Dantean Dialogues: Engaging with the Legacy of Amilcare Iannucci. Edited by Maggie Kilgour and Elena Lombardi. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013. Pp. xxii + 264. ISBN 978-1-4426-4561-5. \$ 80.

My graduate studies at Harvard University (1975-1979) corresponded with the first four years of the New England Inter-University Seminar in Italian Studies, founded by Dante Della Terza in cooperation with Maria Picchio Simonelli, Franco Fido, and Giuseppe Velli. The seminar regularly featured seasoned scholars from the United States and abroad, from Maristella Lorch to Cesare Segre, but Della Terza also ensured that younger scholars—including his own protégés—enjoyed the opportunity to present. It was in that context that I first met and heard fellow Harvard alumnus Amilcare Iannucci speak. Born in 1946, the Canadian-Italian scholar was barely past thirty years of age when he returned to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and confidently held forth at the seminar in Boylston Hall. Following his remarks, our mutual professor Nicolae Iliescu intoned that I would do well to follow Iannucci's example. From that moment I paid close attention to Amilcare's career and publications, and doing so influenced the direction of my professional life and likewise enriched it.

Two decades later, in a 1996 *Speculum* book review of *Dante e la "bella scola" della poesia: Autorità e sfida poetica*, one of the most influential volumes that Iannucci edited, I wrote that "Amilcare Iannucci possesses a trait rare among North American Dante scholars – an altruistic interest in editing and promoting collaborative efforts that draw from both sides of the Atlantic." The magnificently edited, *in memoriam* volume now under review follows that same collaborative pattern and stands as a fitting tribute to a scholar who relished editing and collaborating with colleagues around the globe. Indeed, I am humbled to review a volume so lovingly and painstakingly produced in his memory.

Dantean Dialogues gathers eight essays by distinguished contributors who "worked closely with Amilcare in one way or another, and their essays take up questions or episodes that he had influentially examined and reflect the variety of his interests" (x). In addition, the volume contains an informative preface; a concise section on the contributors; a useful "Bibliography of Works by Amilcare Iannucci," including 11 books (10 of which he edited), 64 peer-reviewed articles, and two videocassettes; and a note clarifying the editions and translations of Dante drawn upon. The essays themselves are intentionally paired. The first two, by Zygmunt Barański and Teodolinda Barolini, treat Dante's earliest works, the *Vita nova* and the *Rime*. The second pair, by Robert Hollander and Elena Lombardi, take up topics dear to Amilcare: the complicated intertextuality of *Purgatorio's* Cato episode and the extraordinary intratextuality found in *Inferno's* Paolo and Francesca canto. The fifth and sixth essays, by Carolynn Lunn-Mead and Maggie Kilgour, treat respectively the *Commedia* vis-à-vis the Vulgate Bible and Dante's Christian epic in relation to Ovid's pagan poetry. The final pair, by Massimo Ciavolella and Piero Boitani, focus on the Florentine poet's *Nachleben* or literary afterlife. Ciavolella explores fascinating "Esoteric Interpretations of the *Divine Comedy*," including those of Giovanni Pascoli and René Guénon, while Boitani focuses on four twentieth-

century Irish interpreters of Dante's works (i.e., William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, and Seamus Heaney).

Insights into Dante's art of poetry are scattered like the Sibyl's leaves throughout the volume. For this reviewer, highlights included the bold rejection by Barański of the usual suspects for the literary forbears of the *Vita nova*, whose "metaliterary vigour and . . . tight integration of prose and verse have no precedent in canonical prosimetrical works such as Boethius's *Consolatio Philosophiae*, Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, and Alan of Lille's *De planctu Naturae*" (23). The scholar likewise dismisses, at least as primary influences, the elegiac tradition, the Occitan *razos* and *vidas*, Cicero's *De amicitia*, Augustine's writings, and Brunetto Latini's *Rettorica*; rather he favors the notion that the *libello*, "as its mix of prose and poetry immediately signals, is a hybrid" (24). "The only text," furthermore, "that could unquestionably and completely account for its hybrid and plurilingual aims and identity [is] the Bible" (25). Following up on the idea of the Bible's centrality to Dante's *ars scribendi* is the later exploration of Lund-Mead into "the role that scripture plays in the development of Dante's critical art of autoexegesis in the *Commedia*" (155). She skillfully and convincingly traces in the Cacciaguida episode how Dante mixes "Virgilian and biblical elements . . . [and] christens Dante as a new Aeneas and a new Paul" (168).

Balancing Dante's debt to the Bible is the Italian poet's equally obvious reliance on Ovid for poetic inspiration, a topic Kilgour studies in "Dante's Ovidian Doubling." She astutely realizes that Dante "seems especially drawn . . . to figures and places through which Ovid reflects on the powers and meaning of art" (181) and, in discussing this idea, focuses on *Inferno* 24 and 25 and the Ovidian imagery in Dante's description of metamorphosing thieves. She concludes that "Dante's choice of Ovidian images . . . allows him to build on a pattern that runs throughout Ovid's works and that is central to his examination of creativity, selfhood, and the desire for self-eternizing through art. Furthermore, the setting, the circle of the thieves, gives Dante a chance to mull over the fact that his own creativity, and indeed his poetic self, originates in such borrowings from past writers" (185).

As an editor and reviewer, I know firsthand that Amilcare, who edited one of my essays for his 1989 volume *Dante Today*, took immense pride in his editing. Meticulous in his attention to detail, he was truly an editor's editor. Therefore, when I first picked up *Dantean Dialogues*, I was struck not only by the handsomeness of the jacket cover, which features a medieval manuscript illustration of Dante's encounter with Casella, but also by the beauty of the type font and the quality of the paper. I thought, "Amilcare would be pleased." Then I pored over the articles and their myriad footnotes; I scrutinized the Italian, Latin, and French quotations. To my pleasure I noted not a single typographical misstep. I reflected again, "Amilcare would definitely approve." *Pax tibi, amice.*

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