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## RECENSIONE / REVIEW

***Citation, Intertextuality and Memory in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, edited by Giuliano di Bacco and Yolanda Plumley, Volume Two: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Medieval Culture, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2013, pp. 260, £ 75,00**

This awaited second volume of *Citation, Intertextuality and Memory* confirms the high level of scholarship of the first volume and its ability to challenge readers by opening new perspectives and offering them new fields to till and to harvest from. Focusing on the Middle Ages, the twelve essays of which the book is made can be divided into four groups, respectively dealing with history, music, literature and art (namely, drawing and sculpture); but let us immediately say that one the merits of this second volume (as it already was of the first one) is that it breaks down the concept itself of clear boundaries between the various fields of culture; and that it forwards the idea of studying citation as a means to go beyond research of mere sources to develop *source studies* which can highlight the very mechanisms involved in drawing on an older text or musical piece to create something which may be, at the same time, an act of homage and an act of defiant recreation.

A quote from Lina Bolzoni's essay on Dante can be a good way of introducing readers to the Medieval world presented in the book:

“There are many things about memory that we have forgotten. In a historical period such as ours, dominated by artificial memory and the virtual reality that it has engendered, a tremendous effort is required even to imagine a different sort of world, one where the individual’s memory was cultivated, exercised and held in the highest consideration”<sup>1</sup>

Here is another quotation that is useful to keep in mind before tackling the very discourse of the book; we are reminded of it by Sonja Drimmer and comes from a poem by John Lydgate, *Explication of the Pater Noster*:

“Lyke as a glenere on a large lond  
among shokkys plentyvous of auctours,  
thouh I were besy to gadren with myn hond,  
lyk my desire, to haue founde out som flours,  
the grene was repen, russet were the colours.”<sup>2</sup>

The image of the author (be he a writer or a musical composer or an illustrator) as someone who is busy “harvesting an abundant crop” holds good for all the authors dealt with in the pages of this book, which adds new panels to the frame constructed in the first volume. As Ardis Butterfield subtly remarks in the *Introduction*, “the practice of citation in medieval culture [...] was *foundational* to any creative and indeed scholarly composition”.<sup>3</sup> The three verbs which she uses to describe this practice are *engage*, *invoke* and *contrast*: we can see them, so to say, ‘at work’ in all the essays.

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<sup>1</sup> L. Bolzoni, *The Impassioned Memory in Dante’s “Divine Comedy”*, in *Citation, Intertextuality and Memory in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Edited by G. di Bacco and Y. Plumley, Vol. II: *Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Medieval Culture*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2013, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> S. Drimmer, *Visualizing Intertextuality: Conflating Forms of Creativity in Late Medieval Author Portraits*, *ibidem*, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. Butterfield, *Introduction*, *ibidem*, p. 1. My highlighting.

Let us take the essay by Sjoerd Levelt devoted to Anglo-Latin historiographers. In his dense pages, the critic deals with historical chronicles, the development of which he follows along the line Gildas > Bede > William of Melmesbury > Henry of Huntingdon > Geoffrey of Monmouth > William of Newburgh > Gerald of Wales, ranging from the seventh to the twelfth centuries. The process discussed is one of re-organization which involves manipulation and revision, and which is able to transform actual historical data into textual data, ready to be bent to the author's purposes. As Levelt puts it: "To this purpose, they employed an array of strategies of subversive citation, including mis-appropriation, re-appropriation, mis-citation and deliberate omission".<sup>4</sup>

A similar mechanism is shown at work in the essay by Jenny Benham, which deals with two texts representing a peace conference, the former by the Burgundian monk Ralph Glaber (eleventh century), the latter by Walter Map (twelfth century). One of Benham's remarks is that "Medieval authors were usually not engaged in reportage but rather in creating highly crafted literary texts intended to aid, create or distort memories of actual events",<sup>5</sup> so that the habit of citation turns the actuality of history into a fluid territory of possibilities. Historical discourse is also involved in the essay focusing on the chapel of Blanche of Navarre, a sepulchral chapel so devised as to create a network of associations fitting the personality of Blanche into a picture of heroic and dynastic echoes.<sup>6</sup>

The reader or viewer is always actively involved as the depositor of a memory he / she shares with the author or the artist (and of which the

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. S. Levelt, *Citation and Misappropriation in Geoffrey of Monmouth's "Historia Regum Britanniae" and the Anglo-Latin Historiographical Tradition*, p. 146.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Benham, *Walter Map and Ralph Glaber: Intertextuality and the Construction of Memories of Peacemaking*, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> See M. Keane, *Memory and Royal Identity in the Chapel of Blanche of Navarre at Saint-Denis*, *ibidem*, pp. 123-136.

author / artist is well aware). So it is in Dante's *Divine Comedy* (in the already mentioned essay by Bolzoni); so it is in the French debate poetry analysed by Emma Cayley;<sup>7</sup> in the interaction between texts and the paratexts that miniatures and author portraits are.<sup>8</sup> So it is in the depiction of tombs, either real (as in case of Blanche of Navarre) or imaginary (as in the case of literary tombs in Medieval romances, say by Chrétien de Troyes and Gottfried von Strassburg).<sup>9</sup>

Music plays a great role in the book, with essays dealing with polyphony, *contrafacta*, motets and refrains. The analysis of the polyphonic music created by Perotinus and by Oswald von Wolkenstein,<sup>10</sup> of *contrafacta*<sup>11</sup>, of the Fauvel motet<sup>12</sup> (with the whole of its intertwining of music, illustrations and words), and of the use of refrains enacted by Adam de la Halle<sup>13</sup> illuminate the technique of citation and cross-references which draw on older texts in order to defy assumed conceptions and renovate them. In particular, in Guillaume de Machaut's *Dit*<sup>14</sup> the level of a previous authority interacts with the writer's self to create a complex network that comprises inter-, intra- and extra-textual hints; and "far from demonstrating a lack of creativity, or individuality, Adam uses refrain quotations and the

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<sup>7</sup> See E. Carley, *Coming Apart at the Seams? Citation and Transvestism in Fifteenth-Century French Debate Poetry*, *ibidem*, pp. 51-66.

<sup>8</sup> See S. Drimmer, *Visualizing Intertextuality: Conflating Forms of Creativity in Late Medieval Author Portraits*, *ibidem*, pp. 82-101.

<sup>9</sup> See N. Howell, *Sepulchral Citation in Twelfth-Century Romance*, *ibidem*, pp. 102-122.

<sup>10</sup> See A. M. Busse Berger, *Orality, Literacy and Quotation in Medieval Polyphony*, *ibidem*, pp. 30-50.

<sup>11</sup> See H. Deeming, *Music, Memory and Mobility: Citation and Contrafactum in Thirteenth-Century Sequence Repertoires*, *ibidem*, pp. 67-81.

<sup>12</sup> See T. Rose-Steel, *An Unjust and Treacherous Word: The Use of Citational Practices and Language in a Fauvel Motet*, *ibidem*, pp. 162-184.

<sup>13</sup> See J. Saltzstein, *Intertextuality and Self-Representation in the Music of Adam de la Halle*, *ibidem*, pp. 185-202.

<sup>14</sup> See R. Balton Palmer, *Centrifugal Allusion and the Centripetal Text: The Example of Guillaume de Machaut*, *ibidem*, pp. 148-161.

intertextual meanings it fosters to emphasize aspects of his authorial identity”.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout the book, we readers are thus invited to follow the (serious) game of echoes, resonances and references that become “emotionally charged, multivalent, transformative spaces”.<sup>16</sup> It is these spaces (these books that are always “on the move”)<sup>17</sup> that we are urged to explore, with the often repeated warning of being “cautious in seeing too much”, but with our hearts open to enjoy the metamorphosis enacted by citation, which are as living and fruitful factors inside our “memorial archive”.<sup>18</sup>

LUCA MANINI

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. J. Saltzstein, *Intertextuality and Self-Representation in the Music of Adam de la Halle*, cit., p. 186.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. N. Howell, *Sepulchral Citation in Twelfth-Century Romance*, cit., p. 102.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. E. Carley, *Coming Apart at the Seams? Citation and Transvestism in Fifteenth-Century French Debate Poetry*, cit., p. 51.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. A. M. Busse Berger, *Orality, Literacy and Quotation in Medieval Polyphony*, cit., p. 32.

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