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Ariosto: the Orlando Furioso and English Culture

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Nella conclusione, “Postcolonial Returns” (247–62), McGuire, riprendendo tutti i temi affrontati nei capitoli precedenti, si concentra sulle isole dell’Egeo come luogo della memoria; zona del rimosso per la storiografia italiana, ma anche sito di una memoria selettiva anche per la controparte greca. Ottimo lo studio del film di Gabriele Salvatores, *Mediterraneo*, quale paradigma di omissioni storiche, selezione e riproposizione di stereotipi sul ruolo dell’Italia fascista nel Dodecaneso.

Corredato di fotografie e illustrazioni rare, il libro di Valerie McGuire prende in considerazione altri aspetti storico sociali riguardanti l’Arcipelago, come problemi di discriminazione di genere e la fittissima rete di rapporti e legami tra il passato ottomano, greco e la colonizzazione italiana e le sue implicazioni sulla popolazione locale delle isole dai suoi esordi nel 1912 fino al periodo fascista. Si tratta di un eccellente testo, scritto in una prosa accattivante, di una novità assoluta nell’ambito dell’Italianistica, ma anche nel contesto più vasto degli studi coloniali e postcoloniali. Il capitolo “Everyday Fascism in the Aegean,” diventerà una lettura obbligatoria per gli studenti del mio corso sul fascismo.

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Jane E. Everson, Andrew Hiscock, and Stefano Jossa, eds. *Ariosto: the Orlando Furioso and English Culture*. Proceedings of the British Academy, 221. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. xvi + 365. ISBN 9780197266502.

Five hundred years after Ludovico Ariosto’s second edition of the *Orlando Furioso*, the publication of *Ariosto: The Orlando Furioso and English Culture* perfectly connects this historical moment to the rich array of events and studies that surrounded the 2016 quinqucentenary celebrations of the first edition of the poem. This collection of essays records the papers presented at the conference hosted by the British Academy in April 2016, titled “Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* and the English Culture 1516–2016,” which aimed at showcasing the independence and cultural novelty of the 1516 edition, as demonstrated in Marco Dorigatti’s critical edition, *Orlando furioso secondo la princeps del 1516* (2006). The conference brought together experts from a vast spectrum of fields and highlighted events, blogs, and celebrations that testified to the central importance of Ariosto’s masterpiece in the English-speaking world, both in the past and present. The variety and richness of

those contributions is reflected in the broad selection of topics and areas of study presented in the volume.

The collection addresses both “the reception of the *Furioso* in the English-speaking world” and “issues of translation, appropriation, manipulation, reader-response criticism and reception aesthetics” (6), by proposing two main questions at the core of its scholarly analysis: How did English culture receive, read, appropriate, and manipulate the *Furioso*? And how do contemporary culture and politics of English-speaking countries influence the reception and interpretation of Ariosto’s poem? In answering these questions, the content of *Ariosto: The Orlando Furioso and English Culture* embraces in its selection of topics and analyses the very complexity found in Ariosto’s poem and invites readers to move at their pleasure through the volume and to cross-reference its content in order to provoke new questions and to open new areas of research.

The organization of the volume mostly follows the chronological order of the conference program; however, the “Introduction,” by Jane E. Everson, Andrew Hiscock, and Stefano Jossa, shows possible interconnections and thematic correlations between the essays. The collection is divided into four parts. The first part, “Before Reading – the Image,” presents essays by Lina Bolzoni (“The Visualization of the *Orlando Furioso*: From the Original Editions to Modern Video Art,” 27–49), Luca Degl’Innocenti (“Reading the Poem ‘in the Very Picture’: New Evidence on Harington’s Original Sin,” 50–68), and Eleonora Stoppino (“Landscape and Seascap: The British Isles and the *Orlando Furioso*,” 69–88). This section not only informs the rich history of imagery surrounding Ariosto’s editions and translations but also investigates Ariosto’s own navigation of fictional and realistic geographical narrations.

The second and third sections focus more specifically on Ariosto’s presence in English culture between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Section two “From the Elizabethan to the Enlightenment,” collects essays by Andrew Hiscock (“‘englishing th’Italian Ariost’: The *Orlando Furioso* among the Elizabethans,” 91–114), Tobias Gregory (“Milton and Ariosto,” 115–24), and Ita Mac Carthy (“Fiordispina’s English Afterlives: From Harington to Ali Smith,” 125–43). This section deals mostly with issues of adaptation and reinterpretation as well as translation of the *Furioso* in the English-speaking world, both during the early modern period and today. The third section, “Gothic and Romantic Ariosto,” includes essays by Jane E. Everson (“Ariosto in England in the Eighteenth Century: From Antipathy and Ambivalence to Enthusiasm,” 147–68), Tim Carter (“Lesson in Madness: The *Orlando Furioso* on the Eighteenth-Century Operatic Stage with

Special Reference to Handel,” 169–85), Susan Oliver (“Walter Scott and Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*,” 186–209), and Maureen McCue (“Authorizing Ariosto: The Construction of Ariosto in Early Nineteenth-Century Periodicals,” 210–25). This third section focuses not only on issues of translation, adaptation, and reinterpretation of the *Furioso*, but also on critical reception, among which are Carter’s key considerations on the impact of the *Furioso* in the operatic world.

The last section, “Texts and Translation in the Modern Era,” presents essays by Marco Dorigatti (“Antonio Panizzi, Textual Editor of Ariosto,” 229–45), Martin McLaughlin (“The *Furioso* in Translation: ‘Lascivious’ Ariosto in Two Modern English Versions,” 246–67), Nicola Gardini (“The *Orlando Furioso*, Writing and Construction of Meaning,” 268–85), and Stefano Jossa (“Entertainment and Irony: The *Orlando Furioso* from Modern to Postmodern,” 286–307). This section deals in particular with access to the *Furioso* in critical editions, translations, different media, and contemporary culture.

This volume certainly achieves its aim to fill the gap in scholarly studies about the importance and influence of the *Furioso* in English culture and in English-based contemporary criticism. Because of the deep expertise of its contributors, this volume stands as a key contribution to Ariosto studies. The essays in this collection not only showcase the never-ending importance of the *Furioso* as a masterpiece of Italian literature and its influence on English-based literature, but they also illustrate the vast array of fields, cultural artifacts, and media that were and are to this day inspired by the poem. The studies in this volume demonstrate how Ariosto was and remains a great source of imagery and narratives across disciplines. In fact, the main contribution of this collection is to offer new perspectives in many fields of scholarly studies, from art history to musicology, from translation to literary studies and philology, from media and communication studies to ecocriticism, from the early modern to the postmodern era. Furthermore, the rich bibliography and footnotes allows readers, be they curious connoisseurs, students, or expert scholars, to enjoy the most updated source of information on Ariosto studies in all these fields as well as to reflect on new issues and trends in Ariosto scholarship.

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