

Book Review

Furlati, Sara, ed. *I Cantari del Danese: Edizione critica con introduzione, note al testo e glossario. Il Cavaliere del leone. Collana di studi e testi medievali 4. Alessandria: Edizioni dell' Orso, 2003. Pp. 494.*

For those not familiar with the Italian tradition, *cantari* are a literary form that appears in Italy from the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries. *Cantari* are of varying length; *cantare* in the singular (*cantari* in the plural) refers both to the poem and its secondary divisions (similar to chapters). Each *cantare* consists of multiple strophes of eight rhymed hendecasyllables. Sources range from French tradition to Classical and religious sources, these too possibly through the French. The *cantari* subject matter links the *chanson de geste* to prose and to the romance epics of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Pulci. In this edition, the *Danese* contains seventeen *cantari*, each of which is formed by 26 to 74 *ottave*. Related to oral presentation from the start (sung or recited), the nature of *cantari* as popular literature has long made them the center of debates around “traditional” literature in Italy, as their content makes them the object of studies of literary reception in the Italian peninsula.

S. Furlati's *Cantari del Danese* offers a long-needed edition of a popular text. It is divided traditionally. The introduction includes an explanation of the interest of the text, classification of manuscripts, a linguistic analysis of the best manuscript, criteria of edition and notes on the handwriting, and concludes with a summary of the plot and an author-ordered bibliography. The edition includes three levels of notes: two sets of footnotes for graphical particularities of the text, additions, and emendations, together with endnotes after each *cantare* (primarily of textual information—references to other texts and further explanations). An edition of the P fragment (only two *cantari*, the second incomplete) follows in an appendix. The volume concludes with an index of names

and a glossary.

S. Furlati describes the three manuscripts and incunabulum in which this poem appears. She carefully follows current textual criticism; she cites Finnegan on the possibility of a text contaminated with oral and written precedents.¹ She points out that in such a contaminated tradition no stemma is possible and offers her edition to “conservare e valorizzare queste diverse redazioni nella loro individualità” [“to preserve and valorize these different versions in their individuality”] (p. 23) since all *cantari* together reflect the public’s mentality. Furlati selects fifteenth-century Florentine M (II.II.31, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, olim Magliabechiano Cl. VII, n. 1048) as reference text (p. 19), because it is the earliest version and is an almost complete text.

Furlati wishes to produce a readable edition, so she keeps only spellings in “le grafie antiche” [“antiquated spellings”] that have “un reale valore fonetico; ho invece uniformato all’uso moderno tutte le altre” [“a real phonetic value; I have instead standardized all the others to modern usage (spelling)”] (p. 58). Among the standardized are geminates (p. 40), together with *c/g* (/k/, /g/ contrasting to /č/ and /ǰ/), and varying representations of nasals and laterals, which she lists (pp. 41-42). Her edition of P in the appendix, on the other hand, is much more conservative, as she documents (pp. 429-30).

Furlati’s linguistic analysis begins by examining stressed and unstressed vowels according to position and will be of interest to all those working in nonstandard linguistic transmission in Northern and Central Italy. Her bibliography and references include not only the classic reference tools but also recent linguistic research, and her exemplification will provide materials for lexicographical analysis as well as etymological investigations. The morphosyntactic section, organized by traditional parts of speech, again offers rich lists of examples together with short

¹ Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1977).

analyses of items of interest such as agreement of number in personal pronouns with subject and syncope of verbal forms. Though the volume does not offer linguistic study as its main goal, the editor has spent much time preparing the text in comparison with others, and this introduction provides a wealth of information as a starting point for those wishing to work with the language of the text.

The next section, the bibliography, unfortunately suffers from a few incorrect entries. A question mark in parentheses in a bibliographical reference to Le Gentil calls our attention to a question that seems to have been missed; the entry should read (following the format of the book) “LE GENTIL, Pierre *Ogier le danois, héros épique*, in «Romania», XXVIII, 1957, pp. 199-233.” Another bibliographical item, Bender’s “*Métamorphoses de la royauté de Charlemagne*,” is in fact in *Cultura Neolatina* 21 (1961): 164-74. Some misspellings of foreign names (*Karl Magnus Krønike* missing a final -s, Eusebi’s *Ogier de Danemarche* printed as *Denemarche*) are errors that appear throughout the *Bibliografia* but which should be easily correctable in a second edition since they are consistent throughout the volume (in the *Introduction* as well). Many entries are fine; these comments refer to items immediately evident to this reviewer and a spot check of a few others.

The edition itself follows. “The Dane” (*Ogier* in French, *Uggieri* in Italian) has been a popular epic figure in western Europe from his appearance in the twelfth century through modern times. The explanation for his name, his actual origin, and his exploits have varied. From a *chanson de geste* figure in the Italian peninsula he becomes a hero of *cantari*. The *Danese* is a fascinating text, one that should draw readers to this easy-to-consult edition. It is the story of the baron (sent to bring tribute from a rebel city to Charlemagne) partially as told in Old French and Franco-Italian versions and will recall later Italian tradition to those familiar with it.

It is not necessary to summarize all seventeen *cantari* in *Uggieri il Danese*; for those who know other versions, the plot is that of the *Chevalerie*; it does not include the Dane’s childhood. The text is related

to the prose *Rinaldo*, books three and five, attributed to Andrea da Barberino.² One can divide the plot into two parts, the *Chevalerie* (*cantari* I-IX) and the Arab rescue (*cantari* IX -XVII). It is wonderful to have this version now available in print since various details in it, unknown to critics, escaped surveys in the past.³ The reasons for Charlemagne's son killing the Dane's son differ in the Italian tradition from the French, as do the results. There is no flight to Italy, and it is Orlando who arranges for the Dane's imprisonment. Other elements of interest in the Italian versions include the presence of the *merveilleux chrétien*, the characterization of Orlando and Rinaldo, and the role of Astolfo.

The Dane saves a *fata*, a fairy, outside the walls of Verona during his mission there, and she subsequently assists him by telling him how to avoid being taken by the devil Bravieri who threatens Paris. When the Dane confronts Massimione, the ruler of Verona, St. George descends in person to give the Dane force to cut into the tyrant's head through three layers of armor; he also later comes to the Dane in a dream to urge him to fight Bravieri. There is no sorcery involved, except on the part of Malagigi (*cantari* 7-8); Orlando is not overly wise and is taken by Bravieri, unlike, for example, in the Franco-Italian version.⁴ Bravieri, the pagan, is

² Gloria Allaire, *Andrea da Barberino and the Language of Chivalry* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997), pp. 65-92. She has also transcribed Laur. Plut. 42, codex 32, *Storie di Rinaldo* in prose; Book three's story line follows the first part of this edition and Book five, the second part.

³ Knud Tøgeby (*Ogier le danois dans les littératures européennes*, Det danske Sprog-og Litteraturselskab [Munksgaard: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri A/S København, 1969], p. 212) comments on Machiavelli's *Mandragola*, where Nicia (Scene 7, act 3) says, "...m'impeciassi gli orecchi comme el Danese...," and wonders where it comes from.

⁴ Aldo Rosellini, ed., *La Geste Francor di Venezia. Edizione integrale del Codice XIII del Fondo francese della Marciana*. Saggi e monografie, 6. Pubblicazioni del centro di linguistica dell'Università cattolica (Bre-

a sort of devil, born of heresy, who disappears with a bad smell when killed. The poem ends with a comparative test of the Christian and pagan religions: whose symbol will survive fire? Of course, the crucifix does (Orlando, initially reluctant to test a relic, permits it after an angel appears to him in a dream), pagans are converted, and the Christians, together with a converted pagan bride for Ulivieri, return victorious to Paris.

In the second part of the *cantare*, where Rinaldo, Ulivieri, Orlando and the Danese seek Astolfo and Riccardo d'Ormandia, Rinaldo reminds the reader of Morgante and his undying appetite.⁵ The four wander through desert and forest with Rinaldo constantly seeking food. This second portion of the *Danese* is largely a vehicle for Rinaldo, a popular figure in the Italian tradition. Expressions as well as plot recall Pulci, both because of the words themselves and their position in the text. For example, "non curava d'essere messo tra' ghiottoni" (15, 15:6) brings to mind the numerous appearances of the term *ghiottoni/i* in the Morgante and Margutte segment and the famous, "co' santi in chiesa e co' ghiotti in taverna" (18, 144: 8). Orlando, on the other hand, is the wise man in the *Danese*, trying to reconcile differences and attempting to hold Rinaldo back from foolishness because Rinaldo likes to pick fights and constantly asks for trouble. Finally, Astolfo, while neither the wise-cracking sidekick of the *Entrée d'Espagne* nor the wise fool of *Orlando Furioso*, makes the pagan princess laugh when he identifies Orlando, Rinaldo, Ulivieri, and the Danese as his *scudieri* [squires] (15, 65: 1-2).

Reading this text initially reserves a few surprises: final vowels written that impede syllable count are included in italics. The format used for the edition, a little different from that used for *chanson de geste* edi-

scia: La Scuola, 1986) is the currently available edition; the individual combats with Braier in his edition run ll. 12650-12895, and Orlando and Namò remain untaken, organizing the return of the Dane.

⁵ Luigi Pulci's *Morgante* dates to 1478-1483 and Pulci was Florentine. A relationship between the two texts has not been critically examined.

tions, takes a little getting used to. Suggested emendations appear sometimes within the line, sometimes following it, surrounded by asterisks. Thus, “*al tutto*” within the line (7, 21:1) and “*li mettiamo l’usbergo con amore;*” after it (7, 43:2), and so on. This is a helpful device to see side-by-side the original erroneous (or nonfunctional) reading with the proposed correction. Where the syllable count is off, it is noted in parentheses after the line; thus, for example (+1) or (-1).

After the edition itself, the appendix contains Fragment P, a version of *cantare* 1 and the beginning of 2. The following index of proper names is very helpful, giving some background information for characters. It is grouped with the primary name first, followed by a list of other equivalents. This works well, and each character this reader sought was there. The one entry that could have used a cross-reference was *pastore*, a synonym for pope. *Apostolico* is common, but a simple *pastore* was not immediately obvious, and since these appellatives are not capitalized, glancing in back one finds nothing, though it is found under the main entry, *papa*. Missing too is a reference to Charlemagne’s childhood meeting and marrying of Galerana, sister of Marsilio, Falserone, and Balugante; it might have been helpful to mention this, since there are oblique references to it (for example, in 6, 40: 7-8, where Charlemagne blames the troubles of the French on her family [p. 198]). The proper name index mentions her brothers but does not outline the origin of the situation.

The glossary includes “[...] words unknown, rare or used in unusual ways, as well as unusual constructions” (p. 461, my translation). Rhyme words are followed by (:), a useful convention, since rhyme word forms can be unusual. References to notes are included in glossary entries, a helpful touch. Again, all terms this reviewer sought are present, though it would have been useful to have included references to the introductory linguistic material where examples appeared. The word *anona*, for instance, for an expected *avena* (French *avoine*), seems at first glance a scribal problem, and it would have been useful to know where it falls among the cited phenomena.

The volume itself is paperback, a logical choice for lesser expense and ease of use. A running head on each page with the number of the *cantare* and beginning and concluding *ottava* of that page facilitate use. Computer composition no doubt caused the few single open quotes instead of apostrophes (e.g., ‘nipotente 7, 8:1; ‘mpronte, 7, 47:4), but these are minor blemishes. This edition will be useful to many literary and comparatist scholars and belongs on the shelf of research libraries. It will help familiarize those outside of Italy with another branch of the *Ogier le Danois* tradition and later versions of it. It is truly a pleasure to see this important witness of later epic tradition receiving an accessible, modern edition.

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