

Girolamo Fracastoro. *Latin Poetry*.

Trans. James Gardner. The I Tatti Renaissance Library 57. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013. xx + 538 pp. \$29.95. ISBN: 978-0-674-07271-8.

The Veronese doctor Girolamo Fracastoro (1476/78–1553) was highly admired by his contemporaries, especially for his major poem *Syphilis*, which has attracted attention over the intervening centuries for its medical content and literary qualities, and which has often been edited and translated. The remainder

of Fracastoro's poetic and prose output has been in comparison neglected, and some poems have been accessible only in eighteenth-century or earlier editions. The present I Tatti Renaissance Library edition contains Fracastoro's entire poetic oeuvre (including two previously unpublished poems), and it is welcome for that reason. The text-translation section is preceded by a brief introduction, and followed by "Note on the Text" and "Notes to the Text" (which together amount to over sixty pages), "Notes to the Translation" (some seventy-five pages), a bibliography, and an index.

On the whole the texts have been well edited with (mainly) modern punctuation and orthography. For the constitution of the *Syphilis* text, earlier editions will have been helpful (especially Jacqueline Vons et al., eds., *Jérôme Fracastor: La syphilis ou le mal français* [2011], in which Concetta Pennuto established the text). But no such assistance was available for the other poems, for which manuscripts and/or early editions had to be used. The credit for the text, the textual appendixes, and much else that is good in the I Tatti volume belongs to Dr. Ornella Rossi: see the note at page 362 by the general editor of the I Tatti Renaissance Library, which also mentions further contributors (see also pages xvii and xviii). I am puzzled by the absence of Dr. Rossi's name from the title page.

Apart from *Syphilis*, the collection contains Fracastoro's incomplete biblical epic *Joseph, Alcon* (which may or may not be his), and extensive *Carmina*. Although in its fundamental concept not unlike *Syphilis*, *Joseph* will be of less interest to modern readers. Fracastoro's *Carmina*, however, deserve the greater attention that this edition will facilitate: they document Fracastoro's life and interests, and introduce the reader to the circle of his patrons, friends, and acquaintances.

If the text and textual material of the I Tatti volume merit praise, the translation arouses less enthusiasm. Fracastoro's Latin is not always easy, and it demands a knowledgeable and alert translator. This volume's translation is not accurate enough to be relied upon by the "students and scholars in a wide variety of disciplines" who are the stated audience for the series. Wherever I looked I found infelicities and misrenderings (in the examples that follow my corrections and comments are in parentheses). *Syphilis* 1.465–69: the imperfects *vertebat*, etc., are rendered as aorists ("overturned," etc., instead of "was overturning," etc., masking Fracastoro's delicate reminiscence of the end of *Georgic* 4); *Syphilis* 1.468: *Euganeos* and *Carnum*: "Euganean Hills" and "Carnic mountains" (they are peoples); *Joseph* 1.16: *Italiae iuvenis decus*: "glory of Italy's youth" ("youth, the glory of Italy"); *Carmen* 13.4: *lacrimis . . . obortis*: "covered in tears" ("tears having sprung forth"); *Carmen* 15.1: *silvis* is untranslated; *increverit*: "roars" ("intensifies"); *Carmen* 36.1: *Natalem . . . tuum lux crastina reddet*: "Tomorrow . . . is your birthday" ("Tomorrow . . . will bring back your birthday").

A randomly selected page (55, *Syphilis* 2.375–406) contains ten misrenderings: *quam maxima terra est* (line 375): "extending as wide as earth itself" (*quam* a dubious reading?); *subdita* (line 376): "subservient" ("lying beneath"); *genera unde metalli* (line 380): "of such metals as" ("whence the kinds of metal"); *ad te miserans . . . / advenio* (lines 382–83): "taking pity on you" ("I come to you in pity");

*advenio* untranslated); *exaudiri* (line 386): “they could hear” (“could be heard”); *haec regio est late* (line 388): “this is the broad region” (*late* [adverb] belongs to the next clause); *Haec loca mille deae caecis habitamus in antris* (line 391): “A thousand goddesses inhabit the dark caves of this land” (“We, a thousand goddesses, inhabit this area in dark caves”); *coërcent/ obicibus* (lines 396–97): “force . . . into bars” (“compact . . . with molds”); *coquntque* (line 399): “smell” (misprint for “smelt?”); *unde salus speranda* (line 404): “wherein consists your hoped-for health” (“whence health is to be hoped for”). Some of these are infelicities, but others (here as elsewhere) are errors; a risible example (*coli insperso sale concava complet*, *Carmen* 20.7) has a housewife making a sausage by stuffing a “bowl” instead of a pig’s intestine. In sum: a useful text; an unreliable translation.

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