



Petrarch's Laurels

Sara Sturm-Maddox

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A comprehensive new reading of Petrarch's lyric collection known as the Canzoniere or Rime sparse, the work that stands at the origins of the dominant tradition of European Renaissance poetry. Unlike many other considerations of Petrarch's poetry, this study takes into account through close reading the vast majority of the 366 poems included in the collection. At the same time it adopts a range of intertextual perspectives. It emphasizes the position of the Rime within Petrarch's own varied literary corpus and in relation to his precursors both classical and vernacular. New insights emerge into his transgressions and evasions of the primary Ovidian myth in the collection, into his engagement with Dante, and into his adaptation of the motifs of the romance quest. Sturm-Maddox also explores Petrarch's creation of a personal myth of poetic origins, one centered in Valchiusa as the locus of an amorous epiphany, and in the shade of the laurel as the locus of the production of rime sparse. Ample notes complement the text, and English translations of the Italian poetry are included. Sara Sturm-Maddox is Professor of French and Italian at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and author of several books, including *Petrarch's Metamorphoses: Text and Subtext in the Rime Sparse* (Missouri, 1985).

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