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The 'florin.ms' Project

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THE florin.ms PROJECT

JULIA BOLTON HOLLOWAY

Having taken early retirement to Florence in order to be nearer to her libraries with manuscripts, such as the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, the Biblioteca Riccardiana and the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, all with manuscripts by Brunetto Latino and Dante Alighieri, and archives, such as the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, with documents, and believing in Open Access innovative and decolonialized education I have taken to the World Wide Web as well as the publication of traditional books and articles. Among my books were already Brunetto Latino, *Il Tesoretto (The Little Treasure)*, *Brunetto Latino: An Analytic Bibliography*, *The Pilgrim and the Book: A Study of Dante, Langland and Chaucer*, that went into three editions and its Dante section now translated into Italian as *Il Pellegrino e il Libro: Uno studio su Dante Alighieri*, *Twice-Told Tales: Brunetto Latino and Dante Alighieri*, and now *Le Opere di Brunetto Latino* in DVD in the book *Il Tesoro di Brunetto Latino, Maestro di Dante Alighieri*, and I helped publish a dual language edition of Christine de Pizan's Feminist *Commedia*, *Le Chemin de Longs Etudes/Il Cammin di Lungo Studio*, with her miniatures, where she is in apprentice blue grey, like Dante, her guide, Virgil's Sybil, in rose pink. Articles have been published in Festschrifts for Professor Vincenzo Placella on the *Vita nova* and Antonio Lanza on Brunetto Latino in Italian and in Divus Thomas in English on anagogy in Dante.

We used to say in the early days of computers 'Garbage in, garbage out'. I have believed it essential to combine the best textual editing practices as being humbly diplomatic, 'What You See Is What You Get', WYSIWYG, where we can use .html, .jpg, .mp3 and .docx in Word to .pdf to replicate as closely as possible the medieval manuscript pages' layout, dropped capitals, color coding, and miniatures, capturing and re-using medieval memory systems rather than reinventing wheels with modern and commercialized modes of presentations of texts divorced from their rich cultural

contexts. Most of the above books are available electronically on the <http://www.florin.ms> website and on Academia.edu, a resource I find excellent for keeping *au courant* with Italian directions in Dante studies and editing projects. With a Vow of Poverty and in retirement I am locked out of JSTOR, Muse, etc., but can revel in primary ‘smoking pistol’ materials. My latest work is the editions of the *Rettorica*, *Tesoretto* and *Tesoro* in DVD and on the Web, <http://www.florin.ms/OpereBrunettoLatino.html> with downloadable searchable .docx files divided into two volumes, the first volume by Brunetto Latino’s students taking down his texts in the 1280s-90s, the second volume by his last surviving student Francesco da Barberino, who returned to Florence in the 1330s and published the texts by his teacher and by his friend. I give these in parallel text with the facsimile folios and facing page transcription, WYSIWYG, the only change being to modernize the spacing so that even lay people can clearly read what was written 700 years ago. I am now composing a copiously illustrated book on Dante, *Su questa commedia, lettore, ti giuro*, concentrating on his combination of fact and fiction, his biography and Europe’s history and geography in the realm of reality, his poetry in the realm of the right hemisphere dream vision poetry, his son Pietro in the *Commento* proclaiming this aspect as fiction.

On www.florin.ms I have two major projects for the general public, for Italian school children and for global tourists. The first is the entire *Commedia* at <http://www.florin.ms/Dantevivo.html>, the project’s title taken from Giovanni Papini’s book, *Dante vivo*. It gives Dante’s text against a backdrop of the relevant Botticelli and Blake drawings, with miniatures from manuscripts that illustrate the theatrical scenes (shades of the manuscripts of the Afro-Roman ex-slave Terence’s Comedies from which these derive), the recordings by Carlo Poli, the actor son of Mugello Contadini who recites Dante *cantastorie* and whom I recorded as his therapy while he was dying; the recording of the Società Dantesca Italiana of 50 years ago on LP records my son Richard Holloway converted into mp3s, but which are sadly read as boring prose (no wonder Italian school children hate Dante!), and my own readings of the Italian text in the English of the Carlyle, Okey, Wicksteed volume I stole long from my father who stole it long ago from Hastings Public Library and to which it is to be returned in my Last Will

and Testament. Wherever Dante mentions sung music we performed and recorded this with the Ensemble San Felice of Federico Bardazzi and Marco Di Manno from coeval manuscripts and hypertexted this synaesthetically likewise on these *Dantevivo* web pages. That project, 'La Musica della *Commedia*, Playlist', is also on YouTube and its two-hour concert with moving images and the accompanying text given in English subtitles can be easily retrieved.

To all this I have most recently added an app titled 'Dante's Florence in Hypertext', at <http://www.florin.ms/DanteFlorence.html> (also in Italian as DanteFirenze), which takes its visitor virtually or in reality from Santa Maria Novella station and church through all the monuments, of columns, churches, squares and palaces, including the *lapidi dantesche* the Florence Comune placed on the buildings of the families Dante mentions in *Paradiso* XVI, the Dante passages read by Carlo Poli. In this way we read Dante's *Vita nova*, his *Commedia*, his biography, his love of Beatrice Portinari, whose nurse Monna Tessa founds the Oblate and whose father Folco Portinari founds the still operating Santa Maria Nuova Hospital, Dante's friendship with White Guelf Guido Cavalcanti and their love of Orsanmichele, modeled on Alfonso X el Sabio's *Las Cantigas de Santa Maria*, a manuscript Florence still has, their feud with Black Guelf Corso Donati which leads first to Guido's exile and death when Dante is Prior in the Torre della Castagna, then to Dante's own enduring exile from his beloved Florence. The *percorso* is accomplished by means of period maps the viewer of the app can follow vicariously or in reality, even to the discovery of the extant iron-bound column of the God of Love of Brunetto Latino's *Tesoretto* and Guido Cavalcanti and Dante Alighieri's *Vita nova* celebration when Dante was just 18, that is still there in the Oltrarno Piazza di Santa Felicita, that Giovanni Villani described of the thousand young Florentines who came together all garbed in white on that St John's day, in 1283. Modern apps can take us back 700 years into a past that can still live, in flesh and blood and cloth, on parchment, on paper, on electronic screens.