



# **Dante's Tenzone with Forese Donati: The Reprehension of Vice (Toronto Italian Studies)**

*Fabian Alfie*

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*'And by now, mind, it's too late to redeem your debts by giving up guzzling.'*

Dante's poetic correspondence (or *tenzone*) with Forese Donati, a relative of his wife, was rife with crude insults: the two men derided one another on topics ranging from sexual dysfunction and cowardice to poverty and thievery. But in his *Commedia*, rather than denying this correspondence, Dante repeatedly acknowledged and evoked the memory of his youthful put-downs.

*Dante's Tenzone with Forese Donati* examines the lasting impact of these sonnets on Dante's writings and Italian literary culture, notably in the work of Giovanni Boccaccio. Fabian Alfie expands on derision as an ethical dimension of medieval literature, both facilitating the reprehension of vice and encouraging ongoing debates about the true nature of nobility. Outlining a broad perspective on the uses of literary insult, *Dante's Tenzone with Forese Donati* also provides an evocative glimpse of Dante's day-to-day life in the twelfth century.

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