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Dante fra scienza e sapienza: esegesi del canto XII del 'Paradiso'. By FRANCESCO BAUSI. (Saggi di Lettere Italiane, 66) Florence: Olschki. 2009. 247 pp. €24. ISBN 978-88-222-5943-1.

Francesco Bausi is well known for his work on Italian literary and humanistic production of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. This is his first—extremely welcome—foray into Dante studies, and it takes the form of an extended *lectura dantis* on *Paradiso* XII. The volume itself is divided into two main chapters ('Laus Dominici', pp. 25–74; 'Dante fra i sapienti', pp. 75–119), a further section devoted to 'glosses' upon important or controversial lines or passages (pp. 121–62), and a substantial appendix (pp. 163–227). The appendix deals with issues related to the canto, including an extensive treatment of some of the major figures in the first circle of wise souls in canto X (Aquinas, Solomon, Horosius, Richard of St Victor, Siger of Brabant), of key passages in canto XI, and of Dante's relationship to Hugh of St Victor and Joachim da Fiore in the second circle of the wise. The volume concludes by presenting a text of the canto (pp. 229–36) in which several textual variants are discussed.

Bausi's work is significant for its attempt to move beyond the restrictions of the traditional *lecturae dantis*, by offering a reading of the canto that connects and engages it within the broader bloc of cantos that make up Dante's Heaven of the Sun (X–XIV). In so doing, Bausi underlines the intricate, harmonious architecture of the canto and the Heaven, and also—and perhaps more significantly still—establishes linkages with several other parts of the poem (inter alia, *Inferno* IV; *Paradiso* XXVIII, XXXI). According to Bausi, the Heaven of the Sun deals with wisdom as it is represented in a double dimension—that is, in relation both to the scholastics of the first circle and to the contemplatives found in the second one. He observes—rightly—how many of the figures in the two main circles share overlapping epistemological concerns, and argues that the distinction between the two circles is to be understood through the figures found at the beginning and end-point of each circle (i.e. Thomas and Siger, on the one hand, and Bonaventure and Joachim, on the other). This chapter also highlights the role of intellectual pride and its risks in the canto and outside. Chapter 2 examines the background to each blessed soul in the two circles and outlines the structural symmetries between the cantos, a point already explored quite deeply in Dante scholarship. Particularly interesting, however, is Bausi's argument that each circle represents increasingly extreme development of its main form of epistemological practices (the 'ways' of philosophical rationalism and of mysticism-prophecy). Of interest, too, is Bausi's argument that the co-ordination is not to be related to Dante's syncretism, but rather to his concern with the positive value of intellectual enquiry regarding divine truth. The following two chapters are also to be recommended for the analysis and background information provided on textual loci and the intellectuals presented in the Heaven of the Sun.