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Nicolò Maldina. 'In pro del mondo. Dante, la predicazione e i generi della letteratura religiosa medievale.' La Navicella dell'ingegno, 6. Rome: Salerno, 2017.

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Precisely where and when the author of the *Ottimo* met Dante is difficult to establish, since every reference in the commentary refers to Dante speaking about the *Commedia*. Since the poet never returned to Florence after his conviction, in 1302, the two likely met in Northern Italy during Dante's exile. What is certain is that the author of the *Ottimo* belonged to that group of Florentine devotees of Dante who, in the first half of the fourteenth century, gave rise to an exegetical movement aimed at spreading and promoting the work of their illustrious fellow citizen. Thanks to the work of these researchers, today we can read in a genuinely *ottima* and philologically impeccable version one of the most exceptional texts of the Dantean exegetical tradition. This monumental work is also accompanied by the edition of a supplemental commentary, the so-called *Amico dell'Ottimo* ['The Friend of the *Ottimo*'], beautifully edited by Ciro Perna, who based his edition on the analysis of four manuscripts.

The publication of these two works is an event to be welcomed with great enthusiasm. Both the critical editions not only contribute to the reconstruction of the extraordinary exegetical tradition of the *Commedia* in the years following Dante's death, but also remind us of the need to have philologically accurate editions of the texts linked to this tradition, especially in an age like ours, rich in new ideas on the interpretation of Dante's work.

Natale Vacalebre, *University of Pennsylvania*

Nicolò Maldina.

In pro del mondo. Dante, la predicazione e i generi della letteratura religiosa medievale.

La Navicella dell'ingegno, 6. Rome: Salerno, 2017. 260 pp. €24.

The main goal of Maldina's book is to offer an introductory study of the relationship between Dante's *Commedia* and the homiletic genre of Medieval preaching. The main issue for such research lies in the substantial impossibility of tracing precise textual references which go beyond generic consonances. As the author himself stresses, it is not possible to point at any precise text because, on the one hand, the manuscripts containing sermons were probably off limits to laymen during the Middle Ages, and, on the other hand, the sermons were written in Latin but planned for vernacular homilic preaching, as if they were a sort of outline for the friars. Despite these issues at the basis of the research, Maldina attempts a reconstruction of echoes, stylistic devices which are the common traits which can link Dante's *Commedia* to the homiletic genre. In this sense, the most evident relation is the parenetic finality of both Dante's poem and the sermons offered by preachers.

The book is organized in four chapters which treat different but intertwined topics. The first chapter, *Dante, la predicazione e la crisi del genere visionario* reconstructs the history of religious literature between eleventh and twelfth centuries. Maldina suggests how, in Dante's time, the particular genre of the otherworldly

visio had been combined into numerous other religious genres. Among these, the homely featured, as a form which gathers the prophetic and eschatological ferments which characterized the *visio* of previous centuries. Obviously, such ferments are regathered in the genre of the *visio* in Dante's *Commedia*, a poem which reunites eschatology and prophetism under the banner of the afterlife journey.

The second chapter, *Predicazione e predicatori nella 'Commedia'*, analyzes the passages of Dante's poem which somehow deal with preaching. If on the one hand the false preachers identifiable with modern ecclesiastic hierarchy are condemned because Dante feels they have betrayed the evangelical message of poverty and humility, on the other hand, the Dantean lines tend to praise the preachers who have conveyed that same evangelical message, i.e. the Apostles, especially Paul, and modern saints such as Francis and Dominic.

The third chapter, *Figure della predicazione*, focuses on the rhetorical and stylistic aspects of the so-called *sermo modernus*, the particular homiletic genre which came to life during the twelfth century. Maldina argues that Dante's divine mission is highlighted not only by the substantial function of prophet and preacher accorded to him, but also by the peculiar literary styles through which Dante shapes the eschatological message he carries, as he expresses his prophecies according to the style of the *rhetorica divina*.

The final chapter, entitled *Stili omiletici*, analyzes three different passages of the *Commedia* which relate to the genre of medieval preaching. In particular, the instance of *Inferno* 19 can be related to the specific subgenre of homely which is moral rebuke; the purgatorial episode of the *girone* of pride (cantos 10-12) helps not only demonstrating how the homiletic style helps repressing sins, but it also exhorts to the opposite virtue (in this case, humility); cantos 4 and 5 of *Paradiso* offer an example of how the homiletic genre can function as an intertext for what concerns the more marked aspect of the *Commedia*.

Giovanni Vedovotto, *University of Notre Dame*

Filippo Andrei.

Boccaccio the Philosopher. An Epistemology of the Decameron.

Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. XI + 259 pp. \$99.

In Italian literary tradition, there are many authors whose contribution to philosophical thought has not been fully appreciated. Giovanni Boccaccio is certainly one of these. Although writing across an impressive variety of different genres and topics, including history, mythology, and moral psychology, Boccaccio's legacy as an author seems to be especially tied to his purely literary works. For most scholars, as well as for a more general public, Boccaccio is, first and foremost, the witty and colorful author of the *Decameron*.

While the *Decameron's* role in the development of Italian literature cannot be underestimated, this view runs the risk of overshadowing a large and significant