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**Alberto Casadei. 'Dante. Storia avventurosa della Divina
Commedia dalla selva oscura alla realtà aumentata.' Milan: il
Saggiatore, 2020.**

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The editing of Biblical texts brought high stakes in the desire for accuracy and certainty in establishing a text. Scott Mandelbrote examines editions of the Septuagint. His winding narrative begins with the Roman edition of 1588 and continues with the appearance in 1628 of a new manuscript, referred to as the Codex Alexandrinus. Its variants held political implications for English scholars in the century's middle decades, and it contributed to ongoing, confessionally laden controversies across Europe about the relationship between the Septuagint and the Vulgate. The possibility that the Vulgate was a witness to a lost Hebrew version offered support to its high esteem among Catholics. He concludes with Philadelphian James Logan and his library, which included the Aldine Septuagint and the London Polyglot. The implications of biblical textual scholarship thus ran wide through early modern thought.

Gian Mario Cao brings the volume up to the era of the Enlightenment and the links between biblical scholarship and freethinking. He discusses Anthony Collins's work on freethinking (1712) and responses by Richard Bentley and by Girolamo Maria Allegri. The latter related to the book's inclusion on the Index of Forbidden Books. This lengthy controversy genuinely did involve questions of philology and doubt; Bentley argued, against Collins, that the existence of so many variant biblical manuscript readings does not destroy trust in the text; it is merely a condition of all manuscript transmission.

Not surprisingly given the topic, the authors have avoided drawing broad conclusions. They have nonetheless produced a set of valuable insights about the points of connection and intersection as well as points of divergence between the recovery of ancient texts on the one hand, and the philosophical contents of those texts on the other.

Ann E. Moyer, *University of Pennsylvania*

Alberto Casadei.

Dante. Storia avventurosa della Divina Commedia dalla selva oscura alla realtà aumentata.

Milan: il Saggiatore, 2020. 195 pp. €18.

Alberto Casadei's latest book, published by Il Saggiatore in August 2020, arrives at a particularly poignant moment: in fact, this contribution is surely one of the first volumes about Dante that will be written and published in light of the upcoming Dantean centenary (2021); in addition, it was also completed during Italy's first lockdown for the Covid-19 pandemic. This double peculiarity makes *Dante. Storia avventurosa della Divina Commedia dalla selva oscura alla realtà aumentata* a rather compelling and interesting read. Casadei, Professor in Italian Philology at the University of Pisa, is by no means new to Dante studies; as a matter of fact, some of his previous books (*Dante oltre la Commedia* (2013), *Dante: altri accertamenti e punti critici* (2019), to cite the most recent ones) deal precisely with the *Sommo poeta*

and the reception of his works. What makes his latest a most welcome addition to his *corpus* – and to Dante studies at large – are several features arising precisely from the current historical convergence: a compactness that does not allow many digressions, an attention both to the academic and to the general public, an interest in Dante's modernity, and the narrativity in its pace.

As for the book's compactness, it is made apparent even at first sight: the volume is divided into six brief chapters and an introduction, in which Casadei states the book's intent in argument and audience. His interest lies not only in presenting Dante's life journey with a linearity in which real life facts are intertwined with the genesis and contents of Dante's works, but he also offers his own interpretations to perennial *vexatae quaestiones* which have been topical in Dante studies for centuries. In his introduction, Casadei is also adamant about making this book accessible even to non-specialists by adopting a style which is not academic but more narrative. Without oversimplifying the subject matter – indeed, he offers food for thought even for Dantean *aficionados* – Casadei's detailed attention to Dante's reception and modernity functions as a bridge between academics and general readers.

The first chapter covers the years 1265–1292; Casadei presents a thorough overview of Dante's socio-political climate at the time of his birth and offers a useful insight on the dynamics of the *comune* in terms of class and political structure. The author intertwines general information regarding historical events with Dante's own intellectual education and his first literary works, especially the *Vita Nuova*. On this matter, he stresses the revolutionary features of Dante's prosimeter and details the manner in which Dante's literary relationship with Beatrice evolves within the *Vita Nuova*, and how her death ultimately paved the way for his subsequent writings.

The second chapter deals with the years 1293–1302, when Dante turned to politics and engaged in various literary experimentations (the *tenzone*, the *rime petrose*). Casadei's valuable input is most apparent when he deals with the first years of Dante's exile and the genesis of the *Commedia*: here, the author embraces the theory that first four *canti* of the poem (and not the first seven, as usually speculated) were written when Dante was still living in Florence, citing a considerable difference in style, tone and allegorization from the first four to the subsequent ones. In the third chapter, before delving into the last decades of Dante's life and the proper drafting of the *Commedia*, Casadei aptly follows Dante's whereabouts after his exile; the reader is offered a succinct but detailed map of Dante's stays in those years, while also dealing with the writing of the *Convivio*, *De vulgari eloquentia* and the *canzone montanina*. The latter appears to be a consequence of a proper erotic turmoil experienced in Casentino around 1307 that, according to Casadei, lead Dante to abandon his previous unfinished works and focus solely on the *sacrato poema*.

Chapters four and five are focused, then, on the writing of the *Commedia*. Casadei remains true to his *modus scrivendi* and not only offers an overview of the poem's content, structure and unique features, but also sheds light on the historical contingences of the time in which Dante was composing the *cantiche*. Even here, Casadei presents his own interpretation to some critical issues: he not only reinforces the idea that the first four cantos were composed before Dante's exile, but he also makes some suggestions regarding the circulation of the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio* (especially in the case of the *Infèrno*, Casadei seems convinced that the *cantica* was

modified later on in order to add Pope Clement V in the 19th *canto*, following the pope's betrayal of Emperor Henry VII). When dealing with the *Paradiso*, Casadei also dismisses the much debated *Epistola a Cangrande*, stating that it almost certainly was not authored by Dante. In addition, anticipating the following – and final – chapter, the author brilliantly links the last ten cantos of the *Paradiso* to what nowadays would be associated with “augmented reality”, due to their retelling of a complete immersion in a reality both enhanced and foreign.

Dante's reception through the centuries – and the relevance that the *Commedia* still has in our time – is the subject matter of the sixth and last chapter of the book. From the early commentators to Dante's rediscovery in the 19th and 20th centuries, Casadei paints a detailed picture of the reasons why Dante has remained a source of inspiration for not only for Italian, but also international, artists across a range of mediums. The author aptly distinguishes between an *intentio auctoris*, prerogative of philological studies, and an *intentio lectoris*, which is exemplified in the numerous adaptations and rewritings of such an iconic work of literature; due to its ties with contemporary narrative forms and the never-ending appeal of its metaphorizations, the *Commedia* remains to this day both the ultimate classic and contemporary work. By outlining an impressive amount of historical facts, tied with his own philological takes on many Dantean issues, Casadei offers a solid tool both for Dante specialists and the general public, demonstrating that Dante and his *poema sacro* can be appreciated by everyone, everywhere, and at any time.

Giulio Genovese, *University of Pennsylvania*

Marco Martinelli.

Nel nome di Dante. Diventare grandi con la Divina Commedia.

Milan: Ponte alle Grazie, 2019. 155 pp. €14.

In his latest book, the Italian playwright Marco Martinelli (1956) examines Dante's *Commedia* with a view to discussing his own life and that of mankind, assuming that Dante wrote his book for each one of us.

In the first chapter, called “Il racconto che apre al giorno”, Marco Martinelli recounts that his father, Vincenzo, had a particular habit of sitting next to his bed while telling him stories, including the ones in the *Divina commedia*. In the second chapter, titled “Dante adolescente”, the author rebuilds the history of Dante when the poet was a teenager. Dante likely saw destructions in his city, caused by the battles between Guelphs and Ghibellines. However, from his days nothing changed, and after seven centuries, we can still see the same destruction around the world: “il pianeta è ancora arrossato del sangue dei fratelli” (17). At the end of the chapter, Martinelli maintains that he wrote this book so that his young Italian readers may be fascinated by the *Commedia*, as he was in his teenage years, a credit he owed to his father. In chapter three (“I maiali e la grammatica”) Martinelli tells the story of his father Vincenzo and of his many success as a young student of classics. He later