

---

H-France Review Vol. 22 (April 2022), No. 55

Alison Baird Lovell, *The Shadow of Dante in French Renaissance Lyric: Scève's "Délie."* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2020. xiii + 250 pp. Notes, bibliography and index. \$99.99 U.S. (hb and eb). ISBN 9781501517976.

Response by Alison Baird Lovell, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I appreciate Jennifer Rushworth's review of my book, *The Shadow of Dante in French Renaissance Lyric: Scève's Délie*, and her estimation of the book's importance in opening new paths for scholarship.[1]

However, a few points of clarification are in order. My book elucidates in depth for the first time the poetic filiation between Dante and Scève, and seeks to nuance existing scholarship concerning the allusions in *Délie* to Petrarch's *Canzoniere*. I emphasize Scève's Italianism rather than his Petrarchism, and situate these poets in a lineage that includes the troubadours, Guinizzelli, and Cavalcanti. Dante's subtle influence on Scève is characterized as a shadow, as the book's title reflects.

Rushworth's review distorts certain ideas presented in my book, as follows. She claims that I argue that Scève is more Dantean than Petrarchan, which misses the point of the book. A cursory glance at the book's description refutes this. Rushworth then condemns this position as being inconsistent with my acknowledgment of the importance of Petrarch's influence on Scève and the plurality of Scève's sources. Rushworth insists that my book contrasts Dante and Petrarch with a "rigid presentation," while citing instances that indicate otherwise. She denigrates what she considers the book's "indecision as to whether it is arguing for Dante instead of or as well as Petrarch as the key to understanding Scève," which likewise misses the point of the book.

I was not proposing "the key" to understanding Scève. I sought to examine anew these complex poetic influences in my reading of *Délie*, particularly with respect to Dante. Rushworth is free to disagree with my interpretive stance, but let us distinguish between a position she dislikes and weakness of argument, and let us refrain from straw man fallacies and reductive claims. It is rather unfortunate that her review, for all its length and impressive detail, does not truly engage with my poetic analysis of Dante and Scève, which is the heart of the book. Instead, Rushworth fixates on Petrarch and seems to disregard the book's nuances.

Finally, it is regrettable that Rushworth disapproved of the book's title, whereas the author felt that it did indeed correspond to the substance therein.

## NOTE

[1] *H-France Review*, Vol. 21 (October 2021), no. 193.

Alison Baird Lovell  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
[alovell3@wisc.edu](mailto:alovell3@wisc.edu)

Copyright © 2022 by the Society for French Historical Studies, all rights reserved. The Society for French Historical Studies permits the electronic distribution of individual reviews for nonprofit educational purposes, provided that full and accurate credit is given to the author, the date of publication, and the location of the review on the H-France website. The Society for French Historical Studies reserves the right to withdraw the license for redistribution/republication of individual reviews at any time and for any specific case. Neither bulk redistribution/republication in electronic form of more than five percent of the contents of *H-France Review* nor republication of any amount in print form will be permitted without permission. For any other proposed uses, contact the Editor-in-Chief of H-France. The views posted on *H-France Review* are not necessarily the views of the Society for French Historical Studies.

ISSN 1553-9172