The following review appeared in the June 2007 issue of CHOICE:

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Barolini, Teodolinda. **Dante and the origins of Italian literary culture.** Fordham University, 2006. 287p bibl index afp
ISBN 0823227030, $80.00; ISBN 0823227049 pbk, $28.00

Unlike all too many collections of reprinted scholarly articles, this one will be universally--and deservedly--welcomed. In recent years Barolini (Columbia Univ.) has been publishing some of the most original, skillfully argued, and elegantly expressed essays on medieval Italian literature currently available. This volume conveniently gathers 16 of her most important contributions, two of them incorporating significant new material. Barolini also supplies a pointed, thoughtful introduction. Focal points of her erudite and sensitive analysis include Dante's lyric poetry (in both the *Vita nuova* and the *Rime*), the work of his contemporaries (e.g., Guittone d'Arezzo and Guido Cavalcanti), the lyric context of canto V of *Inferno*, the theology of Dante's hell, classical intertexts of the *Commedia* (Virgil, Ovid), the structure of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, and the formative history of Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*. The essays are informed throughout not only by medievalist erudition but by a lively interest in methodological and theoretical issues, especially in the area of gender. This book's appearance is an important event for Italian and medieval studies. **Summing Up**: Highly recommended. Graduate students, researchers, and faculty. -- *S. Botterill, University of California, Berkeley*