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Armando Antonelli. 'Fabbricare e trasmettere la storia nel Medioevo. Cronachistica, memoria documentaria e identità cittadina nel Trecento italiano.' Pisa-Rome: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2021.

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Similarly, Phillipe Lefeuvre outlines the collective uses of the forests in and around Florence in the eleventh through thirteenth century. The Appenine forest domains, for example, served as the location for prestigious monastic institutions while other surrounding wooded areas had alimentary and commercial uses. Wood, mushrooms, and berries were just some of the yields that sustained the city. Lefeuvre also notes that the mention of these forests in statutes of rural and urban communes indicates their importance in the Early Medieval period, while this kind of documentation was not as traceable in the pivotal years of the Middle Ages. Lefeuvre notes that the woods of great aristocratic endowment and uncultivated lands of the notarial formulas have little to do with the chestnut and oak woods which more pronounced documentation begins to show at the end of the XI century and in the subsequent centuries. Lefeuvre notes that from the start of the eleventh century until the latter years of the thirteenth century, the progress of a domesticated forest, of woods, becomes increasingly notable. The woods that the notarial deeds show with great lucidity are well-defined and highly desired spaces.

The second part of the volume ends with a study on the archeobotanical and palynological data known from Dante's period. Barbara Proserpio and Mauro Rotoli explain the history of cultivated and uncultivated land and the anthropic effects of deforestation that occurred in different times and in different ways overall.

Selve oscure e alberti strani underlines pertinent information on forests through various lenses and brings together contemporary Medieval perspectives of the dark wood and its cultural, economic, and social significance within Dante's time. The edited volume provides a historical, archeological, and literary reading of the *selva* and *foresta* Dante embeds as an entry point and exit in his journey towards *Paradiso*.

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Armando Antonelli.

Fabbricare e trasmettere la storia nel Medioevo. Cronachistica, memoria documentaria e identità cittadina nel Trecento italiano.

Pisa-Rome: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2021. 123 pp. €38.

In the thirty-second canto of the *Inferno* Dante finds himself in the Antenora, among the traitors to their countries. Here he meets Bocca degli Abati, the Florentine Guelph who at the Battle of Montaperti chopped off the hand of the Florentine flag-bearer, causing his fellow citizens to flee and lose the battle. Bocca informs Dante of the other sinners who, like him, are immersed in ice with their faces turned up: “tu hai da lato quel di Beccheria, / di cui segò Fiorenza la gorgiera. / Gianni de' Soldanier credo che sia / più là con Ganello e Tebaldello, / che aprì Faenza quando si dormìa” (*Inf.* XXXII, vv. 191-123). The last character is Tebaldello degli Zambrasi (1230/40-1282), a Ghibelline nobleman from Faenza linked to the Lambertazzi, an illustrious Ghibelline Bolognese family. On the night of

November 13, 1280, Tebaldello betrayed his city by opening its gates to the Bolognese Guelph family of Geremei. He did so in revenge for an offense he had received from the Lambertazzi themselves, who had taken refuge in Faenza after being banished from their own city. Slaughter and killing followed. It seems that the Faentine had betrayed the Lambertazzi because of a pig or two that the latter had allegedly stolen from him. In the aftermath of the event, the Bolognese commune granted Tebaldello citizenship, as well as his family and followers. If in Dante's earliest commentaries the episode does not receive much prominence, things change with the commentary of Benvenuto da Imola, written in the 1380s (and here, as we will see, chronology is not secondary), who dwells on the episode in great detail. Above all, the *Serventese dei Lambertazzi e dei Geremei* speaks of the episode: and it is on this text that the first and largest chapter of Armando Antonelli's volume, *Fabbricare e trasmettere la storia nel Medioevo*, sheds new light (*Inventare la tradizione*, 19-74).

The *Serventese* (i.e., stanzas of three hendecasyllables rhyming with each other plus a quinary that rhymes with the hendecasyllables of the next stanza) is the work of an anonymous Bolognese author and recounts events concerning the struggle between the above-mentioned Bolognese families between 1274 and 1280. It is a poetic text of a popular and jester matrix, with historical and topical subject matter, and is incomplete because it was transmitted from a single fragmentary manuscript. Until now it had been assumed that the *Serventese* had been written close to the events narrated, that is, in the last years of the 13th century, by a Guelph committed to discrediting the opposing side, that of the Lambertazzi. This is why Gianfranco Contini, while pointing out some doubts about the chronology, had included it in the *Poeti del Duecento*, defining it as the “oldest properly historical vernacular poem in Italian literature outside the lyrical sphere” (vol. 1, p. 843). It is not, therefore, a secondary text in Italian literature. But something, even at first glance, seems not to add up. And this is where Antonelli's research starts. The scholar analyzes some elements that would not seem to prove the late thirteenth-century dating of the *Serventese*: first of all, the apparent contradiction of an author setting up a work neglected from a formal point of view, but rich in selected terms (many of which would make their first appearance in the vernacular); the author's apparent Guelph affiliation contradicted both by the clear condemnation of the *partes* and by the affirmation of ideological and political principles of clear popular descent that emerge from the text; the legendary tenor of the tale (which would be ill-suited to a text written close to the facts); the mistake about the year and day on which the brief pacification between the parties would have taken place (September 3, 1280, instead of the end of September 1279, which is the exact date), which then leads to the mistaken dating of the taking of Faenza to 1281 (instead of 1280) – a date also reported by several late-third-century Bolognese chronicles; the silence of the coeval Bolognese chronicles and the extensive treatment of the event in the late-third-century and early-fourteenth-century Bolognese chronicles (such as Matteo Griffoni's *Memoriale historicum* and Bartolomeo della Pugliola's *Antichità di Bologna*). Moreover, Antonelli shows how the author of the *Serventese* made use not only of literary sources, but also of archival sources in relation to a specific event: the granting of Bolognese citizenship to Zambrasi and his fellows. The archival source of reference is identified in a 36 *folii* “Registro delle riformazioni e

provigioni”, produced in the 1290s but assembled into a volume – known as “Libro H” – between the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries by the entourage of the Bolognese notary Giacomo Bianchetti (1335–1405). The die is cast: these and other elements (thoroughly analyzed by Antonelli) convince the scholar to shift the dating of the *Serventese* by about a century, around the last years of the 14th century. The text would not be a chronicle of contemporary events, but rather a retrospective narrative resulting from a more refined political intention. What, then, would be the overall meaning of the *Serventese*? Antonelli explains it clearly: “the actualization of the past events in the historical discourse presented by the author of *SLG* brings to the surface the urgency for Bologna of a government alien to the parties, unable to protect, in the intestine division, the interests of the *res publica*” (41). There was thus a need to stigmatize a tragic event such as the seizure of Faenza and the massacre of the Lambertazzi (not accidentally recalled from Dante’s *Inferno*), and to ensure that a popular revolution, such as the one that took place in Bologna in 1376, would be seen as the perfect opportunity so that such events would never happen again. In addition, the detail about the use of particular archival sources prompts Antonelli to glimpse precisely in Bianchetti’s entourage the microcosm in which the *Serventese* came to life: despite this, the scholar does not go so far as to consider Bianchetti himself the author of the *Serventese* (as has been done in the past): this is a conjecture “more or less plausible, certainly not entirely implausible, but not proven” (68). The detailed analysis that Antonelli provides of the *Camera actorum* (i.e., the public archives) at the time of Giacomo Bianchetti (especially on 70–74) make the hypothesis, however, even more admissible.

The remaining two chapters (the second, *Memoria, poesia e archivi*, 75–92 and the third, *Nel laboratorio di un cronista medievale*, 93–116) further explore the relationship between history writings, poems, and documentary sources, between the 14th and 15th centuries, among the notaries responsible for managing Bologna’s public records. Continuing a line of research he himself has undertaken for several years, Antonelli investigates the traces (“tracce”) that is, adventitious writings of the notaries themselves, usually left on the covers of the notarial registers, often bearers of fragments of poetic, historical, chronicle texts etc. The scholar deals, in particular, with the traces of notaries such as Bianchetti himself, Matteo Griffoni and Francesco Paganelli, bringing the reader into their complex cultural world. The breadth of this type of source – and this is, in my opinion, one of the strengths of the volume – “concretizes the medievalist’s possibility of documenting the cultural and literary preparation as well as the readings of the bureaucratic class, since the rhymes are found not infrequently penned alongside groups of Latin texts, documenting the circulation of classical works by Seneca, Cicero and Terence at the center of the humanistic renewal of the time” (84). The traces, in other words, preserve both original texts and transcriptions (from other copies or more likely from personal memory) of classical authors. Finally, the last pages of the volume take the reader into the laboratory of a medieval chronicler – the Bolognese clergyman Pietro Ramponi (1385–1443), author of a *Memoriale* (a ‘libro di famiglia’) and a *Cronaca di Bologna*. Antonelli shows not only how Ramponi uses earlier chronachistic sources, but also how he intervenes on the same sources with a method both “intrusive and unscrupulous” (“intrusivo e senza scrupoli”) (110): that is, by inventing

out fantastic genealogies and characters that never existed. And, as Antonelli explains, this is all due to strong ideological reasons.

This ideological component, strongly rooted in the Bolognese municipal context, is what drives most of the texts analyzed by Antonelli. Indeed, it could be said that the overall sense of this volume consists precisely in reconstructing the different facets of an ideology rooted in a given historical-political context and understanding how this given ideology influenced the composition of certain texts. Reconstructing ideology means reconstructing the environments within which that ideology was formed, the relevant protagonists, and the relevant instruments (starting with notarial registers). And so here come to life names that are typically relegated to footnotes such as Giacomo Bianchetti, Matteo Griffoni, Pietro and Ludovico Ramponi: thinkers with their own idiosyncrasies, their own cultural projects, passions, relationships. In short, *Fabbricare e trasmettere la storia nel Medioevo* is a book that it would be limiting to define of literary history or even of history *tout court*; it is a book, instead, of intellectual history, which focuses on the ways in which ideas circulated, were transmitted and reworked, as well as on the men who ‘fabricated’ and ‘transmitted’ those ideas. At the center of this world is the archive, a place in which literary historians and philologists rarely set foot. But it is precisely archival work that makes possible to reconstruct a human environment that would otherwise be lost. I myself was able to take advantage of this methodology (inspired by Antonelli himself) in an article on Dante’s intellectual formation, in which I showed how some of the quotations from classical authors that Dante makes in the *Convivio* (Cicero, Sallust, etc.) belonged to a common cultural heritage: these *sententiae* orally circulated in the circles of municipal officials gravitating around the Florentine *capitani del popolo* and had been deposited on the covers of notarial registers. It is especially in the field of Dante Studies that this research method may bear even more fruit. First and foremost, one could reconstruct the milieu Dante frequented and the culture that was transmitted there – not to be forgotten, in fact, how many of the individuals Dante frequented were members of such circles, and how Dante himself both in Florence and during his exile found himself frequenting these circles several times. But one could also reconstruct the biographies of the characters mentioned in Dante’s *Commedia*, as well as explore the transmission of Dante’s texts in adventitious scriptural forms, starting with the transcription of the Garisenda sonnet in the notarial register of Enrichetto delle Querce. In short, the field is open, and only partially plowed.

Let it also be said, however, that Antonelli’s volume is not an easy read. Personally, I had to reread entire sections of the book several times in order not to get lost in the maze of dates, manuscripts, major and minor characters. Perhaps, an overall conclusion would have helped to tie up the loose ends and leave the reader with the feeling of a journey drawing to its completion. Several times, moreover, one has the impression that the volume fails to coordinate the precise judgment over a text or an author, or a fragment of them, and the historical-literary vision outside the Bolognese environment (a fundamental but nevertheless narrow environment in the framework of late medieval Italian culture). In short, there is sometimes a struggle to fix the position of that text or author in the broader diachrony of late medieval Italian literature/culture. But perhaps this is also necessary: the facts reconstructed by Antonelli are complex, and only a careful and thorough

examination of the events, texts and people involved can illuminate all their features. This allows the reader to ask certain questions, some of which could be developed in future studies and research. These are questions which historians and archivists have partly answered, but which I feel have not been asked sufficiently in the fields of the history and philology of Italian literature. These include: did these notaries entertain relationships with other chanceries of Italy that were particularly active in the cultural field? And if so, in what terms? Is the situation of the Bolognese archives unique in the Italian landscape of the time? As they traveled, did notaries disseminate and/or acquire texts in other chanceries as well? Is the strong ideological component that moved the writing of the *Serventese* and the other texts analyzed by Antonelli also discernible in other centers of Italy at the time, one above all, the Florence of Leonardo Bruni (fifteen years older than Pietro Ramponi)? Would it be possible to produce an overview of the type of texts produced within Italian chanceries? What was the relationship between the official classes and the universities between the 14th and 15th centuries? And above all: what do adventitious texts such as the traces tell us about the channels through which the laity were able to acquire a literary culture (first and foremost Dante, but also Cavalcanti, Lapo Gianni, Dino Compagni, to limit ourselves to Florence)? These and other questions are further proof of the great potential of an archival investigation applied to the texts of Italian literature, of which Antonelli's volume is certainly a remarkable example.

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Niccolò Crisafi.

Dante's Masterplot and Alternative Narratives in the Commedia.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. 208 pp. \$80.

Studies of Dante and his *Commedia* often embrace and take on the teleological ordering and structures of the poem and the poet's life, whereby what comes later is given precedence over what came before. In *Dante's Masterplot and Alternative Narratives in the 'Commedia'* Nicolò Crisafi presents an anti-teleological manifesto that urges readers to read beyond, and against, the teleology of Dante's poem. The result is an exploration of alternative narrative structures that demonstrate the poet's narrative pluralism.

The title of Crisafi's book maps out the monograph's argumentative structure. In an introduction titled "Dante's Masterplot" the author presents his *pars destruens*, identifying the characteristics of the Dantean masterplot and the limitations of accepting it as our hermeneutic guide to the text. Here Crisafi shows how his reading emerges from other studies of Dante and narrative, especially Teodolinda Barolini's *The Undivine Comedy: Detheologizing Dante* (Princeton 1992), and Albert Russell Ascoli's *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author* (Cambridge 2008). Through an analysis of scholarly 'keywords' and a deft use of narrative