cano, la lettura della *Commedia* (e specialmente dell'*Inferno*) sia diventata una *Bibbia* dell'azione politica, della ribellione al razzismo e della passione letteraria, al di là del ristretto, e a volte soffocante, ambito delle ricerche degli studiosi.

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Roberta Ricci. *Scrittura, riscrittura, autoesegesi: voci autoriali intorno all'epica in volgare. Boccaccio, Tasso.* Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2010. Pp. 258, with illustrations. ISBN 978-884-6725-75-2. €25.

Roberta Ricci begins her study with Boccaccio's *Teseida*, the first Italian poem of epic pretensions in "ottava rima," then proceeds to Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, which she calls "l'ultimo grande poema eroico rinascimentale di corte" (15); between them, these two works frame the entire span of the genre's development. By remarkable coincidence, each is accompanied by the authors' own extensive exegetical commentaries, Boccaccio's in the form of glosses set in the margins of his manuscripts, Tasso's in the so-called "lettere poetiche" which he sent to various revisers during the years 1575-1576. Ricci notes how the authors employ the contrasting formats of glosses integrated into the text as opposed to the separate, private medium of letters for a common purpose, that is, to seek public approval for their innovative treatments of a genre that was always marked by uneasy compromises between the requirements of its classical models and contemporary literary expectations. Each author strives, in his own way and for his own age, to create a hermeneutical voice that is meant to facilitate interpretation for readers who might come to the texts with divergent visions regarding what should or should not constitute an epic poem.

The volume includes an introduction describing the author's approaches and methodologies, followed by a single lengthy chapter devoted to Boccaccio and another to Tasso. Since the correlation between extraneous glosses and narrative text is a central topic here, especially in the case of Boccaccio's autograph manuscript of the *Teseida*, Ricci also provides no fewer than thirty reproductions of her manuscript evidence, many of them in color.

In the first chapter, Ricci reminds us that Boccaccio was ever an experimental narrator. Moreover, he often assumed the role of glossographer of his own works in one way or another, sometimes applying allegorical interpretations usually reserved for biblical exegesis. The *Teseida* is one of his most intricate works, involving continual interplay between two ideologically distinct themes: it tries to be both romance and epic, to treat of love and war, at the same time. The self-glossographer prompts the reader to engage critically with a work that includes elements of the classical epic tradition, the medieval love lyric, the popular "cantastorie," the works of Dante and the "chansons de geste." According to Ricci, Boccaccio's deliberate inclusion of a third-person marginal commentary as an

essential component of his text serves as a distancing device not only in narrative terms but also in terms of culture, since the *Teseida*'s epic narrative derives primarily from classical models, especially the poems of Statius, Ovid and Virgil, whereas the glosses reflect more medieval influences, especially those of Andreas Cappellanus, Dino del Garbo's glosses on Dino Cavalcanti's poem "Donna me prega," and a medieval commentary on Statius' *Thebaid* (44). Ricci emphasizes that the *Teseida*, when viewed in its totality as a compendium of dedicatory preface, poem, glosses and concluding sonnets, constitutes an "enciclopedia di procedimenti letterari," an intricate literary experiment that points toward its grand successor, Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum gentilium* (66). Since Ricci is inclined to follow the largely North American critical school that minimizes the ideological separation between Boccaccio's youthful vernacular works dealing with love and the later erudite Latin works that he produced after he came under the influence of Francesco Petrarca, she sees an essential continuity between the *Teseida* and the *Genealogia*. The *Teseida* glosses, especially the extensive mythological ones of Book VII, direct the reader toward appreciation of the emotional and symbolic value of poetry, as expressed in the *Genealogia*, and away from mere encyclopedic decoration: Boccaccio's glosses are seen to do more than divulge meaning, in fact they authorize and legitimize it. Ricci discusses at length the moral and ideological implications of Boccaccio's gloss on the carnal Venus, Emilia's prayer to the goddess Diana, and Fiammetta's evocation of marriage in her naming the poem "Teseida di nozze d'Emilia" in the work's concluding sonnet. If these features are read in conjunction with Boccaccio's later assertion in the *Genealogia* that epic poems hide their truths "sub velamine," and that the gloss to a text can explain and legitimize its poetic fictions (88), then it becomes evident that Boccaccio had already intended the *Teseida* glosses, written many years before the *Genealogia*, to serve a similar function in the process of "resemanticizing" (risemantizzare) this heterogeneous text and communicating its essentially anti-erotic ideology (94).

Despite Tasso's very different "morfologia autoesgetica," Ricci finds that his epistolary commentaries on the *Gerusalemme liberata* reveal a fundamental purpose that is essentially similar to that of Boccaccio's glosses: to reconcile the themes of love and war within the epic idiom, and to make a public display of the author's individual inventive process. Ricci acknowledges that Tasso's "lettere poetiche" have long been studied by those interested in Counter Reformation attitudes toward artists, as well as by biographers cataloguing evidence for the poet's decline into melancholy, and that both the letters and Tasso's essays on literary theory have already been mined extensively as sources for his notions of how to write an epic. Ricci analyzes Tasso's comments on his poem from a somewhat novel perspective, as indicators of a drawn-out "metodologia autoriale" that was ever inclined to seek reassurance and confirmation from external authorities, in a process that she terms "revisione dialogica" (143) or "riscrittura a quattro mani" (172).

The years 1575-1576 were a frenetic period of soul-searching for Tasso; he was consumed with desire to see his poem published, but also to make sure it would not draw undue controversy for its moral content or putative lack of adherence to the notions of narrative unity set forth in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Through

extensive citation of the letters, Ricci shows how Tasso's attitudes toward both his work and his critics developed throughout the correspondence, revealing an author "profondamente smarrito nell'egemonia ideologica" (174), unable to reconcile his conflicting urges to write a work that would simultaneously satisfy both his readers, who expected to be entertained, and the Inquisition. Ironically, despite all of his mental anguish and misguided efforts at revision, he managed to succeed almost effortlessly on both counts.

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Stefano Dall'Aglio. *Savonarola and Savonarolism*. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2010. Pp. 190. ISBN 978-0-77272-061-0. \$19,50.

The recent translation in inexpensive paperback of Stefano Dall'Aglio's 2005 *Savonarola e il Savonarolismo* is a welcome contribution to English-language scholarship on Savonarola and his larger impact on Florentine politics and society. The author Dall'Aglio of specialized studies of the Savonarolan movement in the sixteenth century and of critical editions of "piagnoni" texts, in this volume offers a broadly conceived and illuminating synthesis of the Savonarolan movement from the Dominican friar's second arrival in Florence in 1490 to the Counter-Reformation setting of the late sixteenth century.

Dall'Aglio rightly observes that there are few English-language studies suitable for an audience of undergraduates and general readers that introduce Savonarola and discuss his impact on Florence and Italian religious history of the sixteenth century. Quintessential studies on Savonarola as a product of Florentine intellectual culture by Weinstein and on the friar's following by Polizzotto are difficult to integrate into undergraduate courses (the former is out of print and the latter is prohibitively expensive and specialized). The recent English translation of Savonarola's political writings by Borelli and Passaro offers a rich selection of key texts, but readers unfamiliar with Savonarola need to look elsewhere for historical context and a general introduction to the principal message and themes of Savonarola's Florentine mission. Martines' recent *Fire in the City* beautifully and accessibly captures the drama of the Savonarolan moment itself, but does not consider the movement's long and complicated sixteenth-century history. Dall'Aglio's book successfully addresses this pedagogical gap and should go a long way towards making Savonarola a regular fixture, rather than a periodic footnote, in undergraduate courses on the Italian Renaissance.

Although a relatively brief book (134 pp. of text)—in keeping with its introductory intent—Dall'Aglio nevertheless covers an impressive amount of ground. He discusses a wide range of Savonarolan texts, Savonarolan-inspired controversies in Italy and Europe, and manages deftly to contextualize them within an historical landscape that shifted rapidly over a century that included the considerable