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Review Essay: *Dante Today*

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defensive and vainglorious act would appear much less troublesome had Mastrobuono not devoted the entire last paragraph of his book to attacking Freccero for the promotional blurb on the dust jacket of the latter's *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*. The notion, found on the dust cover and accepted by many American Dantists, that Freccero "is the best contemporary critic of Dante" is, to quote Mastrobuono, "a shameless, if not shameful, example of advertising hype, altogether unbecoming in a scholarly book on Dante, whose *Comedy*, after all, is also a celebration of humility" (279). Needless to say, such contradictions will likely confuse the sentient reader trying to make sense of the book's overall purpose.

One final warning: Mastrobuono's book is not particularly user-friendly; it lacks an index and confusingly locates the Contents page *after* the Preface. In conclusion, *Dante's Journey* contains important revelations but could have benefitted enormously from a good editor.

Madison U. Sowell
Brigham Young University

Dante Today, ed. Amilcare A. Iannucci, special spring and fall volume of *Quaderni d'italianistica*, 10.1-2 (1989).

This special issue of *Quaderni d'italianistica* brings together fourteen essays and five notes by some of the most distinguished Dantists working today and cumulatively offers a panoramic view of the current "state of the art" from a predominantly Anglo-American perspective. It also contains brief notices on twenty-six recent books and a sixty-page bibliography of Dante research published between 1984 and 1988.

The editor, Amilcare A. Iannucci, leads with his own essay, "Dante, Television, and Education," which critiques a 1988 Italian series on the *Commedia*, a British production of the *Inferno* in progress, and finally the University of Toronto classroom videos that Iannucci himself conceived. Teodolinda Barolini's groundbreaking "Detheologizing Dante: For a 'New Formalism' in Dante Studies" authoritatively proposes a new course for future research on the poem: "The time has come for us to be more interested in *how* the *Commedia* works than in *what* it says" (46). Massimo Verdicchio, in "Error in Dante's *Convivio*," considers Dante's error in believing and leading his readers to believe that one can improve oneself simply through the study of philosophy. Dino Cervigni persuasively interprets Dante's loss of consciousness at the end of *Inferno* 3 in terms of a Dantean rhetoric of silence in "L'Acheronte dantesco: Morte del Pellegrino

e della poesia." Diskin Clay investigates Dante's confessions of unfaithfulness to Beatrice throughout the *Commedia* in "Dante's Broken Faith." Elio Costa's "From *locus amoris* to Infernal Pentecost: The Sin of Brunetto Latini" reads *Inferno* 15 in the light of Latini's philosophical and political writings. Christopher Kleinhenz provides in "Deceivers Deceived: Devilish Doubletalk in *Inferno* 21–23" an articulated analysis of the ambiguous and deceptive linguistic surface of these cantos that examine the workings of fraud, especially fraudulent language. An important and original contribution is Madison U. Sowell's "Dante's Nose and Publius Ovidius Naso: A Gloss on *Inferno* 25.45," in which Sowell demonstrates that the verse contains a play on Ovid's last name and integrates that play within a larger discourse on the role of Ovid in the *Commedia*. Margherita Frankel's "Juno among the Counterfeiters: Tragedy vs. Comedy in *Inferno* 30" addresses the rhetorical incongruities of that canto's opening simile, which she reads convincingly as meta-rhetorical manifesto for Dante's comedic, anticlassical "new style." Domenico Pietropaolo, in "Dante's Paradigms of Humility and the Structure of Reading," provides thoughtful reflections on the phenomenology of reading as dramatized by Dante in *Purgatorio* 10, which serves as a paradigm for reading the *Commedia* as a whole. Zygmunt G. Baranski's lucid treatment of "Dante's Three Reflective Dreams" both shows how the organization of the dreams establishes structural connections throughout the poem and highlights the way in which Dante, in a strikingly contemporary manner, "imbues the dreamer's visions with psychological realism" (227). Giuliana Carugati's "Dante 'Mistico?'" is a fascinating and deeply pertinent essay that attempts the precise collocation of Dante's writing in relation to the writings of religious mystics. The essay portion of the volume concludes with two *lecturae* by acknowledged masters in the genre: Michelangelo Picone on *Paradiso* 20 and Riccardo Scrivano on *Paradiso* 28.

The "Note e Rassegne" that follow the essays include a brief history of the Dartmouth Dante Database project, written by its "inventor," Robert Hollander; Nicola de Blasi's discussion of the unfortunate philological history of Marino Jonata's neglected *Giardino*; a gloss on *Inferno* 30.64–69 by R. A. Shoaf, who identifies Peraldus on the vice of avarice as a source for Dante's *acqua falsa*; Carolyn Lund Mead's observations on how Dante's meeting with Forese comments upon the Ugolino episode; and finally, Mirella Pasquarelli's engrossing note concerning the historical morphology of one of Dante's most interesting and controversial *hapax*, the rhyme word *crese* at *Purgatorio* 32.32.

This general and necessarily cursory description should suffice to give a sense of the volume's importance and usefulness, not only as a research tool for Dantists but also as a guide for scholars from other fields as well as for general readers interested in gaining access to the contemporary state of Dante scholarship and

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criticism. In this regard, *Dante Today* can be taken together with the 1990 issue of *Annali d'italianistica: Dante and Modern American Criticism* as both quantitatively and qualitatively representative of the very healthy state of Anglo-American Dante studies.

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Luis Garcia-Ballester, Michael R. McVaugh, and Agustin Rubio-Vela, *Medical Licensing and Learning in Fourteenth-Century Valencia*, American Philosophical Society, 1989, 128 pp., facsim., maps, \$15.00.

The authors of this study have provided a wealth of fascinating material for such a short book. They discuss the development and implications of the licensing of medical practitioners in the Kingdom of Valencia and provide thirty-one documents pertaining to this licensing and its results, printed both in the original Catalan and in English translation. These documents include legal requirements for obtaining a license, accusations of practicing without a license, and a number of recommendations that those examined be licensed to practice various aspects of medicine. They also provide a list of the municipal examiners responsible for this licensing between 1136 and 1400.

The licensing of medical practitioners—physicians, surgeons, and barbers—comes into prominence with the *Furs*, the lawcode of Valencia, of 1329. The *Furs* provided that each year two leading physicians would be selected to examine all prospective physicians in the kingdom. Before they could be licensed, candidates had to study the art of medicine for at least four years in a *studium generale* and then be found competent by the medical license examiners. Only if they met these requirements were they to be licensed to practice medicine.

The authors also discuss how this licensing was carried out and what its implications were for medical care. Valencia was far from being the first kingdom to pass laws requiring licenses for medical practitioners, but the Valencian situation differed from much of the rest of Europe due to its majority Muslim population and substantial Jewish minority. Lawmakers in Valencia, like those in the rest of Europe, were placing increasing importance on university training and professionalization in the practice of medicine. One of the more interesting peculiarities of Valencian licensing procedure is that the city of Valencia itself maintained the right to choose medical license examiners for the entire kingdom. It was certainly hoped that licensed physicians, surgeons, and barbers (and later