from Italy to England, while the range of influences on the north was much wider than has usually been allowed for. However, the more exotic influences did not extend far down the social scale. By bringing these and other fascinating points before the reading public, Melitta Weiss Adamson et al. have done us a service we can best repay by pursuing further studies within the regional framework they have established.

Debby Banham
Cambridge University

Gloria Allaire. *Andrea da Barberino and the Language of Chivalry*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997. xiv + 182 pp. \$59.95 ISBN 0813015286.

As the author of this study points out, starting in the twelfth century, Old French and Breton narrative traditions circulated in Italy. Stories about Charlemagne’s battles against the Saracens in Spain, and tales about the knights of Arthur’s round table flourished for approximately four hundred years. This vogue culminated with Pulci, Ariosto, Boiardo, and Tasso, who fused the various traditions together and reworked them into magnificent works of literature. While scholars have studied the many sources which inspired these authors, they have generally not emphasized the production of Andrea da Barberino. Rather, he has been merely listed among the numerous sources, and given no sense of prominence. Because of this, critics have not given him the respect that he deserves. There have been several reasons for this, most notably, an incomplete and imperfect understanding of his works, and the lack of critical editions of his works. Gloria Allaire attempts to address this general oversight through this painstakingly documented and well researched philological analysis. By returning to the manuscripts themselves, she is able to reconstruct his literary corpus more fully than has been previously accomplished. In this way, she demonstrates that Barberino was instrumental in the development of the chivalric epic as a literary genre. By bringing forth this study,

Allaire wishes to return Barberino to a more authoritative position regarding the literary culture of the Italian fifteenth century.

Andrea da Barberino was born ca. 1372 in Florence and died between 1431 and 1433. During his lifetime, he penned numerous prose versions of the lives and adventures of different heroes in Charlemagne's court. Internal evidence and copyist notes suggest that these works were read in the city *piazze* during the time of the Florentine oligarchy, before the rise of the Medici family. Therefore, they reflect the aristocratic ethos of the city of bankers and merchants. At the same time, however, Andrea's style demonstrates a full knowledge of the literature of the day, and includes references to the Bible, Marie de France, Virgil, Guido da Pisa, Ovid, Statius, Justinus, Ptolemy, Giovanni Villani, and Boccaccio. Moreover, the author remained closer to the original French source texts than to the more recent Tuscanizations in general. Therefore, while Barberino appears inspired by the oral tradition, he adopts an ambivalent position to it, writing unmistakably literary redactions of the tales. Because of his erudition, later authors, including Machiavelli and Ariosto, borrowed from his works. Thus, he plays a crucial role in the transformation of this tradition from a popular art form to a more literary one.

Allaire first examines Barberino's style, thereby providing herself with the tools to determine if newly found exemplars in the manuscripts are his or not. Writing in pure Tuscan, she says, the author uses a lay, secular tone completely in line with Italian renaissance historiography. Rather than speak in generalities or cite vaguely fantastical occurrences, Barberino prefers the specificity of the chronicler. To that end, he utilizes a regular ordering of events and dates, cites specific statistics such as the strength of a given army, and frequently enumerates the various points on a journey. Indeed, for Barberino, geography constitutes an organizing principle as he mentions actual places and cities. Citing primarily from Ptolemy, he concerns himself with "anthropological" concerns, such as the peoples and customs of a given area. In much the same way, when warriors encounter animals, he borrows from the bestiaries. Therefore, according to Allaire, the hallmark of Barberino's style is verisimilitude through the use of realistic details.

Having established his stylistic characteristics, Allaire dedicates much of this book to proving that certain texts belong to him. She states that Barberino strove for completeness in his literary production, relating all the important episodes and characters from the tradition. Previous scholarship established his corpus with a number of gaps, and this book seeks to address these missing portions. She first directs her attention to *La prima spagna*. This work was discovered in the nineteenth century, but was subsequently lost. Working from the scholar's description, she argues that although it was unattributed in the manuscript, it probably was written by

Barberino. Thus, even though it is no longer extant, Allaire performs the invaluable service of restoring the work to its author.

The same nineteenth-century critic also described another book, *La seconda Spagna*, and Allaire asserts that a version of this text, with the title of *La storia di Ansuigi*, survives. The two *Spagna* texts fill in the narrative *lacunae* between Barberino's *Aspramonte* and his *Nerbonesi*. Moreover, she demonstrates that the most famous paladin in Italy, Rinaldo, was not lacking to Barberino's works. Rather, the work entitled *Le storie di Rinaldo* similarly belongs to him. In her discussions of *La seconda Spagna* and *Rinaldo*, she shows their stylistic affinities to his other books, citing his unique motifs, expressions, and lexicon found in each. By using a group of control texts, she is careful to ascribe only those elements found specifically in the author's works, and not those which pertain to the chivalric genre in general. Conversely, using this same technique, she is able to argue that Barberino probably did not author the poorly written work, *Il libro di Rambaldo*, but rather, that it represents a copy of his *Guerrin Meschino*. In this manner, Allaire proves that Andrea da Barberino's literary production formed a seamless whole. It relates all the major events in the complete story of the war between Charlemagne and the Saracens. Rather than being inconsistent, as it appeared previously, it constitutes a consistent, universal perspective on that legendary material.

With this study, Allaire sheds new light on an unfairly ignored author of the early Renaissance. By re-examining the manuscripts themselves, she is able to re-evaluate the scholarly opinion on Andrea da Barberino. She shows that, rather than being second-rate, Andrea da Barberino represents an important figure in the development of Italian literature.

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Bernhard Klein. *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland*. Houndmills and New York: Palgrave, 2001. xii + 235 pp. \$65.00. ISBN 0333779339.

When the time comes to write the history of cultural criticism in the latest Elizabethan era (and why not, since Elizabeth II's reign has more or less coincided with the rise of that criticism), one section might be devoted to the category of book in which the first chapter turns on a brief discussion of a painting by an Old Master. Readers usually need look no farther than the book's jacket or frontispiece to see a reproduction of the painting in question. This category would include Michel Foucault's *Les mots et les*