

Continental Reviews

AUZZAS, Ginetta, Carlo DELCORNO, Manlio Pastore STOCCHI, Stefano ZAMPONI, eds. 2018. *Studi Sul Boccaccio* 46 (Firenze: Olschki). ISSN 0585-4997. Pp. 457. € 96.

After over fifty years with the Florentine publisher Le Lettere, number XLVI of the historic journal *Studi sul Boccaccio* (founded by Vittore Branca in 1963) has recently been published by another well-known press: L. S. Olschki of Florence. The volume collects significant contributions about the life, work and influence of Giovanni Boccaccio, with a new editorial look. The first thing that the reader notices is the great richness of the contents of this number. There are articles about philology, literary criticism and linguistics, embracing a large part of Boccaccio's production, all of which analyse some interesting and new points of view concerning his influence on the literature. This volume can inform scholars about the current state of studies on Giovanni Boccaccio, and is certainly useful for anyone who wants to study in depth one of the "tre corone" ('literary crowns') of Italian Literature. The volume consists of fourteen essays, on the aforementioned subjects, and five reviews of recent and important works on Boccaccio, such as *Boccaccio e la Francia* by P. Guérin and A. Robin (reviewed by P. Rinoldi) or *La Vita Nuova del Boccaccio. Fortuna e Tradizione* by L. Banella (reviewed by N. Gensini). The volume also contains a useful general index of names and manuscripts cited and abstracts of all essays in the volume in both Italian and English. Finally, the journal *Studi sul Boccaccio* contains the "notiziario" of the Ente Nazionale Giovanni Boccaccio, whose site was recently revamped (<http://www.enteboccaccio.it/s/casa-boccaccio/page/home>), listing many forthcoming initiatives and conferences on Boccaccio.

In its range of essays, the volume is essential to gain up-to-date information about the most important acquisitions and ongoing research about Boccaccio's work and influence. Moreover, all the works are interconnected at some level, and the volume ends up having a more solid structure than a first glance might suggest. The first essay, by C. M. Monti, is about the relationship between Boccaccio and Petrarca; more precisely, the self-representation that the former offers in the framework of an articulate "progetto culturale condiviso" (11). This topic is investigated through the philological analysis of two Latin expressions: *itineris strator* and *audibus ex*

minimis, that are used in Boccaccio's two 'academic' works: the *Genealogie deorum gentilium* and *De montibus*, written in the same period, under the influence of the aforementioned cultural project, the latter title is short for the original, "encyclopaedic" *De montibus, silvis, fontibus, lacubus, fluminibus, stagnis seu paludibus, et de diversis nominibus maris*. About the latter, the *De montibus*, a second essay by M. Papio e A. Lloret examines some philological aspects of their future critical edition, to be published with an English translation. The authors, in order to collate all the witnesses of this opera, have used one of the most advanced methods of philological analysis, the collation software *Juxta* (14, <https://www.juxtasoftware.org/>). A new, stronger interest in Boccaccio's *De montibus* (and his importance on his general production) is apparent not only in these two articles, but also in a footnote inside Papio and Lloret's essay, citing the forthcoming publication of this same work by V. Rovere in the main collection published by the Ente Nazionale (1: 13–14). As an anticipation of these two editions, the essay within this volume is extremely precise and focused on the main problematic issues and *loci critici* inside this problematic text, largely made of long lists of glossed toponyms. These future editions will eventually be crucial to our understanding of Boccaccio's knowledge of Latin and Greek culture and their influence on his work. However, these important fields of study can count on an established tradition, and the present volume also includes an essay by L. Battaglia Ricci referencing Boccaccio's knowledge of Homer. Battaglia Ricci explores the evolution of the author's progressive discovery of Homer and Greek literature through his lifespan. This path of discovery climaxed in the portrait of Homer in the Berlin autograph of *Decameron*, a tangible sign of Boccaccio's primary role in the rebirth of Classical studies in Italy.

Homer was also considered at the top of the ancient poets in Dante's list in *Inferno* (IV, ll. 94–96), and Dante himself was held in the highest esteem by Boccaccio. In this same volume, two additional essays concern Boccaccio's complex relationship with Dante, with a main focus on Boccaccio's *Esposizioni sopra la Comedia* (PADOAN 1994). The two works explore this relationship in the new perspective shared by other papers in the volume, i.e., in the light of Boccaccio's representation of himself as an unworthy follower (whether or not that may be considered a mere rhetorical representation). An essay by I. Castiglia shows how Boccaccio is often engaged in justifying Dante's most unconventional positions ("teologicamente ardite", 180). He finds himself often between the anvil of his love for the poem and the hammer of the "catolica verità" (187). Boccaccio's works concur with his autobiographical references — quoted by Castiglia — to affirm the

solidity of his relationship with the Catholic religion, especially after 1360, and this is consistent with textual evidence from the later *Esposizioni*. It is precisely in this latter work that F. Marzano analyses Boccaccio's re-use of his own previous works in his commentary of the *Commedia*. By means of such intertextual evidence, it is possible to show the various ways in which Boccaccio uses his own work for the extensive commentary of cantos I-XVII of Dante's *Inferno*. There are various degrees of intertextuality inside the commentary, from translation or paraphrases of his own work to some others, less direct, that can effectively show the "capillarità dei suoi riusi" (224).

Among the issue's various approaches, there are notable critical analyses of some of *Decameron's* *novelle*, starting with R. Morosini's interdisciplinary work on VIII 10. Beginning with engaging remarks on the novella's iconography in ms. Fr. 239 of the Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Paris, the author's critical analysis of the short story shows the role of the sea and the *dogana*, and how "real spaces [tend] to become cultural signifiers" (97). The story, with Salabaetto's many journeys across the sea, symbolizes the mobility of the merchant class, accurately sketched by Boccaccio. Through a parallel consideration of the early fourteenth-century *Libro del giuoco degli scacchi* by Jacopo da Cesole and the miniatures of the French codex (attaching relevant reproductions), Morosini shows how the double-joke structure of VIII 10 and all of its elements are perfectly integrated in the mercantile context of Mediterranean life. As further proof of the crucial importance of classical sources in Boccaccio's work, M. Pascale's essay addresses the influence of Aristotle's *Etica Nicomachea* in the *Decameron's* representation of *ira* (anger, wrath). Even a limited number of examples allows Pascale to distinguish and explain different kinds of anger within Boccaccio's best known work. Ranging from Ser Ciappelletto's "bona ira" (I 1) to the lover's "ira viziosa" (IV 3), following a detailed explanation of this sentiment provided by the narrator's voice. This essay's thesis is explained through an analysis of Aristotelic and Thomistic elements within this short story: building on the vast bibliography on the theme, Pascale clearly explains this complex subject, with appropriate references to Boccaccio's life and works (e.g., the previously cited *Esposizioni*, 136). Still based on the textual evidence of Boccaccio's work, but from a linguistic and lexicographical standpoint, E. Guadagnini's essay focuses on the octaves XI 22–24 of the *Teseida*. This opera marks an attempt by Boccaccio to create a chivalric poem in the vernacular. Within the selected octaves, Guadagnini studies the complex relationship between the poet and his sources, showing how a primary source (Stazio's *Tebaide*) is intertwined with other classical texts,

such as Ovid and Lactantius. Starting from the list of plants used for the funeral pyre of Arcita, Guadagnini shows how Boccaccio's extraordinary lexical and linguistic research is made through the use of classical sources. Such literary sources are also D. Delcorno Branca's main topic (in the volume's fourth essay), supporting her strong arguments that the character of Agnoletta (*Dec.* V 3) is based on the episode of *Tristan* — as portrayed in Giovanni del Virgilio's version — and was to become itself a source in the creation of Angelica's flight in Ariosto's *Orlando*. The latter, a well-known episode, offers a clear and interesting case in which the sources are transmitted from one author to another interdiscursively, or without complete awareness.

As is well known, the *Decameron's* influence in European textual cultures, prose and poetry, during the following centuries is multifaceted and hard to define; the last essays in this issue of *Studi sul Boccaccio* tackle this complex subject. D. Boillet shows the various editorial stages of a theatrical version of one of the *Decameron's* best known stories, that of Ghismonda (IV 1), produced by Antonio Cammelli (called *il Pistoia*), and that it was very well received between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Along the same lines, G. Rizzarelli offers an analysis of the Ariosto's Ginevra and Ariodante episode, once again highlighting the influence of the *Decameron* on the *Orlando Furioso*. Near the close of the essays, R. Di Giorgi focuses on the textual presence of Boccaccio's *Filocolo* and *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta* in Francesco Colonna's mysterious *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (POZZI, CIAPPONI 1980). The issue concludes with two important analytical essays. The first, written by F. Strologo, tracks the discontinuous evolution of the *ottava rima* genre in Carolingian cycles in Italy after Boccaccio, focusing on the case study of the *cantare* of *Carlo Mainetto*. This rare work, preserved only in MS Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magliabechiano VII 951, is a fragmentary copy dated 1384–1400, a further witness of the broad circulation of Carolingian cycles in Italy during that period. Its interest in this context lies primarily in its value as a source to assess the reception of the *ottava rima* shortly after Boccaccio's *Filostrato* and *Teseida*. Written by F. Palma, the concluding essay offers an interesting example of Boccaccio's influence beyond the boundaries of Italy, assessing the presence of the story of Tofano and Ghita (*Decameron* VII 4) in the *Fish Waves*, an English book of ca. 1620 in which a fisherman recounts the story that now takes us to a new (non-Mediterranean) setting.

As brief as it might be, this introduction and summary of the rich material published in this issue will hopefully help readers appreciate the wide-ranging interdisciplinary nature of the journal, a must-read for any scholar

of Boccaccio. Offering a detailed outline of previous bibliography in each of the topics, all essays add up to represent an extremely useful snapshot of current Boccaccio studies, making this volume an essential source for an up-to-date appreciation of Boccaccio's work, life, and influence.

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Works Cited

- PADOAN, Giorgio, ed. 1994. *Esposizioni sopra la "Commedia" di Dante*. Milano: Mondadori.
- POZZI, Giovanni, CIAPPONI, Lucia A, eds. 1980. *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. Padova: Antenore.

CARUSO, Carlo, ed. 2018. *The Life of Texts. Evidence in Textual Production, Transmission and Reception*. London – New York: Bloomsbury Academic. ISBN HB: 978-1-3500-3905-6. ISBN ePDF: 978-1-3500-3906-3. ISBN eBook: 978-1-3500-3907-0. Pp. xii + 253. HARDBACK \$ 76.50.

This book derives from a series of public lectures sponsored by the Institute of Advanced Study at the University of Durham on a challenging topic: *The Life of Texts. Evidence in Textual Production, Transmission and Reception*. On that occasion, speakers reflected on a number of compelling theoretical and methodological issues centered around scholarly editing and textual criticism as well as on several editorial case studies, from ancient texts to modern times.

Recently edited by Carlo Caruso, *The Life of Texts* works from the premise that each text is inextricably linked to the historical circumstances in which it was produced and that its resultant variability is often an ontological principle at the core of the text itself. Therefore, the various authors of these essays challenge their readers to consider the history of texts as a dynamic and vital sign of their own life. Unsurprisingly, several chapters of the collection are focused on traditions of texts considered *in fieri*: from Leonardo da Vinci's private writings and their variety and mobility as 'open works', to the different editions of the unfinished *Essays* by Montaigne. Texts are often the result not just of an author-inspired activity, but also of the lack of this authorship, the evolving techniques of book production, the historic vicissitudes and the act of interpretation which lies behind each