Only a handful of misprints, early in the Latin of the notes, mar the presentation of the book. It is hard to tell whether a numerical misprint or merely the thicket of argument produces an apparent inconsistency about the day the pilgrim entered Hell (Thursday or Friday, p. 163). The Dominican Fathers of Ottawa (p. 357) are once confused with Toronto's Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies (p. 300).

A single serious conceptual difficulty arises at the start, and that is in Boyde's diffident and differentiated but still extended comparison of Dante with Lucretius. Classicists will recognize that the point is a similar fusion of style and doctrine in the Roman author, and Santayana did make the same link in his eloquent Three Philosophical Poets. But for most readers of Dante, this introduction is pedagogically unsound — *ad ignota per minus nota* — and perhaps fundamentally confusing. The strongest complaint could be developed from the difference between didactic and narrative modes (acknowledged by the author on p. 3). Had Dante known of Lucretius (and Aristotle's Poetics), one wonders if he might not have applied to him the Philosopher's strictures on Empedocles: what is written in verse is not necessarily poetry unless it does a work of *mimesis*.

This comparison seems to have blurred some distinctions with regard to the *Comedy* as well. "Hypothesis" and "model" are good words for our attempts to project a religious conversion into Dante's biography (p. 37), but they are hardly the last word on the poem that purports to recount the events by which that conversion was effected. (Compare "his fiction," p. 287; the Letter to Can Grande defends with two *exempla* precisely the possibility of some vision of God in this life, *not* ultimate happiness.) It should be stressed that Dante was so much the *philomathy* that he laid down the requirement that we believe his story, even if our suspension of disbelief is achieved at the cost of historical incoherences. Among his poetic conventions was the primacy of the literal sense.

Beyond that hurdle, in any case, the reader who has some taste of Dante will be well advised to consult this extensive and exhaustive survey on any and all details of the poet's world-lore and its central place in his art.

ALBERT WINGELL
St. Michael's College
University of Toronto


Although it is difficult to credit, given the vast amount of documentary evidence surviving about Salutati's life and given the significance that has been attached to his career in the formation of Florentine humanism in late Trecento and early Quattrocento, Ronald G. Witt's *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati* represents the first complete biography written about the celebrated humanist chancellor. Indeed, an explanation of this curious fact may perhaps be that the
very richness of the archival material about Salutati, and the almost mythic position that has been assigned to him in the development of Florentine humanism made the prospect of preparing a full biography too overwhelming for any scholar other than Witt, whose previous major publications, including *Coluccio Salutati and his Public Letters*, have been a careful apprenticeship to the production of this monumental study.

The biography of Salutati requires large proportions. The details of his life alone are compelling. Born of a rather obscure Guelf family in Stignano in the Valdinevole, he was brought to Bologna as a child during the exile of his father and was educated there in the growing traditions of Latin protohumanism. This association with the intellectual environment of Bologna in the mid-Trecento was to have a profound influence on Salutati and helps to explain his adoption of Petrarchan humanism in the years prior to his moving to Florence.

From Bologna, Salutati practised the *ars dictaminis* as a successful provincial notary and local public official in his ancestral locality of the Valdinevole and subsequently in other provinces of the Florentine Republic, rising to high positions such as Chancellor of Todi (1367). He then went to seek his fortune at the Curia but was unhappy there and returned to Tuscany as Chancellor of the Commune of Lucca (1370-72), only again to find disappointment.

Two years later, however, Salutati found his place in the world in Florence, succeeding in 1375 as Chancellor, an office he was to maintain until his death. It is in this role that Salutati has most often been portrayed: the rigorous classical scholar, admirer and friend of Petrarch and Boccaccio and vehicle for the institutionalisation of humanism in the naturally fertile and cultivated soil of the Florentine Republic. In addition to his official duties, which included the writing of letters for the state, Salutati's literary research continued. To him the classical form and style of the golden age of Latin prose was a flexible, living language better suited to the demands of chancery and scholarship than the medieval Latin of the scholastics. Philological studies assisted his work to restore Latin purity and eloquence; and textual editing and research directed him to the wisdom and truth of the ancients.

It was in this search for truth, however, that Salutati encountered increasing difficulty. The lessons of his secular, humanistic studies appeared to be causing him some measure of discomfort, as his natural, traditional piety, exacerbated by personal tragedies such as the deaths of his wife and son, reinforced his spiritual commitment to Christian values and teachings. This conflict of Christian and humanistic or classical values troubled Salutati for much of his life but grew ever more intense as his faith deepened until at last he sought to subordinate his secular studies to Christian principles, although still within the context of the active life of the concerned citizen in the world.

This element of ambiguity in Salutati looked back to Petrarch and his moral dilemmas whereas his sense of man, as a political animal for whom learning, eloquence and experience are skills to be devoted to the service of one's fellows prefigures Leonardo Bruni and Poggio Bracciolini. Thus, Witt is correct in ascribing to Salutati the transitional position between the generation of Petrarch and that of Bruni.

In investigating and explicating the complex career, personality and thoughts of Salutati, Witt has employed exemplary scholarship, both
through archival research in the voluminous Notarile of many Italian towns and cities and through literary analysis of the many extant letters and works of Salutati himself. The quality of scholarship reflected in the text and explicit in the rich scholarly apparatus provide a model for this kind of monograph. Witt deserves our gratitude and our respect.

KENNETH R. BARTLETT
University of Toronto


In the past, critics have tended to study Fermo e Lucia as a preliminary to the 1827 and 1840 editions of I Promessi Sposi, at least from 1921, the year of publication of N. Bussetto’s La genesi e la formazione dei Promessi Sposi. A branch of stylistic criticism in Italy has addressed itself to the examination of the creative process as evidenced in succeeding progressive versions of a work, a procedure condemned by Croce as “critica degli scartafacci,” but which aims to devote itself to the scientific study of concrete evidence rather than indulging in personal, unverifiable reactions. Gianfranco Contini and Lanfranco Caretti have been notable in this sector.

Toschi’s book is original in that it concentrates on Fermo e Lucia and the manuscript evidence relating to it. His method is not stylistic but investigates the building up of the structure of the work, especially the union of historical and imaginary events and the ordering of narrative events that results from it — the production, in brief, of a new type of novel in Italy. At this early stage, Manzoni had not yet decided precisely which historical events were to be included and thus the place in the history of the period of the adventures of Fermo and Lucia. The structural demands of the story tended to change Manzoni’s concept of the mingling of history and invention. It would be impossible to follow all of Toschi’s detailed treatment of the various aspects of his subject, but some references will indicate the nature of his work.

In the first of his three sections, Toschi shows how Manzoni came to realize the advantages of implicating Fermo in the riot of S. Martino, a move which necessitated the inclusion of previous references and the omission of other details. This move marked a real turning point, the creation of a different system. Subsequently, too, the plague was made to play a role. Fermo and Lucia are no longer isolated from history. Manzoni must now adhere to history. The inclusion of the war and the descent of the German mercenaries also afforded Manzoni the opportunity of speaking again of private characters. In fact, as in the later eighteenth-century novel, he now saw historical reality as a social phenomenon, involving everybody. The union of historical and invented events resulted in a continuous narrative in opposition to the preceding construction in separate blocks. Fermo is affected most of all by this development and acquires a definitive identity. All of these points are carefully documented by Toschi on the basis of manuscript and text.