

with the present. They even are aware—though in my view insufficiently so—of contemporary trauma inflation, which blurs the boundaries between literal wounds, psychic pain, and perceived microaggressions. Most of the contributors are wary of projecting our own post-industrial sense of fragile vulnerability onto previous ages—ages before meat counters and funeral parlors—when even in peacetime most people witnessed and handled animal and human death regularly, without widespread mental collapse. And yet, these scholars rightly observe, any era that inflicted and suffered the epic concussions of colonial expansion, developing racialized slavery, and intractable religious warfare must have produced lasting traumatic repercussions.

After the editorial introduction, the chapters in the first half of the collection, “Reframing Modern Trauma,” both use and problematize modern trauma theory as an interpretative framework for understanding a chronological succession of instances: ecological disaster in sixteenth-century France, rape trauma in Shakespeare’s *Rape of Lucrece*, trauma in women’s seventeenth-century English conversion writing, ciphred messages in wartime, maimed soldiers’ petitions, a master’s guilty sympathy for a melancholy slave, and the “chronic loss” of a biracial woman on the colonial frontier. The collection’s second half, “Recognizing Early Modern Trauma,” applies trauma theory to “decipher” certain difficult texts and events: narratives of the dispossessed Irish, stories of “loyal slaves,” sexual failure in Behn’s “The Disappointment” and *Oroonoko*, the origins of Jacobitism in the Glorious Revolution, retellings of Orestes’s matricide, PTSD in Farquhar’s *The Recruiting Officer*, and *tableaux vivants* in Defoe’s *Journal of the Plague Year*. All of the entries bring bright specificity to their claims, the chapters on ciphering and Defoe particularly so.

Significantly, an afterword by Melinda Rabb argues that the traumas of the “long seventeenth century” contribute to that flourishing eighteenth-century genre, satire; for it took the acidic genius of Swift to apply the ancient trauma theories of Deuteronomy and Job to events of the recent past, speaking into the unspeakable. Perhaps the editors have another collection in mind, moving beyond irony to affirmation and hope.

Christopher Hodgkins, *University of North Carolina at Greensboro*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.176

Saracens and Their World in Boiardo and Ariosto. Maria Pavlova.

Italian Perspectives 47. Cambridge: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2020. xiv + 282 pp. \$99.

As its title suggests, *Saracens and Their World in Boiardo and Ariosto* examines the representation of the Saracen world—what Boiardo and Ariosto typically describe as *Paganìa*—in the *Innamoramento de Orlando* and its more famous sequel, the *Orlando*

furioso. It is worth noting from the onset that *Saracens and Their World in Boiardo and Ariosto* is engaging, written with clarity and verve, very well researched and soundly structured, rich with thought-provoking observations about the chivalric tradition, and nuanced in its consideration of the exchanges (cultural and economic) between Western European states, particularly in the Italian peninsula, and the archipelago of Islamic polities across North Africa and Asia.

In discussing the interplay between, on the one hand, the *Innamoramento* and the *Furioso*, and, on the other, their socio-cultural milieu, Maria Pavlova anchors her analysis to two goals she puts forth in her introduction: first, to reconstruct the possible connections between the fictional universes that Boiardo and Ariosto created and the historical realities of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries; second, to contextualize their poems within the vast tradition of late medieval and early Renaissance chivalric literature. A key contention of the book is that Boiardo and Ariosto depict the Saracens in a generally positive light, often emphasizing the Muslim warriors' chivalric values to an even greater degree than we see when they represent the Christian knights' valor. Particularly convincing are the sections dedicated to the themes of *cortesía* and honor, qualities that, Pavlova posits, serve as ideological and narrative catalysts more frequently than the characters' religious loyalties. Indeed, in a passage of her introduction, she argues that "the Saracen creed is to a large extent a mirror image of Christianity with some elements borrowed from ancient Paganism" (27). Moreover, Pavlova correctly observes that some Italian lords, including the dukes of Ferrara Borso and Ercole d'Este, entertained respectful, and even friendly, relationships (often dictated by self-interest) with the Turkish rulers. Although her reading of the *Furioso* perhaps underestimates the political dimension of Ariosto's poem both with respect to the Ottoman gains in the Balkans and the crisis of the Italian city-states in the early sixteenth century, Pavlova persuasively points out that it would be a mistake to interpret the *Innamoramento* or the *Furioso* as political allegories whose poetic worlds flatly reflect the historical realities of the time.

Irrespective of whether any given reader subscribes to all aspects of Pavlova's argumentation (and one may disagree with some of her conclusions—for instance, on Boiardo's purported view that Christian Europe owes a great deal to *Paganía* in chapter 3, or Ariosto's treatment of Angelica and, more broadly, of erotic desire in chapter 4), the results of her work are undoubtedly praiseworthy. *Saracens and Their World in Boiardo and Ariosto* is most compelling when it deals with the legacy of the chivalric texts that preceded and, to some extent, paved the way to the two masterpieces around which the book gravitates. In these sections, Pavlova deploys with remarkable dexterity the repertoire of characters, tales, and *topoi* that Boiardo and Ariosto inherited (and from which they occasionally departed). While the influence of the Latin epics, from Virgil's *Aeneid* to Statius's *Thebaid*, remains an indispensable cornerstone of the study of Renaissance heroic poems, Pavlova effectively draws our attention to works such as the *Aspramonte*, *Falconetto*, and *Fatti di Spagna*.

Saracens and Their World in Boiardo and Ariosto is organized into an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion. The first chapter introduces the question of how Islam was perceived in Renaissance Italy; chapters 2 and 3 are dedicated to Boiardo, while 4 and 5 focus on Ariosto. Chapter 5 addresses in greater depth the final duel between Rodomonte and Ruggiero that vividly showcases the centrality of knightly *cortesía* and honor (and their opposite, betrayal) in a crucial moment of Ariosto's poem. Pavlova's book also offers two useful appendixes that meticulously survey the Saracen characters in the *Innamoramento* and the *Furioso*. This accomplished study is a valuable resource for scholars of Renaissance Italy, of the relationship between Islam and Western Christendom, of chivalric literature of the medieval and early modern periods, and of Italian literature and history more broadly.

Andrea Moudarres, *University of California, Los Angeles*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.177

Venetian Inscriptions: Vernacular Writing for Public Display in Medieval and Renaissance Venice. Ronnie Ferguson.

Italian Perspectives 50. Cambridge: Legenda, 2021. x + 424 pp. £80.

In this impressive volume Ferguson focuses on one discrete subset of *scritture esposte* (writings for public display), as Armando Petrucci, a key figure in the study of writing and epigraphy in Italy described them: inscriptions in the Venetian vernacular ca. 1300–1530. As one of the leading vernaculars of the peninsula—vying with Tuscan until the sixteenth century *questione della lingua* definitively found in favor of the latter as the dominant vernacular (3)—used in one of its most populous cities, this is an important collection and informs a valuable word list assembled in the appendix (389–407).

The book is predominantly made up of a detailed Corpus Inscription (CI 65–382), broadly following the model set by the classical Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum (CIL). Ferguson has rigorously compiled each of the 109 entries to include a photograph of the inscription, transcriptions and a translation into English, a date (or range), discussion of where the item is located (or now preserved if it has been moved), and a detailed discussion of its formal characteristics, including typographic style and language use. This is preceded by two chapters that provide some analysis and context, with a primary focus on methodologies applied to organize them, as well as attention for the linguistic peculiarities detected across the corpus. Ferguson suggests the vernacular was used more commonly in Venice than other Italian centers during the same period (6) and considers why it was privileged for texts that were inscribed almost always on walls of the buildings facing towards public spaces. Lay confraternities stand out here (50–51), as almost half the corpus can be related to the *scuole* and thus