



Blasucci, Luigi. Sulla struttura metrica del «Furioso» e altri studi ariosteschi

Johnny L. Bertolio

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of the essays carefully discuss the ways in which Catholicism was articulated and negotiated in Asia and the Americas (Alberts, Vélez, Melvin), and while others synthesize recent studies of religious coexistence and exchange between Catholics and Protestants (Luria, Janssen and Laqua-O'Donnell), I would have liked essays on Catholic interactions with Greek Orthodoxy and with Islam in the Mediterranean and European-Ottoman borderlands (Paul Shore's discussion of the introduction of Catholic drama as an element of Catholicization in Hungary is an exception). Noticeably missing here is an essay on the impact of the Counter-Reformation on Catholic-Jewish relations.

Even so, *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* more than satisfies the collection's mission of offering scholars and students a comprehensive and authoritative review of current research in this field. The editors are to be commended for crafting such an immensely readable and unified volume. Asking new questions and approaching well-trodden areas of study with new concerns and methodologies, the authors offer fresh and exciting suggestions that will guide future study. There is no doubt that this volume will be essential reading for early modern scholars and will certainly find its way onto every graduate student's early modern reading list. However, most will have to take the volume out from libraries: the steep \$150 price tag will make this indispensable book a luxury.

JOHN CHRISTOPOULOS
York University

Blasucci, Luigi.

Sulla struttura metrica del «Furioso» e altri studi ariosteschi.

Quaderni di Stilistica e metrica italiana 4. Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, 2014. Pp. viii + 198. ISBN 978-88-8450-536-1 (paperback) €34.

Luigi Blasucci provides a welcome addition to a series—under the journal *Stilistica e metrica italiana*—that deals with metrical and stylistic questions in Italian literary texts. His volume gathers seven essays, previously published by Blasucci between 1962 and 2011, with the goal of underscoring the importance of metrics in the Renaissance poem *par excellence*: the *Orlando Furioso* by

Ludovico Ariosto (Reggio nell'Emilia, 1474–Ferrara, 1533). As Blasucci states in the preface, the other two themes of the book are language and intertextuality; these, however, are analyzed not by themselves but always as part of the narrative path (vii). In order to evoke their original reception, the essays have not been updated.

The first two chapters, originally published together, examine the structure of the so-called “ottava d’oro” (literally, the “golden octave”) by Ariosto. Compared to other previous authors, like Poliziano, Pulci, or Boiardo, Ariosto gives the octave a new dimension and subjects it to the general rule of harmony and rhythmical proportion. When building his poem, Ariosto must have followed two authors: Boccaccio and Petrarch. From the former, Ariosto derived a far-reaching syntax, which sometimes bursts the banks of the single verse but at the end appears included in the general structure of the octave. Petrarch, on the other hand, provided Ariosto with a lesson of rhythm (main vs. parenthetical clauses), style (synonymical couples, antithesis, enumerations), and lexicon (against the excess of expressiveness and realism).

The typical scheme of the octave is 4+4, with a pause after the fourth line and occasionally after the sixth in preparation for the last couplet; in this case, the scheme becomes 4+2+2. A third, less frequent scheme divides the octave into two parts: 6+2. Only seldom did Ariosto follow the typical structure of the octave; that is, composed of four dystics: 2+2+2+2. Either way, like a surveyor, the poet chose even-numbered structures in order to dominate with a limpid scheme the multifaceted reality.

In the third and fourth essays, Blasucci focuses on the phenomenon of intertextuality in the *Orlando Furioso*. In particular, he analyzes how much Ariosto owes to Dante’s *Comedy* and to Luigi Pulci’s *Morgante*, two texts characterized by a strong sense of expressiveness and an extremely rich lexicon. Following an article by Cesare Segre on the same topic, and without using any electronic inventories, Blasucci identifies various degrees of literary “loans” taken from Dante, especially from the *Inferno*: single words, syntagms, entire sentences, rhyme systems, and similes; that is, always at a “textual,” not “contextual,” level (96).

As for the links to the *Morgante*, Blasucci demonstrates that Ariosto derived from Pulci his technical vocabulary but also several idiomatic expressions, some plays on words, hyperboles, and enumerations. Nevertheless, if in Pulci these linguistic and stylistic facts are clearly exhibited, in Ariosto they

appear perfectly absorbed in the organism of the octave and, more generally, in the “dynamism” of the plot (119). Referring to Ariosto’s manipulation (and often attenuation) of the main features of his literary sources, Blasucci speaks of “linguistic Arcimboldism” (157) evoking the pictures of the Renaissance Italian painter Giuseppe Arcimboldi (Milan, 1527–93).

The fifth and sixth chapters make the most of the analysis of Ariosto’s octave included in the first essay of the book. Blasucci dwells on a couple of remarkable episodes of the poem: the stop of the five wondering knights (Astolfo, Sansonetto, Grifone, Aquilante, and Marfisa) in the island of Cyprus (*OF* 18.136–40) and—the central moment of the entire work—Orlando’s frenzy of madness (*OF* 23.100–15). These two chapters are also conceived as a sort of inspiration for further metrical and stylistic analysis of other sections of the work.

As the first and last lines of the *Orlando Furioso* echo each other in the name of Dante (97), so do the first and last essays, both devoted to the structure of the octave. The sixth chapter, “Appendix,” deals with the course on the history of the octave (from the medieval poems to Ariosto) that Mario Fubini (Turin, 1900–77) taught at the University of Milan in the academic year 1956–57. Since Fubini never published the text of those lessons—although he had hoped to do so—Blasucci used the notes taken by a pupil, Gennaro Barbarisi, and transcribed partly by Barbarisi himself, partly by another student, Maria Consigli. Fubini always tied his observations on metrics to those on style and then to his general critical approach to the writer, and inaugurated a more systematic discourse (less cursory than his predecessors’) on this aspect of literary works.

The core aim of Blasucci’s book is to underscore how the octave in Ariosto becomes “the paramount instrument of all his operations, not only the narrative and lyrical but also the ironical and demiurgic ones” (134). For this reason, the metrical point of view is the source of many of the author’s observations on Ariosto’s technique as a writer.

After having taught generations of students, Luigi Blasucci keeps enlightening scholars with his brilliant and precise analysis of literary texts. His last book on Ariosto confirms the vitality of his authoritative mastery.

JOHNNY L. BERTOLIO
University of Toronto