Rewriting Dante: The Creation of an Author from the Middle Ages to Modernity

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Romance Studies in the Graduate School of Duke University

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

*Rewriting Dante* explores Dante’s reception and the construction of his figure as an author in early lyric anthologies and modern editions. While Dante’s reception and his transformation into a cultural authority have traditionally been investigated from the point of view of the *Commedia*, I argue that these lyric anthologies provide a new perspective for understanding how the physical act of rewriting Dante’s poems in various combinations and with other texts has shaped what I call after Foucault the Dante function” and consecrated Dante as an author from the Middle Ages to Modernity. The study of these lyric anthologies widens our understanding of the process of Dante’s canonization as an author and, thus, as an authority (*auctor* & *auctoritas*), advancing our awareness of authors both as entities that generate power and that are generated by power. By addressing the creation of his authoritative figure from its inception, this study sheds light on cultural production, both as a collective, almost anonymous, process and as a result of the intervention of prominent (and less prominent) individuals. By concentrating on the part of Dante’s oeuvre that may be considered less authoritative, that is, his lyric poetry, my study emphasizes aspects of the “Dante function” that go unobserved when focusing exclusively on the *Commedia*. This research interweaves the critical discourses related to the emergence of the author in the Late Middle Ages (Minnis, Ascoli, *Auctor et Auctoritas*) and the birth of the songbook as a literary genre (Barolini, Bertolucci Pizzorusso, Galvez, Holmes), also touching on the twentieth-century alleged ‘death of the author’ (Barthes, Foucault, Benedetti). I concentrate on the crucial function of editors and anthologists as mediators in the canonization of Dante through the material construction of manuscripts and books. This question has led me to explore canon making as a structure of power and the interplay of cultural hegemonies in its creation. I approach this problem through the lens of material philology because it is a productive interdisciplinary methodology, as is seen in the work of historians of the book McKenzie and Petrucci, and literary critics Eisner, Storey, and Nichols.
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Abbreviations


**Dante**

Inf. Inferno  
Purg. Purgatorio  
Par. Paradiso  
Ep. Epistles  
DVE De Vulgari Eloquentia

**Petrarch**

Fam. Familiares  
RVF Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta

**Libraries**

BML Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana  
BNCF Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale  
BAV Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana  
BNM Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana
Introduction. Materiality and Textuality: The Lyric Dante in History

In the second book of the Prose della volgar lingua, Pietro Bembo summarizes the history of Italian vernacular literature from the origins to his contemporary times:

... Perciò che da quel secolo, che sopra Dante infino ad esso fu, cominciando, molti rimatori incontanente sursero, non solamente della vostra città e di tutta Toscana, ma eziandio altronde; si come furono messer Piero dalle Vigne, Buonagiunta da Lucca, Guitton d’Arezzo, messer Rinaldo d’Acquino, Lapo Gianni, Francesco Ismera, Forese Donati, Gianni Alfani, Ser Brunetto, Notaio Jacomo da Lentino, Mazzeo e Guido Giudice messinesi, il re Enzo, lo ’mperador Federigo, messer Onesto e messer Semprebene da Bologna, messer Guido Guinicelli bolognese anch’egli, molto da Dante lodato, ... Guido Cavalcanti, de’ quali tutti si leggono ora componimenti ... . Venne appresso a questi e in parte con questi, Dante, grande e magnifico poeta, il quale di grandissimo spazio tutti adietro gli si lasciò. Vennero appresso a Dante, anzi pure con esso lui, ma allui sopravvissero, messer Cino, vago e gentil poeta e sopra tutto amoroso e dolce, ma nel vero di molto minore spirito, e Dino Frescobaldi ... . Seguí a costoro il Petrarca, nel quale uno tutte le grazie della volgar poesia raccolte. Furono altresì molti prosatori ... e Dante istesso e degli altri. Ma ciascun di loro vinto e superato fu dal Boccaccio ... . Sono dopo questi stati, nell’una facoltà e nell’altra, molti scrittori. Vedesi tuttavolta che il grande crescere della lingua a questi due, al Petrarca e al Boccaccio, solamente pervenne; da indi innanzi, non che passar piú oltre, ma pure a questi termini giungere ancora níunlo s’è veduto.1

In this narrative, just as Dante is portrayed as the principal poet of his time, he is then apodictically replaced by Petrarch, who collects all the elegance of vernacular poetry. In this piece, published in 1525, the whole fifteenth century and its vernacular culture cease to exist; while instead Petrarch and Boccaccio are famously transformed into unique models for writing in the vernacular, in verse and in prose respectively, while Dante is relegated to the role of ancestor as the first to have truly mastered the Tuscan vernacular. Dante’s plurilingualism and pluristylistm do not fit the classicistic ideals of Bembo, and of the Renaissance as a whole, and thus Alighieri’s work is excluded from the canon, his poetry publically banished as a model for writing until the twentieth century.2 Indeed, despite the recovery of Dante as the ethical father of Italian literature and culture by nineteenth-century medievalism and national philology, his

1 Bembo, Prose, 128-132. Emphasis of the author.
2 Bembo’s crucial role in the evolution of Italian language and its culture has been recently emphasized by Patota, who indeed labels him as the Fourth Crown (Patota, La Quarta Corona).
figure remained far more heralded as a moral archetype for intellectuals, rather than as the author of poetry which could provide a stylistic paradigm. From the Romantic era onwards, Dante’s figure, like the Middle Ages in general, has been appropriated and repurposed by various literary, political, and ideological movements; nevertheless, the ideal was to be like Dante, not to write like Dante. In the twentieth century, Gianfranco Contini, establishing a parallel with contemporary expressionism, emphasized experimentation as the defining quality of Dante’s writing, which allowed Contini to develop a general pattern of interpretation by placing Dante in opposition to Petrarch. According to this paradigm, “Dante’s plurilingualism” and “Petrarch’s monolingualism” are the two functions dominating the whole history of Italian literature, and every author from the Trecento to the Novecento may find a place on one side or the other. The two medieval authors both serve as prototypes for contemporary writing, inverse archetypes of an attenuated and rarified poetry, starting with Petrarch and arriving at twentieth-century Petrarchist authors, such as Umberto Saba, or on the other hand a multi-style and multilingual way of writing, that begins with Dante and arrives at Carlo Emilio Gadda. Yet, such an overly-determined, bipartite narrative needs to be re-evaluated, especially with regards to Dante as a lyric writer and the ways in which Dante rimatore, writer of lyric poems, backed the construction of Dante the Poet, the Commedia’s poetha theologus, particularly between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries, when the perception

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3 The chief example of such perspective is what Francesco De Sanctis writes in his 1870-71 _Storia della Letteratura Italiana_ (History of Italian Literature) when discussing contemporary literature and the ways in which it should renovate itself: Dante as a man is indeed taken as the model for the new Italian intellectual, but there is no reference to his role as stylistic point of reference. Cf. the essays collected in _Dante in the Long Nineteenth Century_, and Carlo Dionisotti, “Varia fortuna di Dante,” in Id., _Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana_ (Turin: Einaudi, 1967): 205-42; Andrea Ciecarelli, “Dante and Italian Culture from the Risorgimento to World War I,” _Dante Studies_ 119 (2001): 125-54.

of *auctores* and *auctoritates* was changing, along with the position of the vernacular relative to Latin.

In his own works Dante strives to open the space for a literature in the vernacular, to authorize himself and his cultural milieu, while also outlining the history of the newborn Italian literature, notably in the *Commedia*, but also in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* and in the *Vita Nuova* (*The New Life*). With a deliberate strategy to become a cultural authority, Dante places himself at the summit of the hierarchy of vernacular writers, narrates his own poetic genealogy and lists his fellow poets along with those writers that must be avoided, thus shaping the perception of literary history up to the present day. The present study aims to provide a fresh perspective on our understanding of vernacular literature from the Middle Ages to Modernity through the lens of the construction of what I call after Foucault the Dante-function, one of the most influential author figures and, therefore, author-functions from the fourteenth to the twenty-first century. Following Dante’s ever-changing fortunes through the centuries, this research has sought to define an archetypal example of cultural authority. Through the analysis of texts and material objects, it delineates a picture of the creation of Dante as an Author, from the emergence of *auctores* to the (presumed) Death of the Author, and beyond.

In particular, this research explores Dante’s reception and the construction of his figure as an author in early lyric anthologies and modern editions of his lyric poetry. While Dante’s reception and his transformation into a cultural authority have traditionally been investigated from the point of view of the *Commedia*, I argue that these lyric anthologies provide

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5 What Contini stated in 1939 in the Introduction to Dante’s *Rime* is still true today (9-10): the histories of Italian literature tend to follow Dante’s instructions in evaluating the origins of Italian literature. On Dante’s awareness and self-authorization, see at least Ascoli, *Dante and the Making*, Barolini, *Dante’s Poets*; Contini, “Dante come personaggio-poeta della Commedìa” in Id., *Un’idea di Dante*, 33-62.
a new perspective for understanding how the physical act of rewriting Dante’s poems in various combinations and with other texts has shaped the Dante-function and consecrated Dante as an author from the Middle Ages to Modernity. The study of these lyric anthologies widens our understanding of the process of Dante’s canonization as an author and, thus, as an authority (*auctor & auctoritas*), advancing our awareness of authors both as entities that generate power and that are generated by power. By addressing the creation of his authoritative figure from its inception, this study sheds light on cultural production, both as a collective, almost anonymous, process and as a result of the intervention of prominent (and less prominent) individuals. By concentrating on the part of Dante’s oeuvre that may be considered less authoritative, that is, his lyric poetry, my study emphasizes aspects of the Dante-function that go unobserved when focusing exclusively on the *Commedia*. Indeed, although Dante as an author and also as an author-function has certainly been at the center of many studies, there is still need to focus his role as a lyric writer and how the *Dante rimatore* interlaces with the Dante writer of the *Commedia*. By leaving aside the *Commedia* and the corpus of works related to it (commentaries and images above all) and concentrating instead on lyric anthologies—both in single manuscripts and in early printed editions, in dialogue with contemporary editions—the goal has been to deepen our knowledge and understanding of Dante’s institutionalization.

There have been several studies concerning the lyric tradition and its relationship with Dante. Yet, a detailed study of the circulation of Dante’s lyric poetry from the material point of view, that is not tracing the fortunes of Dante’s poetry just inside the texts of his followers,

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but through the study of the physical books that have transmitted it from Dante’s epoch to
the twenty-first century, is missing. The volumes I have studied are known by the scholarly
community, some of them are among the most famous early Italian codices. They have been
widely used in the practice of textual criticism and they have been studied as anthologies,
though constantly with the main goal of delineating their relationships as textual containers.
Only marginal attention has been dedicated to their qualities as cultural artifacts provided with
a peculiar meaning, both as regards their materiality and texts’ selection. Since only in a few
cases their composition can be considered arbitrary, it has revealed itself necessary to
investigate these volumes as structured bodies of work and to explore in more depth what
their physical qualities have to tell us, as mirrors of diverse changes in perspective, especially
under the light of being witnesses of the same work, Dante’s lyric poetry. Thus, by offering a
depiction of the development of the lyric tradition through the books containing Dante’s
rhymes, cutting across manuscripts and early printed books, this research challenges the shared
scholarly viewpoint. Lyric poetry has been for centuries one of the most important literary
genres, and especially so between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century. It is therefore
critical to ascertain how the relationship with Dante, and with the Dante-function, fits into the
elaboration of pressing cultural issues at the birth of Modernity. Given the proliferation of
studies on Dante and on Dante’s reception, it is rather surprising that no systematic attention
has been given to the books that contain Dante’s lyric poetry, and consequently to their
owners, compilers, and readers.

7 A good example is MS BML, Martelli 12. See chapter 1.
The exploration of the emergence of authors in medieval times has been a rich field of study in recent decades, where a privileged place is held by the work of Alastair Minnis.\textsuperscript{8} Then, Albert Ascoli pointed out how the case of Dante represents one of the first modern authors, and how Dante deliberately strove to embrace the role of \textit{auctor} and \textit{auctoritas}, that is Author as creator and cultural authority.\textsuperscript{9} Ascoli’s analysis clarifies why the Foucauldian point of view, which I am also embracing, is productive, even if “the case of Dante … anticipates such a transformation [i.e., the birth of the modern author] by at least two centuries.”\textsuperscript{10} It is also essential to pay attention to the bigger picture, by recalling that, although Dante’s example is one of the most striking in many ways, as Ascoli himself points out, Italian culture was already moving fast toward modern patterns of authoriality, and Minnis and many others have highlighted how such process is well-rooted in the centuries before, at least in the Renaissance of the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{11}

In order to explore the reception of Dante as a lyric poet, a \textit{rimatore}, the issues related to the construction of songbooks, lyric sequences, and anthologies become crucial. The significance of the order of medieval lyrics in general, and of Dante’s \textit{rime} in particular, is still an open question. Since there is an authorial order for only a few lyric corpora, the exploration of lyric sequences and of their meaning is one of the crucial issues in literary hermeneutics, both for authorial and non-authorial songbooks or anthologies, as Barolini and others have noted.\textsuperscript{12} Moreover, in the absence of autographs, each and every grouping of poems implies a

\begin{footnotes}
\item Minnis, \textit{Medieval Theory of Authorship}.
\item Ascoli, \textit{Dante and the Making}.
\item Ascoli, \textit{Dante and the Making}, 25.
\item See the essays collected in \textit{Auctor \& Auctoritas. Invention et Conformisme} and in \textit{Auctor et Auctoritas in Latinis Medii Aevi Litteris}.
\item As regards Dante, see at least Barolini, “Editing Dante’s Rime” and the debate following the 2002 edition of Dante’s \textit{rime} by De Robertis.
\end{footnotes}
choice, and each choice implies a redefinition of the meaning of the sequence, and in turn of its author.

Using the lens of material philology, I concentrate on editors and anthologists as mediators in the canonization of Dante through the material construction of their volumes. Much has been written about Boccaccio, and Petrarch, as editors. Their scribal practices have been thoroughly investigated, and their role in literary and cultural history is widely recognized. Boccaccio’s pivotal role as editor of Dante’s works and his claims to further push the boundaries of literature, strengthening Dante’s effort to authorize the vernacular, have been the subject of many scholarly interventions.\(^\text{13}\) I maintain that it is now necessary to focus on less famous scribes, --such as Antonio Pucci or the Florentine musician Andrea Stefani—, or on anonymous compilers, whose work, in connection or in opposition to the cultural mainstream, has silently but strongly influenced the reception of authors’ like Dante, shaping the process of cultural production from within. In their materiality, manuscripts give access to intellectual ferments that are overshadowed by simply focusing on major works and authors.

The analysis of the material features of extant anthologies is, indeed, a privileged point of view to examine the two main critical discourses emerging from the analysis of Dante’s reception as a lyric writer: the advent of the Author as a distinct and independent cultural figure, and the birth of the songbook (or canzoniere) as it comes to be defined and canonized as a literary genre following Petrarch’s example in the second half of the fifteenth century.

*The Corpus.* Dante’s *rime* have emerged as one of the most successful corpora of lyric poetry in the whole history of literature: more than 500 manuscripts containing the *rime* have been counted so far, to which modern editions from the fifteenth century onwards may be

\(^{13}\) See §3.1.1.
Dante, however, never collected his rhymes in an organized songbook. He gathered some of his poems in a prosimetrum, the *Vita Nuova*, and then he planned to comment on some of his *canzoni* in the *Convivio*, which he never finished. But he did not organize the major part of his lyric production in any systematic sequence. Underpinning this study is a concern to identify which of Dante’s texts are found in the volumes, with particular attention to the compositions of uncertain attribution and the apocrypha: it is, indeed, always meaningful to consider closely which texts are attributed to Dante, since significant changes in perspective result from the diverse possible collections deriving from such choices.

The mere quantity of extant witnesses illustrate the fact that Dante’s *rime* have extensively informed Italian literary culture, while the *rime* as a whole and especially some parts of the corpus, such as those rhymes that do not belong or that are not attached to the series of *canzoni*, constitute a ‘less-canonical’ work, in which Dante can be seen as distant from the role of *poeta vate*. Moreover, the critical debate that has developed around this corpus can be considered one and the same, from the discourse started by Dante himself (e.g., in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* or in the *Commedia*) to the contemporary discussions by philologists and literary critics concerning the interpretation and constitution of the canon.

Dante’s interventions and non-interventions on his oeuvre have shaped its own reception, and more significantly, the canonization of Dante himself as an author.\textsuperscript{14} Since Dante’s readers were often influenced by his writings and choices, determining what was the Dante-function from the fourteenth century onwards, depends on Dante. Many among those that have written about literature, that have undertaken editorial enterprises, from fourteenth-century scribes and intellectuals to modern philologists and critics, have felt the need to discuss

\textsuperscript{14} Cf. Ferrara, *La parola dell’esilio*. 
what Dante has written about himself and the culture of his time. The interplay between Dante’s desire to embrace the role of cultural authority and the general consideration of contemporary intellectuals as *auctoritates* during the shift from the Middle Ages to Modernity is among the key issues that this study has grappled with. Nonetheless, a diachronic exploration of Dante’s reception is by definition independent from the origin, understood as the will of the author. Thus, Dante’s decisions, and his own assumptions on his role have to be taken into account, but at the same time, he should be left out of the picture: as McKenzie writes, “any history of the book … must be a history of misreadings.”15

**The Author.** Using the expression “Dante-function” in order to define the object of this study, I am referring to Michel Foucault’s 1968 essay “What is an author?” and on his definition of the author-function as refers to larger discursive formations. Virginie Greene and Albert Ascoli have situated why the Foucauldian point of view is productive also for medieval studies, and for Dante in particular.16 It seems, however, useful to recapitulate some of its key elements. Foucault points out that the name of an individual and the name of the author do not function in the same way. Indeed, a name referring to an author “is functional in that it serves as a means of classification. A name can group together a number of texts and thus differentiate them from others. A name also establishes different forms of relationships among texts.”17 What is also crucial in Foucault’s exploration of the author-function, and what is productive to introduce in any discussion on reception of literary works, especially if undertaken from the material point of view, is the prevailing attention to society and culture: “The function of an author is to characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain

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17 Foucault, “What Is an Author?” 123.
discourses within a society.”¹⁸ As a function of discourse, Foucault attributes to the author four characteristics, among which there are fundamental points in order to frame the exploration of Dante’s reception and canonization as an author. In particular: The author-function “is not formed spontaneously through the simple attribution of a discourse to an individual. It results from a complex operation whose purpose is to construct the rational entity we call an author. … The aspects of an individual, which we designate as an author … are projections in terms always more or less psychological, of our way of handling texts: the comparisons we make, the traits we extract as pertinent, the continuities we assign, or the exclusions we practice. … all these operations vary according to the period and the form of discourse concerned. A ‘philosopher’ and a ‘poet’ are not constructed in the same manner.”¹⁹ Also, the the author-function “does not refer, purely and simply, to an individual insofar as it simultaneously gives rise to a variety of egos and to a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy.”²⁰

As much as these considerations create a suitable point of departure in order to define the author as an object of study, in dealing with pre-modern literature and culture it is, however, problematic to wholly assume Foucault’s reflection on the author-function. Ascoli situates Dante and his case in the wider context of the studies concerning auctores and auctoritates, discussing both the ancient accounts and the contemporary debates about the author, not only in the perspective of Dante, but also in a more general scale. If the Foucauldian paradigm is made of four main characteristics, Ascoli accepts two of them – the two mentioned above –, but he cleverly justifies why it is possible to apply the other two as

¹⁸ Ibid., 124.
¹⁹ Ibid., 127.
²⁰ Ibid., 130-31.
well, which are: “The author function is tied to the legal and institutional systems” determining the “realm of discourses,” systems that supposedly do not come into being before the sixteenth century; The author-function “does not operate in a uniform manner in all discourses, at all times, and in any given culture.”

Ascoli argues that, even if “a gap … exists between the medieval language of authority … and Dante’s status as exemplary author in the modern canon,” “the historical destiny of the name ‘Dante’ and the works to which it is attached over the intervening centuries of Western culture illustrates perfectly how a writer is turned into an Author.”

Concentrating on Dante’s efforts to turn himself into a cultural authority, an auctor, Ascoli is forced to deal with the whole paradigm. But the second of the last two characteristics is implicit in the very idea of reception: Dante Alighieri the writer has not always been DANTE, so every study exploring the reception of his works has to deal with the ever-changing Dante-function. Instead, the first one has not had a role in this study, because the author as a legal referent – in a positive but mostly in a negative way – seems hardly perceivable in late medieval lay manuscripts. Although institutional and political power is generally present in the literary context, and also in the actions of editors, in the specific context of Italian manuscript books of poetry, especially in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, its influence does not seem predominant. While there are some blatant exceptions, such as the Raccolta Aragonese (an anthology of the vernacular compiled by Lorenzo the Magnificent to promote Florentine power through its culture, which shaped a great part of the reception of the earlier lyric at the turn of the sixteenth century), many of the lyric anthologies or miscellanies seem to be more

21 Foucault, “What Is an Author?” 130.
22 Ascoli, Dante and the Making, 27.
neutral. Moreover, Dante as *rimatore* seems less problematic than Dante as the poet of the *Commedia*, so that the debates concerning Dante as a symbol of institutional power usually are bound to the *poema sacro.*

**Anthologies and Canon.** Anthologies are the sites where the issues pointed out so far emerge most clearly. Dante’s reception and canonization as the Italian author has been widely studied; however, the importance of early anthologies in this process has been overlooked. Anthologies can have a double hermeneutical function: they receive and witness a canon, but at the same time in propagating it, they create new paths of meaning, and sometimes new canons. Medieval culture was informed by a tendency toward organization, and especially lyric poetry posed questions with regard to this subject. Thus, there is always a tension between the single poem, that is a single and independent piece, and the series of the pieces, in which each poem tends toward a new and different meaning. These issues are more evident in authorial songbooks, but they can be perceived also in anthologies compiled or planned by readers.

The question, then, would be the difference between series and sequences of lyrics, and also between songbooks as material objects and/or as lyric sequences. A songbook is usually intended as a collection of lyrics forming a sequence whose meaning is greater than the meaning of the single pieces; a songbook can be put together by an author with her/his own pieces (Petrarch is certainly the best instance), or by someone else; in the second case, it can contain pieces from one or more authors. At the same time, however, in most cases it is hard to draw a line between series and sequences of lyrics, and also to fully understand the intention

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23 Cf. Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence.*
24 Bertolucci Pizzorusso, “Libri e canzonieri d’autore.”
of a compiler. But I would also add that, even if the compiler (whoever it might be) does not intend to create a lyric sequence, by putting together lyrics in a book and, thus, creating a series of lyrics, a songbook is almost automatically created. The word *songbook* can also be used to indicate more specific instances, such as in Galvez’s account of the word: “A multiauthor and anonymous lyric anthology contained in a manuscript codex or volume … that displays an intention to gather and organize different vernacular lyric texts as an overall collection.”

Galvez’s definition brings us to the metonymic quality of the word, that taken literally means that a songbook is a book containing songs, lyric texts. Indeed, the primary meaning of songbook is antiphonary, one of the service-books of the church. These various meanings of the word, coexisting together, cast light on the multifaceted issues at stake when dealing with grouping of lyrics gathered together in a book, where many of these categorizations are challenged: significantly, Galvez writes that the songbook *is* “hermeneutic opacity.” For clarity, I decided to use the English word *songbook* to refer to a collection of poems that constitute a macrotext in the intentions of their authors, or of aware compilers; I use the Italian *canzoniere* (or French *chansonnier*) to refer to books containing a collection of poetry. I am aware that this is an arbitrary choice, and these words’ meaning tend to overlap. Nevertheless, in a multilingual context, I decided to give specific functions to each word, also because in the field of medieval Italian literature the word *canzoniere* tends to be used more often to refer to material books, than to collections of rhymes.

In Italy in recent decades there has been an attention for songbooks, both authorial and non-authorial. This interest has moved in two directions: anthologies have been studied

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27 Ibid., 62.
in order to establish the existence of authorial medieval songbooks and therefore to edit the
texts as a consistent corpus, or they have been examined for a wider cultural interest in
anthologies themselves as bearers of meaning. Even though this study belongs in the second
category, more traditional philological studies are fundamental in order to understand the
formation of anthologies by readers and scribes, not just authors. As for the Anglo-Saxon
sphere, there has been a continuous interest in authorial songbooks, especially concerning
Petrarch, but little has been done regarding the miscellany as a genre in the Italian Middle
Ages. Some books, however, have been studied in the context of the New Philology, and more
in general with the tools of material philology.

Many studies are dealing with medieval miscellanies as a genre, aiming at exploring
manuscript culture and the ways in which it comes to realize itself in such kind of books.
Although some general qualities of anthologies and miscellanies, and some paradigms
governing late medieval ways of collecting poetry in Italy have emerged, the primary goal of
this study has not been to investigate lyric collections as such, but as repositories of meaning
and larger cultural discourses. More than exploring and defining manuscript culture per se, I
have sought to re-think the vision of late medieval Italian literature and culture through the
examination of manuscript transmission and collection.

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Decaria, “Stratigrafia ecodotica” and Zinelli, “Tra ecodotica e stratigrafia.”
29 Bologna, “Tradizione e Fortuna,” and Brugnolo, “Il libro di poesia.”
30 See for instance Holmes, Assembling the Lyric Self.
31 See Storey, Transcription and Visual Poetics, and Barolini, “The Making of a Lyric Sequence”
33 Medieval Manuscript Miscellanies; Insular Books; Le recueil au Moyen Âge; The Dynamics of the Medieval
Manuscript.
34 Cf. Busby-Kleinhenz, “Medieval French and Italian Literature.”
Reception and Material Philology. The field of study concerning Dante’s reception is vast, but at the same time scholars have focused primarily on Dante’s reception as the writer of the *Commedia*, mostly due to the pervasiveness of Dante’s poem, and of its great impact not only in Italy, but as a World Literature text. Most of these studies deal with the vast array of writings related to Dante, and most of them on the commentaries to the *Commedia*. As mentioned above, focusing on Dante’s *rime* has allowed me to embrace a different perspective. Especially in the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century, Dante, in general as a writer, and more specifically as a lyric writer, progressively lost his preeminence, while Petrarch was becoming the one and only model for writing poetry. A story of anthologies in which Dante’s *rime* are contained has allowed for a thorough exploration of this specific issue, also challenging the received idea that he became almost a counter-model during the fifteenth century.

Material philology is the hermeneutical approach I have favored. It is an interdisciplinary methodology, which merges literary and textual criticism, codicology, history of the book, and intellectual history, as is seen in the work of Martin Eisner, Wayne Storey, Stephen Nichols, and historians of the book Armando Petrucci and Donald McKenzie. Such productive approach leads to a strong consideration of all aspects that constitute manuscripts as books: their material structure, their composition, and every graphic element, such as the *mise en page*, the paratext, the hand-writings, or the linguistic diastratic variation shown by the text itself. In this way, manuscripts become mines of stories and histories. In the last decades there have been various attempts to deal with traditions of books and in particular of

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manuscripts, which in this specific perspective are more particular than printed books, since every manuscript, due to the direct intervention of the scribe who produces a unique object, is different from any other. Many of these studies deal with complete traditions, and their main aim is to show how a text was transmitted and interpreted by readers and scribes. Due to the large number of extant manuscripts, a complete account of this issue for Dante’s *rime* is not possible, so it is necessary to find new methodologies to address the reception, canonization, and institutionalization of Dante as a lyric writer to avoid anecdotal narratives. Every object that I have included in the present research represents a turning point in Dante’s reception, or a paradigmatic way of receiving his poetry in a determined space and time.

By definition material philology insists on the autoptic study of the artifacts, so manuscripts and books have always remained at the center of this study. But I have engaged in three different critical points of view – books, along with key texts and decisive people, – which have helped to account for Dante’s reception, and to address the question of what has been perceived as the Dante-function through the centuries. As mentioned above, even though the manuscripts and the books I have explored in this study are well known to the scholarly community, they have usually been confronted only as containers of texts, but almost never as textual objects with an independent semantic value, as Petrucci and McKenzie have taught us. It is, therefore, necessary to find a new way of studying the history of a tradition with a new methodology interlacing the more traditional philological perspective, with the study of manuscripts and books as cultural artifacts. Richly complicated traditions, with no evident relationship with authorial editions, just as the more than 500 volumes containing Dante’s lyric production, can give us extremely important insights on the role of prominent

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36 See, for instance, Cursi, *Il Decameron* and Busby, *Codex and Context*.
intellectuals, along with readers and scribes, in the shaping of cultural and literary history: manuscripts, because of their uniqueness and dynamic cycle of creation, result “in decentralized forms of authority.”

The dissertation is comprised of three chapters. Starting from the parallel genesis of Gianfranco Contini’s 1939 edition of Dante's *Rime* and Eugenio Montale’s *Le Occasioni*, the first chapter emphasizes the relevance of the re-introduction of a classic into twentieth-century cultural discourse. It further highlights the contrasting ways in which critics and intellectuals construct the notion of Dante as an author, that is, the Dante-function. This chapter also analyzes the concept of experimentation as one of the fundamental qualities of Dante’s writing, which dovetails with Contini’s critical paradigm of the “expressionist Dante.” Dante’s lyric poems were published multiple times during the nineteenth century, and increasingly they were considered a cohesive songbook. Eventually, in 1921 they were included in the Società Dantesca Italiana edition of Alighieri’s complete works. A close look at these editions shows that, for reasons beyond the realm of philology, Contini’s edition became the most authoritative one. This 1939 Einaudi *Rime di Dante* is a small, yet elegant and refined, book in which Dante’s lyric poetry is accompanied by a solid scholarly apparatus written by a young scholar, who was sensitive to the most recent cultural developments of his time. The success of Contini’s edition may be, indeed, identified by its distinctive connection to twentieth-century literary thinking. Dante’s Rime in Contini’s guise are a ‘book of poetry’ in a fully modern sense: Contini portrayed a Hermetic Dante, one whose poetry was close to the avantgarde. But he also established fundamental critical paradigms, among which Dante’s

37 *The Medieval Manuscript Book*, 1-12, quote from p. 9.
“experimentalism”/ plurilingualism is crucial. I explore the contemporary competing ‘Dante canons’, while the examination of the famous canzoniere BAV, Chigi L VIII 305 points to a medieval classification of genres and styles, utterly dissimilar to ours, which presents different paradigms for representing a cultural authority like Dante. This fact may be illustrated through the interpretation and the editorial history of Dante’s tenzone with Forese. Then, through a discussion of the canon of Dante’s ‘rime dubbie’ I show that editors generally agree on categorizing Dante as an “experimental writer.” Yet Dante’s profile varies, and although critics rely on the label “experimental” for defining and circumscribing Dante as a writer, they apply quite differently an apparently analogous idea of the author. The fact that the author-function is likewise defined as “experimental,” but it does not refer to an identical body of work, allows for a consideration of critics’ influence on canon creation. Moreover, experimentation interlaces with the concept of “expressionism” as the critical paradigm proposed by Contini for interpreting Italian literary history. Thus, gauging Dante’s peculiar “experimental frame of mind” allows for both a better understanding of his poetry and of the shaping of the Dante-function through centuries.

The second chapter focuses on the experimental canzone in three languages (French, Latin, and Tuscan) *Aï fons ris, pour quoi traï aves*, in which the three languages alternate following the backward-crossing pattern of rhymes in a *sestina*. By exploring its peculiar form, and the literary traditions to which it relates and those which it renovates, along with contemporary accounts of its inclusion or exclusion in Dante’s body of work, I seek to review the vexata quaestio of the authenticity of *Aï fons ris*, illuminating the main issues at stake in the determination of the “Dante function.” Indeed, its contemporary reception raises crucial questions concerning the response to Dante as a multilingual and pluristilistic writer. Starting
from the twentieth century, “experimentation” is a critical cliché for defining his writing. Yet this *canzone* remains on the edge of Dante’s lyric canon. In the nineteenth century, Dante, heralded as the ethical father of the Italian language, could not write in French. But the *canzone*’s peculiar use of three languages, which could be interpreted as a reflection of the poem’s representation of the woman’s deceitful nature, while largely unproblematic for the ancient public, still perplexes contemporary readers. The *canzone* thus reveals how our conception differs from the medieval and early modern understanding of Dante. Also, this analysis provides insights into Dante’s double-edged relationship with French language and culture, which extends from the *Convivio* and the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, to the *Commedia* and the *Monarchia*. The analysis of a carefully selected example of *Ai faus ris*’s early tradition (the four Trecento codices and its earliest printed editions) sheds light on the different understandings of the Dante function, not only in comparison with contemporary reception, but also with the modeling of Dante as a cultural authority in ancient times: while there are codices, like the Chigi I. VIII 305, that insert Dante into the newborn literary canon, made only of Italian poetry, other codices, such as Niccolò de’ Rossi’s Barb. Lat. 3953 and the Martelli 12, put *Ai faus ris* and interestingly other Dantean poems into a multilingual and multistylistic context, where Italian lyrics are close to French, Occitan, and Latin texts in prose and verse, thus giving emphasis to the inner plurilingualism and cosmopolitism of late medieval culture.

The third chapter examines Dante’s place in several large anthologies. It explores how the material characteristics of these manuscripts shed light on the intentions and cultural priorities of their compilers, owners, or readers, such as the musician and poet Andrea Stefani (Florence, XV*in. c.*) and Antonio Pucci (XIV c.), and the unknown anthologists of several other Florentine collections. Comparing these anthologies with contemporary manuscripts
coming from northern Italy, it seems that the tradition of Dante’s lyric poetry is divided into two main branches: one originating in Florence and the other rooted in the Veneto, where one finds a more pronounced taste for plurilingualism and pluristylism. This dichotomy continues through the whole fourteenth century and beyond, when eventually the Dantean viewpoint progressively weakens, to be replaced by a Petrarchist perspective. While this situation has been explored from the point of view of textual transmission (De Robertis), a comprehensive depiction of the interaction between the two regions in the canonization of Dante as a rimatore and then an auctor is missing. The analysis of these exchanges sheds light on the longue durée of Dante’s institutionalization as the father of Italian literature. Such early affection toward Dante in the Veneto, as represented by the famous canzoniere Escorialense (lat. e.III 23), may fade as early as the fourteenth century. MS Marciano Lat. XIV 223 attests to such a shift, famous mainly because it contains the carmina by the Paduan pre-humanists and Boccaccio’s Versus ad Affricam, along with a lyric collection, containing works by Petrarch and others. Dante, however, appears only with a sonnet hypothetically attributed to him, Nulla mi parve mai più crudel cosa. Emblematically it is the same one quoted by Montale in his La primavera hitleriana.
1. The Dante-function, Canon Making, and Modern Poetic Creations

1.1 The Long Nineteenth Century and the Post-war Eras

1.1.1. Questa stupida faccia... Contini-Brandeis-Montale

Between 1984 and 1986 Gianfranco Contini exchanged some letters with Irma Brandeis, the American *dantista*, whom he had just recently met in Florence. The topic of this correspondence is a close friend they had in common: Eugenio Montale. The poet was a friend of Contini from the early ’30s, and created the poetic character of Clizia, inspired by Irma, who lodged in Florence in the ’30s and had a relationship with him.\(^{38}\) Somewhat surprisingly, the letters do not have to do with the man, although he is often the implicit subject of their communication.

\(^{38}\) Montale met Contini in Florence in March 1934, while he had met Irma in July 1933 (Montale, *Lettere*, VII, 279; Ciociola, “La lava sotto la crosta,” 470-1 n. 1). Montale in the ’30s writes multiple times to Irma about Contini. He describes him as a brilliant and proper man, who will become, or already is, a great critic (Letter 57, Dec. 29, 1934; Montale sends Irma a letter by Contini concerning the *Mottetti*. Contini’s letter, defined there as pornographic, is now lost. Montale, *Lettere*, 118). In Jan. 1935 Montale writes that Contini is a “sort of genius in his way,” and that he will send her “any more C.’s letters – but sometimes I don’t understand them” (Letter 60, Jan. 20, 1935, the passage concerns again the *Mottetti*. Ibid. 125; cf. letter 61, Jan. 31, 1935. Ibid., 127). In Sept. 1935 he writes to her that Contini is a “good fellow, full of life” who “knows everything” (Letter 87, Sept. 12, 1935. In this same letter Montale is not so kind toward Gadda, who “is a very boring traveller [sic] companion, anxious for economia and stuffed with inferiority complex.” Ibid. 174-75). But Brandeis never met Contini in those years (Ciociola, “La lava sotto la crosta”). For the friendship between Contini and Montale, I refer the reader to their 1933-78 correspondence, published with introduction and notes by Isella (*Eusebio e Trabucco*). On the crossed correspondences between Montale, Brandeis, and Contini, and on Contini’s exchange with her, see Sonzogni, “Il critico tra il poeta e la musa.”
correspondence. Instead, they mainly concern some editorial enterprises that Contini is leading in the ’80s, for which he asks Brandeis’s help. In particular, he asks her to send the pictures to which Montale refers in some of his poems, which are considered essential for Montale’s photo-biography *Immagini di Una Vita.* In this exchange, Brandeis complains about some scholars who had been investigating her life and biography, along with her relationship with Montale, in order to better understand his poetry. This is a practice that she does not approve of at all. A passage from one of Contini’s letters, dated June 28, 1985, is enlightening. Here Contini refers to the sonnet *Nulla mi parve mai più crudel cosa:*

Bellissimo lo snapshot senese. Le Sue due fotografie dànno un senso all’album, visto che Montale la chiamava The Only Begetter della Sua poesia.


The backstory is revealed by the other side of the correspondence, where Brandeis expresses the annoyance caused by the *senhal* Clizia that Montale used to identify her. This feeling is

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41 Letter of May 22-23, 1985: “As for me, I must certainly not be called Clizia. I have spent sleepless nights codifying the reasons why I am not she. But in the end there is one that holds and always makes me shudder. Clizia, ever-faithful to her love, was a murderess. I think the whole story suits better someone else. I am tired of reading that C. was an American who went back to her own country. I did not want to go. Well, do excuse. Enclosed is something else. I wrote it am tired of being treated as though I were already dead.” Brandeis-Contini, *Questa stupida faccia*, 24. Reading their correspondence covering the years 1933-39 (Montale, *Lettere*), the relationship between Brandeis and Montale emerges as all but linear and easy, given his relationship with Drusilla Tanzi and her being an American Jew, a fact that in the end, along with war itself, was the main reason why in 1939 she had to leave Europe without coming back. Montale never directly calls her Clizia, especially in the first year of copious correspondence, confirming that the *senhal* is something he created independently from her persona. Since Drusilla Tanzi threatened to commit suicide if left by Montale (Ibid., 270-71, 278), who was planning to join Irma in New York, the close parallel with Clizia, who caused the death of Leucothea, becomes a sort of accusation for Brandeis, who had been unaware of their relationship for a long time (a whole year in the beginning, when in the letters just an abstract “obstacle” is alluded by Montale, cf. Ibid., 296). While still envisaging his departure in Jan. 1939 (Ibid., 267-68), Montale will never leave Drusilla, thus the relationship with Irma ended in that same year. Cf. Blakesley, “Irma Brandeis, Clizia.”
paralleled by some of her diary passages dating back to 1980, which find a clear and concise explanation in a letter written the following year (July 22, 1986):

I hope you are sure that I do not like the publicity that has followed the identification of I.B. I did not want the identification to occur (because E.M. did not) and disliked the publicity because it invited misreadings of the poems. I hope you are sure that I know that Clizia is a figure of poetry, not of life. (When I complained to you that she was an unfortunate choice, it was not because I thought of the myth as reflecting on me, but on the lady of the Clizia poems.)

So, Brandeis does not appreciate the digging in her past to better understand Montale’s literary writings, least of all when it is related to the myth of Clizia. The point had already been explained in the 1985 letter replying to Contini’s quoted letter:

I wanted to answer you about the name Clizia. When I wrote you I knew the sonnet and the line that led E.M. to choose that name. Indeed, I only learned who Clizia was from your footnote: my translated Ovid calls the lady Clytie. But I did learn who she was, and the name remains for me somehow an irony. In any case, it is not mine; I was never called by it nor could have been; it belongs only to a figure of poetry. And that is why I wrote you as I did.

I do share Brandeis’s concerns (and also annoyance) for the critical practice of flattening poetic figures and ideals to an actual person, especially when an ocean divided the two for such a long time. This situation makes poetic creation even more imaginative, and thus even more detached from reality—even though literature is never reality, but just a partial and un-objective depiction of it. I want to leave aside Clizia’s role in Montale’s oeuvre and the specific issues related to it, to focus instead on the significance of the sonnet Nulla mi parve mai più crudel cosa that is mentioned in the correspondence. Indeed, this sonnet is explicitly quoted as exergo by Montale in one of his most famous and grave poems, where the myth of Clizia is

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43 Brandeis-Contini, *Questa stupida faccia*, 41.


46 Hertz, *Eugenio Montale*, to which I refer the reader for further bibliography, especially by Glaucio Cambon, Paolo De Caro and Luciano Rebay. See also Blakesley, “Irma Brandeis, Clizia,” and Facchi, “Un bestiario.”
established: *La primavera hitleriana* (fig. 1). In order to investigate the ways in which Dante is recognized as an author in recent times, the importance of the constitution of the canon, and how these questions have influenced contemporary culture, we must explore in more depth the interaction between the medieval and the twentieth-century poet, along with the crucial mediation of the critic. As these letters suggest, Dante’s lyric poetry reached Montale mainly through the filter of Contini’s concurrent work on it; while Contini himself was also involved in the militant study of contemporary poetry, which, of course, included Montale. This interpretive circle influenced both intellectuals, and was crucial also for Dante’s reception. We shall thus start from the texts that best substantiate these exchanges and then pass to the material books that were the products of these cultural and personal relations.

**1.1.2 1939: The Pivotal Year**

In the 1939 edition of Dante’s *Rime*, the sonnet *Nulla mi parve mai più crudel cosa* appears in the section of *rime dubbie*. Contini’s introduction relates it to a suspect tradition of sonnets attributed to Dante, to which an alleged exchange between Dante and the Venetian poet Giovanni Quirini also belongs. Among these poems, only this one was included by Barbi among Dante’s *rime*, in the section of uncertain poems, because –he writes– it possibly would not be unworthy of Dante. Clizia is mentioned as early as this introduction since she is related to Quirini’s answer (*Non segue humanità ma più che drago*, which Contini does not reproduce), where Orestes (Oreste) and Pylades (Pilade) are used as parallels for the nymph. Contini’s

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47 The quote of this sonnet in *La primavera hitleriana* has lured the attention of almost all the critics that have dealt with the question Montale-Dante, and also with the sonnet itself. Cf. Pasquini, “Appunti,” 49-50; Pasquini, *La memoria culturale*, 33-5; Tomazzoli, “Montale e Dante,” 244-47.


note to ll. 9-10 is plain and self-explanatory, when Dante (or whoever it might be) uses Clizia and her story as a comparison to his own condition:

\[\text{Né quella ch’a veder lo sol si gira} \\
\text{E ’l non mutato amor mutata serba} \\
\text{ebbe quant’io già mai fortuna acerba.}\]

[ll. 9-11]

Clizia, figlia dell’Oceano ed amante del Sole, che, avendo per la sua gelosia provocato la morte di Leucote, fu dal Sole abbandonata e si trasformò in eliotropio o girasole, come narrano quelle Metamorfosi (IV 234-70) che tanto materiale mitico suggerirono a Dante, da Glauco a Piramo e Tisbe, dalle Piche ad Atamante e Learco. (Un lettore intelligente, l’Eliot, scrive che Dante «deve più a Ovidio che a Virgilio»). L’espressione ricalca l’ultimo esametro dell’episodio ovidiano: \textit{Vertitur ad Solem mutataque servat amorem}. È importante notare, col Torraca, che un passo adiacente delle Metamorfosi (IV 194) è ricordato nell’epistola dantesca a Cino, §7.

As is well-known, Montale quotes the two verses in his \textit{La primavera hitleriana} (dated 1939-1946), where the name Clizia also appears. Line 9 serves as \textit{exergo}, along with the mention of Giovanni Quirini as the addressee (see fig. 1), while line 10 is incorporated within the text itself with only light modifications: “Clizia, … tu|che il non mutato amor mutata serbi.” What Contini writes in the letter to Brandeis quoted at the beginning, is crucial. Indeed, it is there that he firmly ties the \textit{senhal} Clizia to the pseudo-Dantean sonnet. His words also hint at an interpretation of Montale’s poem, and seem to imply that the unchanged love is not that of Clizia, but rather, that love is preserved unchanged in Clizia: just as Dante compares himself

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50 In the 1946 edition, while the introduction to the poem is expanded, the note is only slightly, and not significantly, modified (Alighieri, \textit{Rime} 1946, 241-42).
52 Alighieri, \textit{Rime} 1939, 74 (punctuation and the use of italic reproduce the original). De Robertis (Alighieri, \textit{Rime} 2002) did not include this sonnet among Dante’s poems, neither in the uncertain section. Giunta, however, has restored it among the \textit{rime dubbie} (Alighieri, \textit{Opere} I, 690-93). See below.
to Clizia, who keeps loving the Sun even when changed into a sunflower, Eugenio would be preserving an intact sentiment for someone, Clizia, who has changed.\footnote{Cf. Pasquini, “Appunti,” 50. The persistence of love, though unreciprocated, recurs in Montale’s letters to Irma. For instance, on Feb. 14, 1934 (letter 29), he writes: “As for me, I believe sometimes that my love is unconnected with being or not returned. When my head doesn’t turn around dreaming for a 5\textsuperscript{th} September (which happens very often), my love is a sort of \textit{admiration} without wishes. My love is an exceedingly [sic] high admiration, I don’t know \textit{why}; I don’t ask my-self whether I’m wrong or right. I see that I don’t deserve you for I am not a real man” (Montale, \textit{Lettere}, 53). Cf. letter 33, March 12, 1934 or letter 39, May 9, 1934 (Ibid., 77, 88). Cf. Blakesley, “Irma Brandeis, Clizia,” 224 et seq.}

In 1990 Mengaldo wrote that “se è vero che l’interpretazione continiana delle \textit{Rime} dantesche risente della familiarità con la poesia, in particolare, di Montale, è anche vero all’inverso che l’uscita del commento di Contini all’opera dantesca (1939, stesso anno delle \textit{Occasioni}) ha contato qualcosa per il Montale di \textit{Finisterre} e poi della \textit{Bufera}” (“if it is true that Contini’s interpretation of Dante’s \textit{Rime} is affected by familiarity, in particular, with Montale’s poetry, the opposite is also true, that the publication of Contini’s commentary to Dante’s work [1939, the same year of the \textit{Occasioni}] counted for the Montale of \textit{Finisterre} and then of the \textit{Bufera}”).\footnote{Mengaldo, “Preliminari,” 165-66.} Just a few years earlier (the journal is dated 1986) Barański specified that, although “Contini nowhere explicitly presents Montale as a follower of Dante, nor does Montale acknowledge that Contini’s views on Dante influenced the kind of poetry he himself wrote,” such evidence is not required, since we have multiple tangible clues showing a system of interdependent connections.\footnote{Barański, “The Power of Influence,” 359-68 (“Montale and Contini: The Making of a Modern Dante”), quote from p. 364. Cf. Scarpati, \textit{Sulla cultura di Montale}, 38-40 and \textit{passim}.} Nonetheless, we have just seen that such evidence does exist, and has been pointed out by Contini himself, to Irma-Clizia. The Brandeis-Contini correspondence, thus, gives express proof of the connection Contini-Dante-Montale, and particularly reveals that Montale owes much of his Dantean inspiration to Contini’s philological and hermeneutical work, as is demonstrated by the origin of the \textit{senhal} Clizia that
plays a fundamental role throughout his whole literary career. Critics have suggested that even the title *Le Occasioni* might have been inspired by Contini’s thoughts, and possibly by a passage of his introduction to the *Rime*. Among the now vast bibliography concerning Montale’s *dantismo*, Barański’s essay remains relevant because it points out the dialectics, “a fascinating cross-fertilization” between Montale and Contini (and Dante) in a bidirectional relationship. Contini reads Dante using paradigms he had used, or is developing to interpret Montale’s poetry, while Montale is influenced by Dante as a lyric poet through Contini’s hermeneutics. The friendship with Contini, who was in direct contact with the most recent literary but also philosophical movements, affected Montale’s thought and oeuvre in a profound way that goes beyond the *Occasioni* and Dante, but whose full dimensions I cannot explore here.

At this point, I would like to focus on definite instances to give solid dimension to this claim, and to illustrate concretely how the re-introduction of a classic into the cultural discourse can affect an epoch, with a particular focus on canonization and selection since, as we have just seen, Montale derived the *sennhal* Clizia from a poem that Contini included in his edition, but which is still far from being indisputably attributed to Dante. However, personal

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59 Tomazzoli has recapitulated the most important interventions on Montale’s *dantismo*, pointing out both the explicit declarations of the poet, and the main critical interpretations, which, though, mainly concern the relationship with the *Commedia*. Tomazzoli, “Montale e Dante,” to which I refer the reader for a complete and critical bibliography on this topic. It is noteworthy that a large part of these essays have been written when Montale was still alive, thus many of them directly influenced the relationship of the poet with Dante, or at least, as it is possible to ascertain from his own writing, have generated some kind of reflection on the ways in which he used Dante. This same process happened, more generally, with the critical reception of his poetry, as for instance with Contini: their friendship started after the young critic in 1933 intervened on the *Ossi* (Gianfranco Contini, “Introduzione a E. Montale,” *Rivista Rosminiana* 1 [gennaio-marzo 1933]: 55-59). Cf. Montale’s closing speech of the 1965 Congresso Internazionale di Studi Danteschi, “Dante ieri e oggi.” Cf. Scarpati, “Tra lo Stilnovo e le ‘petrose’” and “Montale, Contini e le «Rencontres»,” in Id., *Sulla cultura di Montale*, 33-56 and 57-86; Pasquini, *La memoria culturale*.
60 Scarpati, “Montale, Contini e le «Rencontres»,” in Id., *Sulla cultura di Montale*, 57-86; cf. Riccardi, “Ripensando il dantismo.”
relationships can also be of major importance in this process, and thus the circle of people surrounding Montale and Contini during their friendship as well, especially in Florence in the '30s should be taken into account. There had been many reactions to Contini’s edition of Dante’s Rime among Italian writers and poets of the time. Intellectuals such as Franco Fortini and Carlo Emilio Gadda took part in the famous conversations at the Florentine café Le Giubbe Rosse with Contini and Montale, and many others.61 As Dionisotti writes, Contini’s 1939 edition is fundamental in the Italian cultural scene because it is an opportunity for interaction between the most advanced academic philology and the so-called ermetici, who in that same period were the avant-garde of Italian militant literature.62

The passage by Mengaldo quoted above maintains that Dante becomes a looming influence for Montale starting from 1939-40, with Finisterre. The common view is that this would happen especially after the contact with Contini’s Dante, for which La primavera hitleriana serves as the clearest example. Even in Montale’s previous collection, Le Occasioni (The Occasions), however, there are recurrent circumstances showing this same inspiration. By involving not the influence of a book, which in its independence might be re- or mis-read and re- or mis-interpreted, but of the editor as an active presence in current times, this collection reveals itself as even more significant than the following ones. Indeed, Montale’s second collection and Contini’s edition of Dante’s Rime were published almost simultaneously. The former is dated October 14, 1939 while in the latter the colophon says that it was finished

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printing on December 4, 1939. Also, Montale writes to Contini to thank him for the copy he has just received as soon as December 21 of that same year.\textsuperscript{63}

Isella, in commenting on the first verses of \textit{Le Occasioni’s Mottetto VI}, “La speranza di pure rivederti m’abbandonava,” refers to a note by Macrì, who not only makes a parallel with Dante’s \textit{incipit} “La dispietata mente, che pur mira di retro al tempo che se n’è andato,” but also points out the importance, for Montale and for the other friends of the Giubbe Rosse, of Contini’s commentary, published in 1939, but already known by them before.\textsuperscript{64} It is worth exploring this suggestion in greater depth. In the \textit{mottetto}, to the enigmatic vision of two jackals on a leash with a servant in Modena, an epiphany of Clizia corresponds, a “labile” “barbaglio” from the past, seemingly confusing with a sense of death. In this poem the woman is doubly absent, both temporally and spatially. On the one hand, there is the past, where Clizia permanently resides; on the other, there is physical inaccessibility. Clizia had permanently left Europe, and Modena adds a layer to this, since she had never been there, nor was she connected to that city in any way for Eugenio. Yet, she emerges from the past and from her distance after the appearance of the jackals. We shall now read Contini’s commentary to Dante’s \textit{canzone}, and then compare the two poems:

\begin{quote}
... questa canzone ... allude (si veda il v. 5) a una lontananza, e dunque probabilmente al soggiorno di Bologna; non è verisimile ch’essa, come pur proposto, sia da abbassare al tempo dell’esilio. ... Oltre al luogo comune provenzalesco dell’attesa che non può oltre protrarsi (strofe III), sicilianeggiante è l’idea (v. 22) di Amore che dipinge nel cuore l’immagine della donna. ... Questa trovata siciliana ... resta a lungo in Dante giovane; e in lui rimarrà almeno la distinzione della persona fisica della donna dall’immagine ... . D’altra parte, l’importanza del saluto, «mirabile salute», anticipa già la situazione caratteristica, quasi l’idea fissa, del «libello» (\textit{Vita Nuova}, XI).
1. ... - \textit{Mente, memoria} - \textit{Pur, continuamente}.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Euribio e Trabucco}, 59-60.

D'altra parte.

Sottile distinzione, portata oggettivamente nella topografia del cuore, della nostalgia spaziale e amorosa del presente dalla nostalgia temporale.

La dispietata mente che pur mira di ricto al tempo che se n'è andato da l'un de' lati mi combatte il core, e 'l disio amoroso che mi tira verso 'l dolce paese c'h'è lasciato, da l'altra partè con forza d'amore; né dentro sento tanto di valore che possa lungamente far difesa, gentil madonna, se da voi non vene: però, s'à voi converte ad iscampo di lui mai fare impresa, piacevvi a lui mandar vostra salute, che sia conforto de la sua vertute.

La speranza di pure rivederti m'abbandonava;

e mi chiesi se questo che mi chiude ogni senso di te, schermo d'immagini, ha i segni della morte o dal passato è in esso, ma distorto e fatto labile, un tuo barbaglio:

(A Modena, tra i portici, un servo gallonato trascinava due sciacalli al guinzaglio).

65 Alighieri, Rime 1939, 35-6.
66 Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 3 183-85. “Pitiless memory, ever gazing back at the time that is past, assails my heart on the one side; on the other, with the power of Love, is the love-longing that draws me towards the dear place which I have left. Nor, gentle lady, do I feel that I have the power in me to resist for long, unless such power come from you; hence if it fitting that you sometimes take action to rescue my heart, send your greeting, I beg you, to restore in strength. ... And certainly my heart’s pain burns me the more when I consider, lady, that you are depicted therein by the hand of Love: which is a reason for your caring the more for it, if He who is the norm of all goodness holds us the dearer for being made in His image. Were you to say, my sweet hope, that you will make me wait for what I ask of you, know that I cannot wait -I am at the end of my strength. And this you ought to recognize, since it is my last hope that I have begun to look to now: for a man ought to sustain every burden, short of such as would kill him, before appealing to his best friend, since he does not know how his friend may be disposed; and should the response be unkind, then nothing could be bought at greater cost -he will die of it, ad the more swiftly and bitterly.” Text highlighted in bold by the author.
67 Montale, Le occasioni 1939, 43. Cf. Montale, Le occasioni 1996, 88-90. “The hope of even seeing you again|was leaving me;|and I asked myself if this which closes off|all sense of you from me, this screen of images,|is marked by death, or if, out of the past,|but deformed and diminished, it entails|some flash of yours: (under the arcades, at Modena,|a servant in gold braid dragged|two jackals on a leash).”
Montale’s first verse is a clear reworking of Dante’s *incipit*. The word *pure*, although not rhythmically identical, is in the same position, being the second to last word, in both poems preceding a verb of sight. Besides beginning with the very same word, *la*, the second word is also in consonance, with the sound *sp*, even though the meaning is opposite. While Dante’s mind is ruthless (*dispietata*), Montale uses the word ‘hope’ (*speranza*). The second verse seems modelled on the closing of Dante verse 2, especially in recalling something that is leaving. Montale keeps following Dante in verse 3, whose last words are casted on the last words of Dante’s verse 4, also rhythmically this time. Here, the *I* is subject to the action of desire, for Dante, and something mysterious for Montale (maybe desire?). From the point of view of the form and of its rhetoric, the *mottetto* isolates many of the words used by Dante. We find *speranza* (hope), *morte* (death), *immagine/i* (image/s), while *difesa* loosely corresponds to *schermo*, and *incende* with *barbaglio*, whose concrete meaning is luminescence of fire. In both poems, we also find direct speech to the woman, evoked through second person pronouns and possessive adjectives. This is a feature Montale stresses by putting in italics *tuo* (your). Both poems are dominated by the obsessive gaze to the image of the beloved woman, pinpointed by the adverb *pure* (still, continually) in the first verse, which projects over both poems. Just as for Dante the

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68 Hertz (*Eugenio Montale*, 104) suggests that this line draws inspiration from the inscription of the gate of Hell “Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch’intrate” (*Inf.* 3.9, “Abandon every hope, you who enter”). However, except for the word *speranza*, there seem to be no particular resemblance.  
69 Indeed, Isella suggests that Dante’s *La dispietata mente* first verse might be also behind *Xenia* I 3, where desire explicitly appears: “esaurita la carica meccanica | il desiderio di riaverti, fosse | pure ...” (*Montale, Le occasioni* 1996, 89 n. 1).
woman is depicted, painted, in his heart and in reality he asks for her salutation which equates salvation (saluto/salute), for Montale the woman is a flash, appearing instantaneously in his mind after a sight (the jackals), which is completely detached and disjointed in time and space, evoking her in an involuntary association. Yet, the woman appears likewise portrayed inside Montale: the “schermo d’immagini,” the illusory images constituting the reality of the poet, seems to owe to the image of the woman painted in the heart, since her memory comes out in his mind because of and amidst it. Dante implies that he is not in Florence, where desire drags him, while Montale sets the scene in the (for him) unusual city of Modena. Thus, as we have already mentioned, both of them are in unfamiliar places. Both of them convey a feeling of loneliness and abandonment, while both immersed in the past. The double plan of the distance in time and space, along with the distinctive portrayal of the woman, persisting in their intimate, is precisely what had been highlighted by Contini. His note on l. 6 of *La dispietata*

70 In a later article in the *Corriere della sera* (Feb. 16, 1950) Montale writes about *Mottetti, VI* (the article has been re-published in E.M., *Il secondo mestiere*, ed. G. Zampa [Milan: Mondadori, 1996], 1489-93; the passage has been used as an introduction to the poem in Montale, *Le Occasioni* 1996, 88): “Un pomeriggio d’estate Mirco [Montale himself] si trovava a Modena e passeggiava sotto i portici. Angosciato com’era e sempre assorto nel suo «pensiero dominante», stupiva che la vita gli presentasse come dipinte o riflesse su uno schermo tante distrazioni. Era un giorno troppo gaio per un uomo non gaio. Ed ecco apparire a Mirco un vecchio in divisa gallonata che trascinava con una catenella due riluttanti cuccioli color sciampagna, due cagnuoli che a una prima occhiata non parevano né lupetti né bassotti né volpini. Mirco si avvicinò al vecchio e gli chiese: «Che cani sono questi?». E il vecchio, secco e orgoglioso: «Non sono cani, sono siacalli». (Così pronunciò da buon settentrionale incolto; e scantonò poi con la sua pariglia.) Clizia amava gli animali buffi. Come si sarebbe divertita a vederli! pensò Mirco. E da quel giorno non lesse il nome di Modena senza associare quella città all’idea di Clizia e dei due siacalli. Strana, persistente idea. Che le due bestiole fossero inviate da lei, quasi per emanazione? Che fossero un emblema, una citazione occulta, un senhal? O forse erano solo un’allucinazione, i segni premonitori della sua decadenza, della sua fine?” Then, he says that he wrote the first seven verses on a tram ticket. But, given their refined structure, we should not trust this story in its entirety, since it is not probable that the verses just came out as they are. This is important to point out, since Contini thought that Montale (just like Dante) was far from Romantic individualism (cf. Barański, “The Power of Influence,” 359-68). Yet Montale writes to Irma that, although he needs years to collect poems, the material execution is rapid, even just a few minutes (letter 23, Dic. 5, 1933, Montale, *Lettere*, 37). Barański suggests that this prose piece “can be read as an ironic *Vita nuova* in synthesis, in which the poet introduces two motets (“Lontano, ero con te quando tuo padre” and “La speranza di pure rivederti”) into a prose framework, which acts as a commentary to the structure, content, and occasions of composition of the poems. Further, parallel events, progressing along similar chronological axes, appear in both texts” (Barański, “Dante and Montale,” 20-21, quote from p. 20).
mente ultimately gives the key to understand the mottetto. Dante’s canzone, thus, seems to be the necessary hypotext for the very existence of the mottetto, especially when seen through the lens of the 1939 commentary. Still, we could also imagine that this poetic bridge might have been engendered by discussions in person between Contini and Montale, concerning the psychological condition of Dante as he portrays himself in this canzone, expanding on what is written in the edition. No matter how, Mottetti. VI elucidates and synthetizes the key concepts of the medieval canzone. We could even say that Montale “tweets” Dante, while transferring the same ideas in the uncertain contemporary condition of the self. Montale appropriates the medieval lyric and rewrites it and, just like in his adaptation and inversion of the myth of Clizia in order to create the senhal, he performs a continuous process of absorption, concentration and re-creation of both Dante’s poetry and Contini’s hermeneutics.71

There is another poem from the Occasioni that owes its last form to Contini’s suggestions, and also to his commentary on Dante’s Rime. Notizie dall’Amiata II.72 In the letter dated February 14, 1939, Contini writes to Montale about some texts for the Occasioni, which will be printed in the following autumn. He writes specifying that “le Notizie [dall’Amiata] sono formidabili” (“the Notizie [dall’Amiata] are amazing”), and that he is eager to emphasize their novelty.73 Among the critical annotations he makes about the texts he has received and read, Contini focuses on some passages, among which his remark on Notizie dall’Amiata II, ll. 6-7, is

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71 In Montale’s complete oeuvre Ioli counts 472 dantismi drawn from the Commedia, to which 26 from the rime must be added. She writes that of these 26, the 62% come from the Petrose, 15% from the Rime dubbie and 23% from the other rime, which should respectively correspond to 16, 4 and 6 parallels (Ioli, “Dante e Montale,” 100; this data refers to the Dantean corpus as it is organized in Contini’s edition). For what interests us here, this rough data shows that Montale’s interest toward Dante as a lyric writer was not dominant, but it certainly was an important component in his writing. Also, the references to the petrose, that is just four poems, and the dubbie highlight a peculiar way of reading the corpus, oriented toward the part closest to the Commedia, and to its less authoritative part. Cf. Barański, “Dante and Montale,” 37-48; Pasquini, La memoria culturale, 24-7.
73 Eusebio e Trabucco, 39-42, quote on page 40.
of particular interest: “Se mi permetti, ti segnalo qualche areola che mi fa risentire. La Galassia, sulla calcina specialmente, la sento come estetistica.” The version then sent to Contini was “e sulla calcina l’allucciolìo.” A passage that, as it is possible to infer from a letter from the following April to Bobi Bazlen, Montale corrected, along with the other passages signaled by Contini. Thus, passing through “e sull’intonaco l’allucciolìo,” the definitive text of Notizie II soon stabilizes in what we read nowadays: “il volo infagottato degli ucelli | notturni e in fondo al borro l’allucciolìo | della Galassia, la fascia d’ogni tormento” (“the twig-laden journeys of night birds | and the winking of the Galaxy, | shroud of every torment., in the bottom of the ditch”). Borro can be paraphrased by burrone (ravine), and the passage, as Contini himself does, can be rendered as “riflesso della Via Lattea nell’acqua in fondo al burrone” (“the reflection of the Milky Way in the water at the bottom of the ravine”). Montale decides to add a completely new element to his poem, the ravine, and thus, because of its peculiarities of form and meaning, I claim that it is necessary to focus more in depth on the choice of the word borro. This word has a primary spatial connotation, indicating something that is not uncommon in a mountain setting like Mount Amiata, nor poetically alien to the nature of the poem. Yet, it must be underlined that it is a rare word, and that, in particular, starting from Dante, in poetry it assumes a figurative meaning connected to love passion, that of tormenting cliff. The alluded passage by Dante is in the canzone petrosa Così nel mio parlar, ll. 59-60: “Omè, perché non latra | per me, com’io per lei, nel caldo borro?” (“Alas, why does she not howl for me in the hot gorge, as I do for her?”). Contini comments: “60. Caldo borro. Merita di esser ricordato

74 Ibid., 41.
75 Cf. Montale, Opera, 182, 936.
77 TLIO ad vocem. The GDLI ad vocem places the figurative as second meaning of the word, quoting Dante as its first occurrence.
che quest’espressione, come prova un’imitazione di Paolo dell’Abaco, fu più tardi interpretata come «inferno»; con che s’immaginava una dannazione successiva alla morte del v. 56.”

In sum, a broad infernal hypotext, drew through the canzone, even if declined in its cold version, as in the bottom of Hell, seems probable, especially considering other syntagms that precede borro and point in that same direction: “architetture|annerite dal tempo e dal carbone” and “il pozzo profondissimo” (ll. 1-2 “the fragile structures black with time and soot” and “the deep, deep wells”), along with the “tormento” that closes the passage (l. 7, “torment”). Thus borro reveals itself as a Dantean word, especially in his friend’s reading, and, along with the Commedia (whose knowledge, given its universal fame and being furthermore a school text, must be taken for granted) seems to have influenced Montale in making this word choice and in changing this poem. Also, with Barański it shall be recalled that “the use of Dantisms to create a negative atmosphere, a hell-like climate in his more pessimistic poems” is among “some general features of Montale’s dantismo” that “have been valuably and, on the whole, uncontroversially delineated and accepted.”

Eugenio Montale’s Le Occasioni came out less than two months before Gianfranco Contini’s edition of Dante’s Rime. Exploring the interactions and the result of the intellectual collaboration between the editor, Contini, and one of his writer friends, Montale, has highlighted the inner cultural mechanism through which Dante’s lyric poetry became a current text influencing present times. Contini’s edition is one of the fundamental steps in Dante criticism. Especially the insight that Dante’s lyric corpus is not a systematized songbook, but

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78 Alighieri, Rime 1939, 138.
81 Gadda too participated in this process. Since it falls outside our main goal, it is not possible to take into account all the network of influence of this edition and more generally of Contini’s work here. See Ciociola, “La lava sotto la crosta,” Martignoni, “Funzione Dante/Funzione Gadda.”
instead a corpus of scattered poems, has changed the general perspective on Dante as a lyric writer, as the attention to the peculiarities of the poetic forms.\textsuperscript{82} The concepts expressed in the introduction, along with the more general critical interpretation of Dante’s oeuvre that the young Contini (called by his friends “pozzo di scienza,” a wealth of knowledge)\textsuperscript{83} was beginning to elaborate in those years, have evolved in founding hermeneutics. In particular, Contini’s commentary must be seen in correlation with the grouping of his militant essays into the \textit{Esercizi di lettura sopra autori contemporanei con un’appendice su testi non contemporanei}, which were published by Einaudi too in that same 1939.\textsuperscript{84} Also, as it is well-known, precisely in the introduction of the \textit{Rime} emerges the idea that will later flourish in the introduction to Gadda’s \textit{La cognizione del dolore} (1963). That is, the division of the history of Italian literature into two main functions, the monolingual one, inaugurated by Petrarch, and the experimentalist and plurilingual one, originated by Dante and arriving up to Gadda himself.\textsuperscript{85} In particular, as Antonelli and Ciociola write, Contini advocates for the appropriation and re-interpretation of the idea of contemporaneity, where the past should be read under the light of the present and vice versa.\textsuperscript{86} As for the \textit{rime}, in the 1939 introduction, comparing Dante’s experimentation with modern poetics is deemed as necessary for understanding his poetry.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{82} Barański, “Dante poeta e lector.”
\textsuperscript{83} Ciociola, “La lava sotto la crosta,” 487.
However, even outside the field of Dante studies, it is important to focus on the double process of influence at the center of which we find Contini’s *Rime di Dante*: he calls it “my book,” in a significant appropriation of the text that, through his commentary, becomes his own.\footnote{For instance, Contini writes to Capitini: “Hai avuto le mie (mie e di Dante) Rime?” (“Have you had my (mine and Dante’s) Rime?” Dec. 21, 1939, quote from Ciociola, “La lava sotto la crosta,” 482).} There were those, like Montale, that were influenced by its very publication and by the two years in which it was compiled, that is according to the conversations engaged in with Contini regarding its elaboration.\footnote{The contract for the *Rime* with Einaudi was signed by Contini on July 2, 1937 (Ciociola, “La lava sotto la crosta,” 476).} At the same time, human and cultural relationships shaped Contini’s hermeneutics. In those years the young scholar was more a militant critic of contemporary literature, than a pure romance philologist, thus his experience with the contemporary strongly shaped his view on the classic he was commenting on. The critical paradigms he was elaborating and applying to Montale’s work, among others, were also applied to Dante, and vice versa.\footnote{Contini, *Una lunga fedeltà*, and in particular the 1938 essay “Dagli Ossi alle Occasioni.” Antonelli, “Esercizi di lettura,” 558-62; Mengaldo, “La critica militante;” Motta, “Dante secondo Contini,” 15-16; cf. Sangirardi, “Contini e la costruzione,” 45-6.} Hence Dante’s lyrics were introduced in the contemporary cultural discourse and made relevant for the present-day. The present shaped their interpretation, but in turn it was shaped by their reading in that particular form.

Some decades later, in 1980, Contini himself (along with Rosanna Bettarini) will be the critical editor of the whole poetic oeuvre by Montale. The critic and the poet will find themselves again together in producing a book of poetry, which should encompass Montale’s poetic life, comprised of both the texts and the materials leading to their final form. But the momentous closing of the circle comes in 1996, when *Le Occasioni* will be published in the *Nuova Raccolta di Classici Italiani Annotati*, edited by Dante Isella, with the very same layout and
material features Dante’s *Rime* had in 1939.91 The inclusion of this collection into the series puts the contemporary poet on the same level as the father of Italian literature, and from this respect of Italian poetry. The physical dimension of the poetry book, the materiality underlining a unique overarching framework, connecting the fourteenth to the twentieth century, authorizes the contemporary Laureate poet—considering the Nobel prize as our laurel crown—and fuses the two poets in a seamless genealogy of poetry. Given the evident symbolism in the choice of the edition, it is, therefore, time to draw attention to the circulation of Dante’s poetry before Contini’s 1939 book, in order to situate his edition and to measure its innovative nature.

1.1.3 Editorial Forms for Poetry

Appointing Contini, a young scholar, responsible for the edition of a classic like the *Rime di Dante*, who was sensitive to the most recent cultural developments of his time, and who was in close contact with contemporary poets, as Contini was in the 1930s, had significant consequences on the book he produced. The publishing house Einaudi, in the voice of Leone Ginzburg, the editor assigned to the task by Giulio Einaudi, wanted to launch a new series of commented classics, whose direction was given to Santorre Debenedetti. Contini’s *Rime di Dante* are, indeed, the first edition of the series *Nuova Raccolta di Classici Italiani Annotati*. As their correspondence shows, they wanted brand new perspectives, not compilations, but original and sharp readings of the classics that could put them in touch with an audience made

91 Pasquini underlines this connection even before the publication of the edition, writing that the *Mottetti* had already been commented on by Isella following the model of the most accurate twentieth-century commentary on poetry, that is Contini’s commentary on Dante’s *Rime* (Pasquini, *La memoria culturale*, 7).
of well-read people, but not specialists in literature.\footnote{See for instance the letter by Santorre Debenetti, director of the series, to Giulio Einaudi, sent on Jun. 17, 1943 (published in Trevisiol, “La ‘Nuova Raccolta’,” 474). The project was shared by those working in the publishing house in the ’30s, such as Leone Ginzburg, and that is one of the main reasons why the young Contini, only 26 at the time and deeply interested in contemporary poetry, was chosen for inaugurating the series with Dante (Ibid.; Ciociola, “La lava sotto la crosta,” Brigatti, “Le Rime,” 739-40).} Concretely, their target audience was the milieu of those who attended high school, or better the ginnasio, and those who attended university but not with humanistic majors. In Italy in the 1930s this was definitely a small group of people.\footnote{Even though the riforma Gentile (1923) had raised the compulsory schooling to 14 years of age, still for a long time most of the kids did not even complete elementary school. In 1911 ca. 40% of Italians were illiterate. Post-elementary schooling became a mass phenomenon only around 1950. Yet in 1951 only 1% ca. of Italians held a University degree and illiterates were the 7.46% in cities and up to the 18.57% in rural zones; semi-illiterates and functionally illiterates were ¼ of those considered literates. It should also be remembered that Italian was mostly a written language, while people tended to use their dialect in everyday life. De Mauro, Storia linguistica, 36-45, 88-105, 118-19, 337-51.} Although at its beginning the series was oriented toward the general public (even though in a still very restricted interpretation), it then steered to an even more erudite public. It has become an aristocratic niche series of prestigious volumes, which in its history has accepted only a few refined texts. It is demonstrated, for instance, by its last volume, the \textit{Orlando furioso 1516} (published on September 20, 2016), which bears only number 23.\footnote{The series froze between 1973 and 1982. Trevisiol, “La ‘Nuova Collana’,” 494-96.} Nowadays, the series is completely institutionalized and definitely no longer intended for its original public. This change in the target audience, or better in the reader model, is significant for the general understanding of the transformations in the circulation of classic Italian texts (and in particular of the \textit{Dante minore}, which is a selective corpus in itself) over time. It also underlines the relationship of publishers and editors with their public, which is not always smooth. Yet, as we will see, the discrepancy between the intention and the actual result, at least in regards to Contini’s commentary, was felt also in its times, and this type of edition was already (and correctly) considered only for specialists. Both the choice of Debenedetti as the
editor in chief, and inaugurating the series with Dante’s *rime* (even regardless of Contini), seem to reveal some ambiguity in Einaudi’s intents.95

The significance of the people generally involved in Einaudi, and specifically in the series *Nuova Raccolta*, has been explored several times, along with the pivotal role of this publishing house in the Italian cultural sphere during the twentieth century.96 In keeping with the main focus and objective of the present study, I argue that it is essential to draw our critical attention to the material features of the 1939 edition of Dante’s *Rime*, and to compare it to the other editions available at the time. Barolini has explored the anxieties embedded in every choice connected to the edition of Dante’s poetry, from the nineteenth century to our days.97 Yet the material perspective will provide us with unprecedented viewpoints for exploring the significance of the editions of Dante’s lyric corpus. The importance of material features of the books, intended both as their internal structure and physical appearance, is demonstrated by the authors and editors themselves, as it is possible to see going back to the correspondence between Contini and Montale.

In the October 25, 1939 letter, Contini writes to his “dear Eusebius” that he has just received Montale’s brand-new poetry collection, *Le Occasioni (The Occasions)*. The first thing Contini notices and focuses on is indeed the materiality of the book he has acquired. As the correspondence itself suggests, along with Contini’s essays, the two friends had already discussed the contents and the substance of the collection. Contini writes that he does not like its cover, where Montale chose to put a colorless drawing of a moth, the *Acherontia atropos*

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95 As Trevisiol points out, Einaudi’s series *Nuova Raccolta di Classici Italiani Annotati* has always had problems regarding its target audience and consequently of pricing, still persisting today (Trevisiol, “La ‘Nuova Raccolta’”, 474, 488, 500).
96 Mangoni, *Pensare i libri; Libri e scrittori di via Biancamano*.
97 Barolini, “Editing Dante’s *Rime*.”
(death’s-head hawkmoth), which Contini generally calls a “cicala” (cicada). In particular, he has the impression that this choice accentuates “fra l’altro, del volume certo carattere di ‘quaderno’, un po’ nel genere, che so io, Lavorare stanca” (“by the way, a volume’s certain character of ‘notebook’, you know, a little of the kind Lavorare stanca”). In the following paragraph he cursorily writes about the content of the book, which—he implicitly admits—he has not had time to read yet as a book (he refers to a “rilettura in libro”), while at the same time noticing with surprise that the Mottetti occupy the center of Montale’s collection. For what concerns us here, it is crucial to elicit from their correspondence the definition of what a book of poetry should be, and what poetry has to concretely look like for them.

Isella, annotating the aforementioned letter, quotes some passages of the correspondence between Montale and the publisher Einaudi, regarding the project of the book Le Occasioni. The author was concerned about its appearance, Montale did not want a luxury book at all, but at the same time was eager for his poetic collection to look like a ‘real book’ and not like a booklet. Yet, as far as Contini’s reaction tells us, it seems that Montale’s desires were not completely satisfied, at least in the opinion of his friend. In the 1939 edition, Le Occasioni contains 50 poems, Montale’s production of the years 1928-1939, in 105 numbered pages, including also an index and two pages of notes for the “simplest readers,” elucidating

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98 For the peculiar lighter spot on its back, recalling a skull, and the characteristic strident sound it produces when bothered, many superstitions have been linked over time to this moth, which from the Antiquity is considered a harbinger of death, constantly used with this function in the arts. In literature, for instance, it is the monster of E.A. Poe’s The Sphinx, while in Italy it is the protagonist of one of Guido Gozzano’s Epitale entomologiche, who also mentions it in his Signorina Felicita. In movies, it appears as early as in the surrealist Un chien andalou by Dali and Buñuel (1929), while more recently it has been used for the poster of The Silence of the Lambs (1991).

99 Eusebio e Trabucco, 51-52.

100 Ibid., 52.

places and facts.\textsuperscript{102} The collection has a well-ordered, elegant structure: there is an introductory poem, printed in italics, \textit{Il Balcone} (The Balcony), followed by four numbered sections (I-IV), among which only the second has a title, \textit{II. Mottetti}, while in the others each poem has its own title. Sections II and IV are opened by a quote, respectively by Bécquer and Shakespeare.\textsuperscript{103} For what concerns us here, it is important to focus on the physical appearance of the collection, since the semantic implications of its structure have already been widely explored.\textsuperscript{104} Yet, as Contini points out, the book indeed does not have the aspect of an institutional book; but it is not even a plain book: it is relatively large (21.7x15.7 cm) and it is printed using quite a large font size. This makes the pages look rather harmonious and not empty, but along with the somewhat square shape of the volume and the paper, which is refined but thick, its general appearance is more that of a \textit{quaderno}, a minute and personal collection. All things considered, \textit{Le Occasioni} is an elegant and intimate book, which Contini, in a letter dated November 24, 1939, affectionately calls “bouquin,” which is no more than a nickname; yet it recalls its most inner qualities both of material form and content.

At a later time, in 1943, Contini acts as the mediator for the publication of \textit{Finisterre} in Switzerland (which at this stage contains 15 texts). Montale writes him that he would like “un

\textsuperscript{102} Montale, \textit{Le occasioni} 1939, 99-100. Here Montale also specifies the chronology of his collection, whose chronological limits are also printed in the page between the title and the first poem, \textit{Il Balcone} (7): he writes that the volume contains almost all the poems he wrote in that period, while only two of them date back to 1926. The attention for the chronological aspect of the collection, and the relationship between the selection Montale made for publication and the bulk of his poetic production is, indeed, interesting to keep in mind for what we are going to say about Dante. Montale hints at the dialectic between these two aspects of his artistic work, the process of writing in a time span, and the selection for publishing, but obviously he does not give all the information, as a philologist would do. Cf. Scaffai, \textit{Montale e il libro}, 18-20. On the creation of songbooks in the twentieth century, see Scaffai, \textit{Il poeta e il suo libro}, who underlines that contemporary poets when organize their poems do not usually make naive choices. Instead, they are reflecting on traditional models and on literature, keeping in mind looming precedents, such as the \textit{Vita Nuova} and the \textit{RVF} (Ibid., 7; specifically on Montale, 144-47, 200-30).

\textsuperscript{103} Montale, \textit{Le occasioni} 1939, 37 and 65. On Bécquer’s quote, see Pasquini, \textit{La memoria culturale}, 35-6.

\textsuperscript{104} For Montale’s collection as a cohesive songbook and the significant disposition of the poems, see Scaffai, \textit{Montale e il libro}, 9-24, 71-138.
libretto piccolo, ma non proprio un pesce d’oro. ... Lo spazio tra i versi dev’essere uniforme, non largo nelle poesie brevi e stretto nelle cose più lunghe” (“a small book, but not a pesce d’oro. ... The spacing between the verses must be uniform, not large in short poems and strict in longer things”).\textsuperscript{105} Again, Montale is concerned with the material form given to his poetry, and again he seems worried that, even though in this case the number of texts is limited and thus the book cannot be large, his production will not be printed in a pocket-sized edition. The materiality of the book, the \textit{forma-libro}, is just as important for Contini, as is also witnessed by his fifty-year correspondence with Einaudi.\textsuperscript{106} But this is a shared concern by those working with books. Indeed, as many of the extant correspondences between writers and publishers show, every intellectual has at least a minimum sense that the materiality of the book – comprised of the quality of the paper, the font, the layout, the cover,\textsuperscript{107} and all the short texts accompanying it, along with the title\textsuperscript{108} – is its first presentation to the public, especially when the publishing house becomes a company.\textsuperscript{109} It is, therefore, necessary to determine whether Contini’s edition of Dante’s \textit{Rime} is ‘a book’. That is to say, to ascertain whether or not it fits in the canon of the ‘book of poetry’, and how it places in this discussion. However, the editions

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\textsuperscript{105} Eusebio e Trabucco, 84-85. Pesce d’oro (gold fish) here refers to a series of poetry books by Scheiwiller, printed in trigesimo-secundo. Montale will print \textit{Finisterre} in the “Quaderni della Collana di Lugano,” which were printed in sextodecimo (21.5x16 cm), just like \textit{Le Occasioni}. Cf. Ibid., 86. For \textit{Finisterre} editions, see Montale, \textit{Opera}, 937-38.

\textsuperscript{106} For instance, in 1986 Contini, as the editor in chief of the \textit{Nuova Raccolta di Classici Italiani Annotati}, was deeply disappointed by the typographic changes made for the layout of De Robertis’s edition of Cavalcanti, of which he was not even informed: this led to a lively correspondence with the publishing house, where Contini writes of a “trauma” in seeing the drafts of the volume. Trevisiol, “La ‘Nuova collana’,” 497-98.

\textsuperscript{107} Cadioli analyzes many examples of nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers worried about the materiality of their own works, as a part of the transformation of the text into a literary work, which cannot be separated from its material form, especially in contemporary times, when the book becomes a commodity and the process of reading is always mediated by the book as an industrial object, shaped by the market. Cadioli, \textit{Le diverse pagine}, 194-214.

\textsuperscript{108} As Genette calls it, the paratext, and more precisely the peritext. Genette, \textit{Paratexts}, 16-17.

\textsuperscript{109} Cadioli, \textit{Le diverse pagine}, 25-86.
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of Dante’s lyric poetry preceding Contini’s 1939 book shall be explored before, in order to put his work into context.

1.1.4 From Dante’s Canzoniere to Dante’s Rime

In the nineteenth century Dante’s lyric corpus has been published multiple times. At the beginning of the century, it became autonomous in several reprints of the 1527 Giuntina anthology of Tuscan poetry, whose first four books contain an already systematized corpus of his poetry;\textsuperscript{110} while after 1820 Dante is usually included in the prints encompassing the most illustrious Italian poets. Among the multitude, there are a few editions that need to be put into relief: those by Karl Witte (1827 and 1842), Pietro Fraticelli (1834 and 1856), Giambattista Giuliani (1863 and 1868), and Edward Moore (1894).\textsuperscript{111} Witte in 1827 collects Dante’s corpus in a volume entitled \textit{Dante Alighieri’s lyrische Gedichte (D.A.’s Lyric Poems)}, accompanied by commentary and a German translation.\textsuperscript{112} The poems include those of the \textit{Vita Nuova}, maintaining the order of the \textit{libello}, and are then divided by meter (\textit{canzoni, ballate, sonetti, epigrammi}). The structure remains largely the same in the 1842 edition, which however is only in German and bears a slightly different canon, due to the editor’s continuous studies on Dante.\textsuperscript{113} Another independent edition of Dante’s lyric corpus, even though included in the project of a complete edition of his \textit{opere minori} (minor works), is that by Fraticelli of 1834. Entitled \textit{Poesie di Dante Alighieri (Poems by D.A.)}, it collects the whole poetry by Dante in short forms, that is, all the poems divided by meter—\textit{canzoni, sestine, madrigali, ballate, sonetti}—including

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Sonetti e Canzoni di Diversi Antichi Autori Toscani in Dieci Libri Raccolte}. Impresso in Firenze per li heredi di Philippo di Giunta nell’anno del Signore MDXXVII a dì VI del mese di Luglio. Anastatic reprint with commentary in \textit{Sonetti e canzoni}. See below for further discussion.

\textsuperscript{111} Dante Alighieri, \textit{Rime} 2002, vol. 2.2 1107-140.


\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 1114-17, 1122-24.
those of the *Vita Nuova*, that are mixed to the others, along with the *rime sacre* (*Credo and Sette salmi*) and the Latin *Elegge*. The texts are preceded by a long and articulated essay on Dante’s poetry.\footnote{Poesie di Dante Alighieri precedute da un discorso intorno alla loro legittimità (Florence: L. Allegrini e G. Mazzoni, 1834). Ibid., 1117-20.} Fraticelli’s second edition of Dante’s poems (1856) is again the first volume of a series of Dante’s *opere minori*, and has a lengthy commentary, but its structure is, instead, completely different.\footnote{Il Canzoniere di Dante Alighieri annotato e illustrato da Pietro Fraticelli aggiuntovi le rime sacre e le poesie latine dello stesso autore (Opere minori di Dante Alighieri. Volume I) (Florence: Barbèra, Bianchi e comp., 1856). Ibid., 1127-30.} The poems are not divided by meter anymore, but there are the *legitime* (legitimate poems), in turn sub-divided into *canzoniere erotico* (erotic songbook) and *canzoniere filosofico* (philosophical songbook); the *dubbie* (uncertain poems) and the *apocrife* (apocryphal poems) sections follow. This edition by Fraticelli is particularly important because, even though the content does not change, it appropriates two innovations that had already appeared in less famous editions of Dante’s poems. Compared to the 1834 edition, it has the title *Canzoniere*, a novelty which appeared in the 1835 edition by Lyell (*The Canzoniere of D.A.*),\footnote{The Canzoniere of Dante Alighieri including the Poems of the *Vita Nuova* and *Convito*, Italian and English, transl. by Charles Lyell (London: John Murray, 1835). Ibid., 1108.} and it intersperses the *rime* of the *Vita Nuova* with those considered coeval, a way of ordering the poems already adopted in the 1839 edition by Le Monnier, when the most diffused tendency was to order the poems by meter.\footnote{Scelta di poesie liriche del primo secolo della lingua fino al 1700 (Florence: Felice Le Monnier e comp., 1839), Dante on pp. 49-77. Ibid., 1108, 1111-12. Even though the principle is the same, Fraticelli’s order is not identical to this edition.} Also, the partition of the certain corpus into *erotico* and *filosofico*, parallels what had already been done with Petrarch’s *Canzoniere* by Marsand.\footnote{Ibid., 1128.}
Giuliani’s commented edition, both in 1863 and ’68,\textsuperscript{119} contains the Vita Nuova and the other poems, with the title of Canzoniere; the libello precedes the other poems, that are divided into Altre rime spettanti alla Vita Nuova (Other Poems Belonging to the V.N.), Canzoni appartenenti al Convito (Poems belonging to the Convivio), Poesie varie (Various poems), and Rime dubbie (Uncertain poems).\textsuperscript{120}

The last edition to be analyzed is the so-called “Oxford Dante,” that is the 1894 edition by Moore.\textsuperscript{121} It is a volume comprising all the works by Dante, the first edition of his works in one single volume, without any commentary. It is divided into two parts, respectively works in verse and in prose; it is opened by the Commedia, to which the Canzoniere follows. Then there are the Egloge and the apocryphal poems (Credo and Sette salmi); the second section, dedicated to prose works, consists of Vita Nuova, Convivio, Monarchia, De Vulgari Eloquentia, Epistolae and Questio de Aqua et Terra. Despite its English origin, the edition is completely in Italian, including the editor’s proem. There, Moore states that they purposely created a “volume portatile, e quasi tascabile,” (“a portable volume, and almost pocket-sized”) in which “alla robaccia intitolata Il Credo, I Sette Salmi, ec., mal volentieri abbiamo dato posto in questa edizione, ma ci è parso meglio non omettere [sic] nulla di ciò che il lettore potrebbe richiedere in una edizione cosidetta completa delle opere di Dante” (“we reluctantly gave space in this edition to the trash entitled Il Credo, I Sette Salmi, ec., but it seemed better to us not to omit anything of what the reader might request in a so-called complete edition of Dante’s works”).\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{119} Dante Alighieri, La Vita Nuova e il Canzoniere commentati da Giambattista Giuliani (Florence: Barbèra, 1863); La Vita Nuova e il Canzoniere di Dante Alighieri, ridotti a miglior lezione e commentati da Giovanni Battista Giuliani (Florence: Successori Le Monnier, 1868). Ibid., 1130-32.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 1130-31.
\textsuperscript{121} Alighieri, Tutte le opere. Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 2.2, 1137-38.
\textsuperscript{122} Alighieri, Tutte le opere, iii.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 155-81.
corrected and organized by the valente Dantofilo York Powell;\textsuperscript{124} they are theoretically divided into four sections:

\section*{§I. Poesie della Vita nuova (Poems of the V.N.)}
\section*{§II. Poesie del Convivio (Poems of the C.)}
\section*{§III. Poesie citate nel Trattato De Vulgari Eloquentia (Poems cited in the Treatise De Vulgari Eloquentia)}
\section*{§IV. Poesie che non si trovano citate in nessuna opera del Poeta (Poems that are not cited in any work of the Poet)}

However, the first two sections do not really exist, since the poems of the \textit{Vita Nuova} and of the \textit{Convivio}, as is explicitly stated under the table of the Canzoniere’s disposition, are printed at their place, that is, thereafter within the prosimetra. In the last section the poems are ordered by meter – \textit{sestine, canzoni, sonetti, ballate}, with the \textit{tenzone} with Forese Donati at the end, which is included from the 1904 third edition following Isidoro del Lungo\textsuperscript{125} – and then alphabetically within each section.\textsuperscript{126} This edition of Dante’s \textit{rime} summarizes what had been the evolution of the perception of Dante’s \textit{rime} during the nineteenth century, and in particular it emphasizes one of the features that had already been adopted by Fraticelli in 1856, to which Moore explicitly refers for the text, that is the use of the title \textit{Canzoniere}. At the same time, the assimilation of the poems of the \textit{Vita Nuova} and of the \textit{Convivio} is only stated in the table summarizing the structure of the corpus, while the lyrics stay in their place. Also, ordering the poems by meter and then alphabetically is rather impersonal, being closer to many medieval lyric codices. This is a completely different editorial solution from what had been done before, and from the subsequent crystallization of the corpus. During the nineteenth century Dante’s \textit{rime} were progressively perceived as a systematic songbook, and thus edited as a \textit{canzoniere}, a songbook which in varied degrees might also include the poems from the prosimetra, and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[\textsuperscript{124}] Ibid., iv.
\item[\textsuperscript{125}] Ibid., viii.
\item[\textsuperscript{126}] Ibid., 156.
\end{footnotes}
especially those of the *Vita Nuova*. Hence, Dante’s lyric production was considered more and more cohesive, while also showing his development as a lyric writer and the stages of his literary career incontrovertibly leading to the masterpiece, the *Commedia*.

In the 1930s the most recent edition available was that prepared by Michele Barbi for the 1921 edition of Dante’s works for the Società Dantesca Italiana, celebrating the six-hundredth anniversary of Alighieri’s death, to which the most important dantisti of the time participated. Along with Barbi, there were Parodi and Pellegrini (*Convivio*), Pistelli (*Eglogae, Epistolarum, Questio*), Rajna (*DVE*), Rostagno (*Monarchia*), Vandelli (*Commedia*), and Casella (*indices*).127 The edition of the whole corpus of Dante’s works in its *minor* version, without any commentary or philological notes, is contained in one single volume, just like the “Oxford Dante;” the *rime* are set between the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convivio*.128 Dante’s lyrics are divided through titles in capital letters in the seven *libri* (books) established through chronological and thematic criteria by Barbi. Yet, they are printed without any interruption, one following the other, progressively numbered. They also contain the poems by Dante’s correspondents (distinguished by the title and by being printed in italics); but far more important in this section is the inclusion of the *incipit* of each poem of the *Vita Nuova*; a mosaic inspired from a tradition going back as far as the 1527 Giuntina, that for Barbi and his fellow scholars becomes canonical, which will be further explored in the following paragraphs. In this edition there is no philological introduction and no commentary to any of the works, but regarding the *rime*

127 Of these editions, only Rajna’s *DVE* and Barbi’s *Vita Nuova* had been already published, respectively in 1896 and 1907, while Vandelli since 1902 offered several temporary editions of the *Commedia*. The other texts were instead prepared for the 1921 book, and most of them received a definitive edition only decades later, or are still waiting for it (cf. Mazzoni, “Edizione Nazionale”).

128 Alighieri, *Le opere: testo critico*, 55-144. The order of the other works is: *Convivio*, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, *Monarchia*, *Epistolarum*, *Eglogae*, *Questio de Aqua et Yerra*, *La Divina Commedia*. 

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there are some brief notes on the uncertain poems, which are followed by a list of apocryphal poems, and a concise discussion of the lost poems. Barbi’s text will be commented only later, by Maggini and Pernicone, respectively in 1956 and 1969, who used his preparatory notes and preserved both his order and the explicit sections, the books in which Dante’s poem had been divided. Thus, although the poems from the Vita Nuova and of the Convivio were excluded, until the late ’60s Contini’s edition was the only modern unabridged commented edition of Dante’s scattered poems that was available. Although the presence of a commentary is a key difference between Contini’s and Barbi’s edition of the rime, as is the independence of the former from the other Dantean works, the target audience is also a major divergence between the two editorial enterprises. Indeed, the 1921 Società Dantesca edition of Dante’s works is, as Barbi writes, “il frutto di lunghi e pertinaci studi,” which “dà come una riproduzione anticipata, senza le giustificazioni necessarie ai dotti, di quello che è nella mente dei suoi cooperatori l’edizione critica delle Opere di Dante” (“the result of long and unyielding studies,” which “anticipates, without the necessary justifications for the learned, what the critical edition of Dante’s Works is in the mind of its collaborators”). Barbi strived to give Dante’s rime a philological settlement and ascertained the main streams of their tradition. Barbi’s systematic placement of the poems in a meaningful series will implicitly lead to an understanding of Dante’s production as a ‘life songbook’, while Contini will underscore the independence of this corpus from any idea of a canzoniere. Yet it is Barbi who abandoned the term Canzoniere (which he used through his 1915 Studi sul Canzoniere di Dante) for the more

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129 Note alle rime di dubbia attribuzione (Ibid., 140-42).
130 Ibid., 143-44.
131 Foster-Boyd commentary (Dante’s Lyric Poetry) was published in 1967, and thus it is almost contemporary to the conclusion of the publication of Barbi’s commentary.
132 Alighieri, Le opere: testo critico, V.
neutral Rime, and in this same 1921 edition treated the corpus as a parallel, yet not independent, section of Dante’s literary oeuvre. Here the rime become an interlude between the two major prosimetra, the Vita Nuova and the Convivio, a few pages without any autonomy. In sum, they are not a book of poetry. If we look forward and analyze Maggini’s and Pernicone’s editions in their materiality, the contrast between the first appearance of Barbi’s text of the rime is striking. The two commented volumes follow the master’s critical lead and, even though they had been printed some decades later by another publisher, look very similar to the editions of the Società Dantesca, such as for instance both the 1907 and the revised 1932 Vita Nuova. These volumes are all quite big (around 27cm in height), the philological and hermeneutic commentary is lengthy and dense, the critic’s voice is strong and loud, so that the result is a solid institutional academic book. Yet this is not true for the 1921 edition of Le Opere. The book containing the entire corpus of Dante’s works is indeed easy to handle, both for its form and its composition: it is materially small, and the bare text has an unquestionable appeal among the public. Barbi himself writes that the book, printed on May 25, 1921, finally made Dante’s works accessible to the public (“messo alla portata di tutti”). This was a far-sighted editorial operation, even outside the field of Dante studies since it brought his oeuvre to the public’s attention in its totality, even distracting the readers a little from the overwhelming Commedia, which is the last text. In the “Oxford Dante” the Commedia is instead the first text: comparing the two editions, which are indeed very similar as for both content and format, it is possibile to see how this choice gives a different perspective on the poem, which is emphasized in the Moore edition, while more evened out in the Società Dantesca edition.

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133 The appeal of the bare text, which in this way seems accessible, is also shown by the series Scrittori d’Italia by Laterza, ideated and directed by Croce since 1910, along with Aldo Manuzio’s illustrious precedent.  
134 Alighieri, Tutte le opere.
Barbi, and his fellow collaborators, worried about the material form of the book, and eventually decided on a book allowing a continuous reading of the corpus, yet printed on thin paper and in a font-size that would not tire the eye, with the result of a tascabile, a pocket-sized book. The result of this milestone edition dovetails with its genesis. As is well-known, the works for the Edizione Nazionale were going at a slow pace, and everybody knew that it was impossible to produce all the volumes by 1921. Yet it should be underlined that the first impulse to the 1921 editorial initiative came from publishers that urged the Società Dantesca to print a volume that, on the occasion of the sixth-centenary of Dante's death, could substitute the 1894 “Oxford Dante,” which was the most common edition in Italy as well. They believed that such an edition, a single volume easy to handle, yet with the authoritative mark of the Società Dantesca, would have been of interest to the public. Indeed they were right, and this edition has been re-published in 1960 (Valdonega, Ricciardi) and is currently available in an anastatic edition (Le Lettere 2011, which reproduces the 1960 ed.). But the inclusion of Dante’s lyric poetry in these volumes was not epoch-making. For reasons beyond the realm of philology, another edition of Dante’s lyrics, the Rime edited by Gianfranco Contini in 1939, became the most authoritative one.

1.1.5 A Hermetic Dante

We shall now go back to Contini’s edition, and see how it disentangles itself from its undisputable scholarly qualities and its ambition of being an edition of a young scholar intended for quite a large audience, within a series whose objective was to be innovative. From

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135 Alighieri, Le opere: testo critico, XXXI.
136 The publisher Perrella proposed to the Società Dantesca such an edition in 1917, followed by Bemporad in that same year; the agreement with Bemporad was signed on June 21, 1918. After this proposal, Barbi urged the other members of the Società to agree to such an enterprise, fearing that someone could have printed a volume of Dante’s works overtaking them (Ghidetti, “La Società Dantesca,” 37-41).
a material point of view, the form chosen by Einaudi for the series of *Nuova Raccolta di Classici Italiani Annotati* is elegant and refined. The book is small-sized, an octave, and is printed with a fair font-size for the texts, while the general introduction is in a smaller font-size, and the introduction to each poem and the notes, into two columns, are even smaller. It is made of thin high-quality paper, not very acidic, also used for the 1946 revised and extended edition, which the difficulties of the war had left incompletely printed to the sixteenth folio in September 1943. Each poem is a separate unit, and being bigger it prevails on the scholarly apparatus accompanying it. Although the layout strives to emphasize the presence of the poem, the glosses are still present. As for its contents, the book is opened by a rather concise introduction, characterized by a primary attention for the present while giving a clear orientation and an original reading of the corpus. It is closed by a philological discussion (the Nota al Testo) and an essential bibliography, making the edition scholarly and exhaustive. The edition contains the selection of Dante’s *rime* at its minimum, 80 rhymes (54 + 26 uncertain poems), that is without the poems of the *Vita Nuova* and of the *Convivio*, since for Contini they belong to other works, while the *Rime* must contain only the independent pieces, the scattered poems. Therefore, even though the order is the same, the outcome is completely different of what is presented by Barbi, both in the 1921 and in the 1956-69 editions: the inclusion in the commented volumes of the poems from the prosimetra makes them physically combined

137 Alighieri, *Rime* 1946, 293.
138 The innovation of the single introduction for each poem (the *cappello introduttivo*) will be extremely successful and it is now almost the standard way of presenting poetry in Italian annotated editions.
139 The 1946 edition has this same structure. Brigatti points out that the page of the Einaudi edition is not intended for “pure reading,” as for example were the editions in Croce’s series for Laterza, the *Scrittori d’Italia* (Brigatti, “Le Rime,” 743). The layout of Dante’s *Rime* has been maintained for all the editions of the *Nuova Raccolta* series.
141 Contini, though, changes the order of the appendix of *rime dubbie*, creating a series that seems to go to the most to the less probability of being actually by Dante (cf. Gorni, “Sulla nuova edizione,” 580-81).
with the whole corpus of Dante’s lyric poetry; in the 1921 volume quoting their first verse makes their absence clear, along with the place they have in the supposed evolution of Dante’s lyric writing. Contini on the other hand, outside the liminal notes, eliminates any reference to those poems. Hence Dante’s *Rime* in the 1939 edition came out as a thin and elegant volume that in less than 250 pages (less than 300 in 1946) condenses a rich lyric corpus with a thick commentary, where the poems, firmly positioned at the center of the page, are sovereign with respect to the notes. Contini is thus able to make Dante’s *Rime* a real ‘book of poetry’, which goes hand in hand with his interpretation of Alighieri’s poetry, balancing the scholarly treatment – in the wake of Barbi – of a monument from the past with the consideration of his work as living poetry, counterweighing the idea of a “magnificent corpus of scattered poems” with the solid materiality of a lyric collection.

It would be impossible to retrace here the global relationship with Dante of twentieth-century Italian intellectuals and poets, even narrowing the field to the first half of the century. However, before leaving our recent past for exploring the earlier tradition and reception of Dante, we shall draw our attention to a specific episode: Franco Fortini’s review of the revised and expanded edition of Contini’s *Rime* in 1946, entitled “A proposito delle «Rime» di Dante (Come leggere i classici)” (“About Dante’s «Rime» (How to read the classics)”), published in the summer of that same year in *Il Politecnico*. Overtly from its very title, Fortini intends for his review to be an opportunity to discuss the function of literature and of masterpieces in contemporary culture, that is, in Italy right after fascism and World War II, in a nation that needed to be rebuilt from its foundations. He meditates on how canonical texts could be read,

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142 Ibid., 9.
or rather, whether they were still attainable, and in what form; on how they should be confronted in order to benefit from their reading. Hence Fortini’s reflection originates from Dante’s poems, but soon broadens to the *Commedia*, and then to the category of ‘the classics’, and to the literature of the past in general, a topic that he will expand on more in writings yet to come. He opposes the aesthetic or philological reading: instead the texts should be translated, that is transported and used in, or better, by a contemporary culture that must “scegliere di rendere parlanti alcuni di quei monumenti ed abitabili alcune di quelle necropoli o chiese o città, e abbattere il resto” (“choose to make some of those monuments speak, and some of those necropolis or churches or cities inhabitable, and tear down the rest”). Poetry is lost by now, just like a fresco washed out by time, because “la distanza tra la lingua e la cultura media italiana (ad esempio) e quella della *Commedia* è tanto grande; ma più grande ancora, a nostro avviso, è quella che passa fra quella e il testo delle *Rime*” (“the distance between average Italian language and culture (for instance) and that of the *Commedia* is so great; but, in our opinion, the stretching between that and the text of the *Rime* is even greater”), so that it would be necessary to “accettare la morte o la vita pallida e riservata della massima parte di queste rime di Dante” (“accept the death or the pale and reserved life of the majority of these poems by Dante”). Fortini then invites to look elsewhere for a Dante that can be constructive and beneficial for contemporary times. That is where his poetry gets theatrical,

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144 Allegra, “Un vero veduto dalla mente.”
146 Ibid., 1251.
147 Ibid., 1257. It is noteworthy that Montale, in 1965, defines Dante as a poet that is not modern, yet his work is close to us and we feel we can understand him, at least partially, since we do not live in a modern era either, but in a new Middle Ages (Montale, “Dante ieri e oggi,” 316-17).
thus proposing a renewed social and political interpretation of Dante. Skipping the details of a reading that has much in common with the traditional understanding of Dante in the nineteenth century, when the Poet was indeed heralded as social and moral example, rather than poetic model, there is a passage in this review that is particularly significant for what we have said so far, where Fortini deals specifically with the target audience of Contini’s *Rime*:

… se l’opera del filologo critico nel suo correre dietro ad un attimo che sempre più si allontana né mai riesce a dominare compiutamente (a riprodurre), si può dir sempre generosamente disperata, disperatissima avrebbe dovuto essere questa del Contini, se mai egli si fosse proposto di apparecchiare le *Rime* alla lettura degli ignari antichi allievi dei licei italiani che fossero tratti ad acquistare il volume per la notorietà dell’autore e per l’eleganza dell’edizione; ma Contini si rivolge invece ad una cerchia molto meno numerosa di lettori, gli «studiosi» come si dice; quelli che, insomma, non sono tanto specializzati da sapere leggere correntemente questi versi e che pure sono in condizioni di intendere la terminologia di questa critica …

Fortini’s reproach of Contini’s criticism ends with a quote from the latter’s introduction to the *Rime*, which demonstrates that the language of the critics and especially that of Contini, whose dense and cryptic writing, which was also accused of being hermetic, is so hard for the common reader that it becomes unintelligible, and definitely makes it elitist. The effect of estrangement of the citation and the consequent demonstration of his critical point is augmented by the contrast with Fortini’s own journalistic prose that, though definitely not elementary, is straightforward and reader-friendly. Reading Contini’s later anthologies for high-schools (published in the ’50s and the ’60s) proves Fortini right, since there the register

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148 It is possible to recognize the influence of Dante also in Fortini’s own writing, as Severi points out, especially in his second collection, *Poesia e errore* (Severi, “Dante nella poesia,” 64-66). Cf. Allegra, “Un vero veduto dalla mente.”


150 Ciociola underlines that Contini’s own writing, for its ellipsis, technicality and global difficulty, has often been confused with Hermetic critics, which was not generally appreciated (Ciociola, “La lava sotto la crosta,” 492-93, 553-57 and passim). Cf. Sangirardi, “Contini e la costruzione,” 51.

151 Cf. Carrai, “La funzione Dante,” 112. Carrai underlines that Hermetic culture, and those who were close to it, privileged Dante as a lyric writer especially because of his elevated language, matching its cult for the refined word.

is completely different, the prose becomes more direct, while the references are less difficult to understand for a non-scholarly public. Yet, the audience that was envisaged for Contini’s edition of the *Rime*, as for the whole *Nuova Raccolta* series, was not a public made of experts.\(^{153}\) Fortini’s remarks get to the core of the question, making the ambiguities of the edition and of the intended readers of such an elitist choice explicit. Yet, the 1939 edition had a huge success, so much so that the second edition of 1946 was prepared despite the difficulties of the war. In 1965 it was reprinted in paperback in the divulgative series *Nuova Universale Einaudi*, and then in 1995 included in the popular series of classics, *Einaudi Tascabili Classici*, thus becoming the edition in which Dante’s *Rime* have commonly been read until recent years, when new commented editions have been published. It is still printed and marketed, mainly because of its handy size and convenient price. These facts, along with the influence of Contini’s commentary of the *Rime* on contemporary intellectuals and writers, empowered by his critical framework concerning Dante that had evolved in the decades to follow, go partially against what Fortini argues. In fact, the relationship among Contini and writers like Montale and Gadda sustains the idea of an elitist reception of Dante as a lyric writer, while the lack of other complete commentaries at a decent price should be accounted for the diffusion of this particular edition among the general public. Contini’s commentary was definitely favored in contrast to the extremely scholarly form of the Barbi-Maggini and Barbi-Pernicone editions, even though these commentaries, being philological and didactic, are definitely easier to grasp than Contini’s hermeneutics. It is of fundamental importance for the success of any book that the target audience matches the objectives of the series chosen for it, and in general, of the

\(^{153}\) But, as we have already seen, the series has always had issues with its collocation. Cf. Trevisiol, “La ‘Nuova raccolta’,” 474, 488.
publishing house. A mismatch might cause a complete failure, since the work might never reach its suitable readers.\footnote{Cadioli, *Le diverse pagine*, 53-86. Cadioli in particular points out the relevance of the change of series and the canonizing role of the series of “classic” works (78-86).} Despite its elitist characteristics and the difficult language, Contini’s edition must, therefore, have reached its public. Indeed, I argue that there is another reason for the success of Contini’s edition, besides marketing and the absence of any competitor, that is its distinctive connection to twentieth-century literary thinking. Being somewhat a work bound to contemporary intellectual reflections has worked to its advantage, and even though almost eighty years have passed now, this makes Contini’s edition still fascinating, as if this peculiarity is perceivable at first. Dante’s *Rime* in Contini’s guise are indeed a ‘book of poetry’ in a full modern sense.\footnote{Petrarch’s *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, already published by Contini for Tallone (1949), will instead be placed from the beginning in the more popular series *Nuova Universale Einaudi*, with the notes by Ponchioli (F.P., *Canzoniere*, [Turin: Einaudi, 1964]). It is interesting to point out that Contini, since it was not possible to provide a full commentary, given its publishing destination (the edition, at least theoretically, was not supposed to take the place of the previous, specialized and luxurious, one), did not want to comment on Petrarch, and almost preferred to publish it without any notes. For the genesis and the peculiarities of this edition, see Villano, “Contini iconografo.” This edition is introduced by a famous essay by Contini, “Preliminari sulla lingua del Petrarca,” which is in continuity with that critical elaboration on “Dante’s plurilingualism” vs. “Petrarch’s monolingualism,” already permeating the 1939 introduction. Cf. Ibid., 391. Petrarch will be printed in the *Nuova Raccolta di Classici Italiani Annotati* only in 2005, ed. by Rosanna Bettarini (planned since 1982), while the 1964 edition had been re-printed in the even more popular series *Einaudi Tascabili* in 1992 (cf. Ibid., 393-94).}

We shall now make a step further and explore what has happened after Contini’s and Barbi’s editions have had a simultaneous circulation for decades, and particularly what has emerged from the philological exploration of the tradition of Dante’s poetry. But first, it is necessary to begin from one of the features of Dante’s writing that Contini was among the first to explicitly mention as one of his fundamental qualities: experimentation or experimentalism.

1.2 ...*Nel Mio Parlar Vogl’esser Aspro: Experimentation, Ordering, and Canon.*
Experimentation, as one of the fundamental qualities of Dante’s writing, has enjoyed the favorable opinion of critics, so much as to become cliché. The use of polysemy, stylistic and linguistic hybridism, as they appear primarily in the *Commedia*, is among its most evident traits, while there are less manifest features that are as important in order to understand Dante’s literary persona. For instance, at the edges of his literary career, there is at one extreme, the *Vita Nuova*, a prosimetrum that cannot easily be placed in any medieval genre classification, while at the other there are the *Egloga*, where Dante in his last years revives and renovates the bucolic genre.\(^{156}\) Experimentation (or experimentalism) merges with the idea of an anti-classic Dante, which dovetails with Contini’s critical paradigm of the “expressionist Dante” that arises in his 1939 introduction to Dante’s *Rime*. Although the existence of an original medieval expressionism is all but a given, and the Middle Ages are by definition an anti-classic era, the experimental peculiarity of Dante’s *forma mentis* is under the eyes of everyone. Yet, this general consensus on Dante as the great experimenter with language and style –to be intended in its broadest sense– is surprisingly suspended for some texts, which Dante could never have written. Surely there are sound philological and/or critical arguments validating such opinions, and the little definite information we have concerning Dante’s biography, library, or literary and philosophical education, does not help. I am also not underestimating the problem constituted by the many additions to the Dantean corpus, along with the proliferation of texts “by Dante” during the centuries. I am indeed embracing the idea of pruning a canon which is still very rich. Nevertheless, here and there unjustified bias about Dante as an authorial function comes out, and it always seems difficult to evaluate Dante with detachment and plain

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\(^{156}\) Santagata gives a satisfactory account of this issue in his introduction to the edition of Dante’s works in Alighieri, *Opere I*, XCVIII-CXVIII, a paragraph entitled “Varietà e sperimentalismo.” Cf. Barański, “Experimentation.”
method. Such evaluations, in conjunction with an overpowering teleological interpretation of his evolution as an author, led even in recent times to the constitution of the Dantean canon. According to this paradigm, Dante cannot be banal or ordinary, Dante cannot have written anything that might be judged as unworthy or indecorous, Dante cannot deviate from the path leading to the composition of the *poema sacro*, whose interpretation tends to be projected on everything coming before. I will address this issue through the lens of the Dantean lyric canon, which gives a vast perspective both in time, since Dante’s lyrics cover roughly the period from his early youth to the years just before the beginning of the *Commedia*, and as regards literary genres, thus allowing a deep reading of the ways in which Dante as an author-function has been interpreted through centuries.

In the constitution of Dante’s lyric corpus, the author-function as a principle of attribution is fundamental, thus finding itself close to what already Jerome pointed out as the traits defining an author. In Foucault’s words:

> the texts that must be eliminated from the list of works attributed to a single author are those inferior to the others (thus, the author is defined as a standard level of quality); those whose ideas conflict with the doctrine expressed in the others (here the author is defined as a certain field of conceptual or theoretical coherence); those written in a different style and containing words and phrases not ordinarily found in the other works (the author is seen as a stylistic uniformity); and those referring to events or historical figures subsequent to the death of the author (the author is thus a definite historical figure in which a series of events converge).

Although modem criticism does not appear to have these same suspicions concerning authentication, its strategies for defining the author present striking similarities.\(^\text{157}\)

There are major qualities used to “construct the rational entity we call an author,” and in particular “the author serves to neutralize the contradictions that are found in a series of texts. Governing this function is the belief that there must be ... a point where contradictions are resolved, where the incompatible elements can be shown to relate to one another or to cohere

\(^{157}\) Foucault, “What is an author?” 128
around a fundamental and originating contradiction.”158 With respect to Dante, experimentation is certainly among the crucial qualities, if not the most relevant at all. Yet what has to be intended as experimentation and also to what extent this practice may be ascribed to Dante is by no means a shared subject, leading to different characterizations of Dante as an author-function, even though the reflections seem to originate from the same premises. Since “the aspects of an individual, which we designate as an author … are projections in terms always more or less psychological, of our way of handling texts”159 the different points of view, both as regards the stylistic qualities of the texts and their contents, will open up some of the major issues concerning the different environments in which Dante’s corpus has been constituted: to a different time and to a different place tends to correspond a different corpus, and even though the label is the same, the subject may significantly differ.

First, it is necessary to emphasize that, as Barolini has already pointed out in dealing with the ordering of Dante’s poems, there is a ‘knot’ holding together hermeneutics, the order, and the attribution of the lyrics to Dante.160 The latter two aspects are tightly connected, especially in the context of early lyric anthologies; while the former two might apparently seem unconnected to the problems regarding the poems of uncertain attribution, or even the apocrypha. In fact, these are three themes that recall each other, thus they will necessarily confront us in parallel.

What has been written in the Enciclopedia Dantesca is a good starting point, at least for two concomitant reasons: first, it is the summa of what Dante criticism had been in the first

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158 Ibid., 127, 128.
159 Ibid.
160 Barolini, “Editing Dante’s Rime.”
half of the twentieth century, while still offering today unavoidable background material; second, being nowadays easily accessible on-line, it has become an even more widely recognized point of reference to access the –too often felt as arcane– field of Dante studies. It is, therefore, a sort of public profile of Dante, the one which would probably be approached at first by students, or non-specialists in Dante or in Italian studies, who know a little Italian. Looking for an introduction to Dante’s lyric corpus, Vincenzo Pernicone’s entry on the topic Rime should thus be considered first. It opens recalling the fundamental quality of scattered poems of Dante’s lyrics, to which Contini had already drew attention, freeing this corpus from the idea of an authorial canzoniere hidden behind its disorganization. Just as Contini defined Dante’s corpus of lyric poetry as “la più superba collezione di «estravaganti»” (“the most magnificent collection of scattered poems”),161 Pernicone writes that “Dante non provvide mai a costituire un suo «canzoniere» in modo organico, e nemmeno parte di esso” (“Dante never took care of constituting a systematic «songbook» of his own, and not even a part of it”).162 Then, he addresses the proper title that has to be given to this corpus, pointing out that nowadays the more correct Rime had already replaced the inopportune Canzoniere, which was common during the nineteenth century and eventually used by Barbi, who in the 1921 edition introduced the new title.163 Yet, besides the theoretical subscription to this critical paradigm, Pernicone then analyzes Dante’s poems according to the thematic and chronological order given by Barbi, and followed by himself in his commented edition, as Contini and Maggini did before him. Thus, all things considered, Pernicone’s profile gives the idea of a cohesive corpus, which is divideable by genre and style. Moreover, reading this systematic corpus would allow

161 Alighieri, Rime 1946, 9.
163 Ibid., 953. See above.
us to trace twenty-five crucial years in Dante’s life and career, from 1293 to 1308 ca. This
mode of reading Dante’s lyric corpus has never been abandoned, rather it has recently been
embraced by Teodolinda Barolini and Marco Grimaldi. In their editions, both scholars, just as
Barbi did, also include the lyrics of the *Vita Nuova*. Grimaldi comments on the poems
separately, even though they are encompassed (and commented on) also in Pirovano’s edition
of the *Vita Nuova*, printed in the very same volume. Barolini instead places them among the
other *rime* considered coeval.164 On the other hand, Domenico De Robertis in his 2002 edition
opts for a new and different ordering of the poems, based on their early tradition. In De
Robertis’s ordering, the *canzoni* come first, followed by the poems connected to or gravitating
toward them, and eventually by the other poems.165 Lastly, Claudio Giunta, while following in
his commented edition Barbi’s order for “philological etiquette,” clearly states in his
introduction that, because of the absence of undeniable data concerning the order Dante
would have given to his lyrics, the most economical solution would be printing the poems
arranged by meter, or alphabetically, which would indeed be the only possible objective
order.166

164 The inclusion of the poems from the *Vita Nuova* in a lyric series of poems by Dante, is an open
choice since the earliest times. To summarize the question in its essential features, so far three main solutions
have been adopted by modern editors: 1. the elimination of the *rime* of the *Vita Nuova* (see Contini 1939 and
1946 editions, and Giunta, whose commented edition is, however, close to the *Vita Nuova* itself, Alighieri, *Opere I*);
2. the inclusion of only the texts of the *Vita Nuova* that can be found in an earlier version, prior to the inclusion
in the booklet (see De Robertis, Alighieri, *Rime* 2002 and 2005); 3. the inclusion of all the lyrics of the *Vita Nuova*
and Grimaldi, Alighieri, *Vita Nuova-Rime*; Barolini, though, when possible, includes only the earlier version of the
dimensione macrotestuale*, 85-135), and the discussion of his suggestion of an apocryphal songbook to be created by
the editor using the poems supposedly rebuffed by Dante by being excluded from the *Vita Nuova* in Barolini,
“Editing Dante’s *Rime.*** 269-70.

165 De Robertis dedicates a whole chapter to explain his choices regarding the order he gives to Dante’s

166 Alighieri, *Opere I*, 63. Giunta excludes from the *rime* the poems of the *Vita Nuova* and of the *Convivio*,
along with those poem sent to Dante to which he did not answer.
An order based on chronology and style implies a deep hermeneutic reading of the lyrics that, grasping their inner traits, connects them to Dante’s creative evolution and artistic growth.\textsuperscript{167} However, as De Robertis points out, though it is possible to date some texts, for the major part of the poems it is impossible; thus this order grounds only on scholars’ hypothesis and deductions, which too often contend with counter-deductions that have just the same rational value.\textsuperscript{168} Yet we shall agree with Barolini, who underlines that also in the constitution of the “historical” order chosen by De Robertis, interpretation plays a leading role. Indeed, the order provided by the tradition for the \textit{canzoni distese} is already an interpretation, be it Boccaccio’s, or intended by Dante as a more or less rigorous sequence.\textsuperscript{169}

In any case, my goal is not to determine which one among the proposed orders for Dante’s \textit{rime} is without doubt the best; instead, I would like to address what lies behind the order, what idea of Dante (or, of the Dante-function) is conveyed, what each solution says about Dante as a lyric writer, about Dante before the \textit{Commedia}.

In the different perspectives emerging from the discussions concerning the order that has to be given to his poems, two main approaches to Dante’s lyric poetry show through. As Juan Varela Portas de Orduña points out, while Contini (and many scholars following his lead) describes a most serious Dante, in a systematic series of experiences that do not allow any comeback after the passing of a certain phase,\textsuperscript{170} Giunta explicitly expresses a completely opposite view. He depicts Dante as a sort of post-modern poet enjoying playful experimentation, for whom exercises in style going back and forth from the \textit{stilnovismo} to the

\textsuperscript{167} Fernzi, \textit{Le Canzoni di Dante}, 5-16.

\textsuperscript{168} Alighieri, \textit{Rime} 2002, vol. 2.2 1155.


most serious doctrinal poetry might be theoretically possible at any time. This polarization clearly illustrates how our interpretation as critics, even against our will, depends on wider discussions concerning the cultural field. As we have seen with Contini, his production as a scholar closely intertwined with his personal relationships as an intellectual, and in particular how his understanding of medieval poetry was interconnected with his conceptions on contemporary literary production, and on what he envisioned as “being a poet.” Thus, even though we shall take into account these positions specifically in order to understand Dante’s poetry, they also reveal an extremely fascinating interplay between critique and the conception of what is poetry, and how this reflects on the institutionalization of a poet like Dante, who is surely canonical and is never free from ideology, be it critical or philological. Indeed, even Domenico De Robertis, renouncing to impose an order on Dante’s rime and relying on history, seems to implicitly renounce the teleological and evolutionary idea supported by Barbi and then to a greater extent by Contini, paradoxically finding himself closer to Giunta. In order to grasp these issues, we shall review the basic traits of the contemporary “Dante canon.”

1.2.1 2002. A New Lyric Dante?

As we have already mentioned, De Robertis in his critical edition chose to give Dante’s rime a new order, not completely based on interpretation, but mainly on the philological outcomes of the decades he devoted to this corpus. Thus, as a result of assuming that the order the fifteen canzoni distese have in his manuscripts has not been created by Boccaccio, De Robertis decided to give the canzoni the first place in his edition, thereby leaving the other poems in other meters following them, in an order loosely reflecting the structure of medieval

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anthologies. Yet, De Robertis never explicitly writes that Boccaccio’s order reflects an authorial series. His demonstration through textual evidence that the series would have preexisted Boccaccio led other scholars to hypothesize that Dante could be behind it. Reading between the lines, it seems, however, clear that De Robertis himself believed that Boccaccio used high quality sources for the compilation of his Dantesque anthologies.172

Aside from the many objections that might be—and have been—raised against this hypothesis, the process through which a critical idea autonomously gave birth to a new work by Dante, is fascinating and extremely thought-provoking by itself. Tanturli, followed by a large group of scholars, Tonelli first, maintained that the libro delle canzoni, that is the series of fifteen canzoni preserved in Boccaccio’s codices, should be attributed to their author, Dante. In this way, the Libro delle Canzoni is obtained, which should be added to the canon. Tanturli hypothesizes that the series with Così nel mio parlar in the sixth (or fifth) place could be the one planned by Dante for his Convivio, while the series we find in Boccaccio’s manuscripts should be a subsequent version, re-elaborated and independent from the project of the unfinished prosimetrum. In particular, Tanturli theorizes that Dante, after having written an elegiac work, the Vita Nuova, would have composed a more canonic libro delle canzoni in a more elevated style.173 If Dante had actually composed a book of canzoni with the textual and narrative


173 Tanturli, “Come si forma,” 129-30, Leonardi, “Nota sull’edizione critica.” Tanturli and Leonardi agree on the fact that the extant canzoni are compatible with the Convivio. Leonardi, thus, sees them as a residue of the interrupted project. There is also the possibility that the series of canzoni by Dante actually derive from his own materials, because it is rather probable that he kept his poems grouped in booklets, and a booklet might well have contained his canzoni. In the next chapter we will see that it is possible that a book of canzoni circulated, and that it might have even originated from materials by Dante, perhaps collected by Florentine friends with whom he was in contact. Yet, this does not necessarily imply intentionality in the making of the sequence, and moreover that he purposely published his own notebook making a songbook out of it. On this issue, see Eisner, Boccaccio and the Invention, 68–74; Tanturli, “L’edizione critica delle rime;” Tonelli, “Rileggendo le rime;” Grimaldi, “Boccaccio editore;” Boccaccio autore e copista, 255–60; Libro de las Canciones, 5-108; Marco Santagata and Domenico
connections among the poems emphasized by critics, it would be of incomparable importance for the history of western literature. Indeed, Petrarch’s RVF are considered the first true songbook in a modern sense, whose ancestor is precisely Dante’s Vita Nuova. Drawing inspiration from the prosimetrum for the idea of telling a story through a collection of poems, Petrarch would have removed the prose, leaving to the neat sequence of poems, not arranged by meter but connected through multifaceted devices, the task of narrating the story of his own self. Attributing to Dante the elaboration of a sequence of poems not connected by the prose guaranteeing order and interpretation, but linked only through textual expedients, would give him the first place in the creation of the songbook genre. Yet, the Libro delle Canzoni would be a rather traditional songbook, especially in the light of the Occitan or even the whole Romance tradition. For instance, while most of the Romance collections were assembled by compilers grouping the poems by meter, also the libre of Giraut Riquier, considered an authorial songbook, is first divided by meter (canzoni, vers, pastorelle etc.), and then each section is in turn organized chronologically. Being mono-metric, thus, the Libro delle Canzoni would not be comparable to the innovation brought by Petrarch’s RVF, or by Dante himself with his Vita Nuova, where the order is intended as chronological by the narrator, but the first canzone, Donne ch’avete, is preceded by a substantial group of sonnets and a ballad. Although tied with semantic bonds, a series of canzoni is a kind of grouping that is rather traditional also in the Italian book tradition, where it might be paralleled by other


Indeed, this conservatism does not fit together with the already modern project leading to the construction of the *Vita Nuova*, where in the making of the lyric sequence the semantic level is more important than the metrical criterion. But, maintaining that it could not be by Dante because it is not a new and experimental way of collecting poetry, does not seem by itself a valid argument against the existence of the book of *canzoni*.

As Barolini already pointed out, the main critical issue here is not so much the interpretation of the poems by itself, but the methodologies implied in establishing this new work by Dante, his *Canzoniere*. That is the process through which, apparently using the tools of ecdotics, but instead following a mainly hermeneutical argument, the *Libro delle Canzoni* has been created on philological premises that are not sufficient per se to demonstrate its existence without any reasonable doubt. Thus, the point is not the possibility that the series preceded Boccaccio in itself, but that ‘triple jump’ which, from this assumption, led to an authorial series, and then to an authorial series purposely created to be diffused in an independent way. I shall not explore a question that has already been investigated and debated. Nonetheless, attributing to Dante the elaboration of a songbook seems to be the principle guiding those who subscribe to the authorial origin of the series of fifteen *canzoni* and its autonomous

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176 As for authorial series before the *Vita Nuova*, it is important to recall Guittone’s alleged authorial collection witnessed by MS BML, Redi 9: Guittone’s poems introduce both the section of *canzoni* and that of sonnets, so that the codex seems an authorial book. Critics have discussed whether it witnesses an arrangement of Guittone’s oeuvre ideated by himself or by someone else (Lino Leonardi, “Il canzoniere Laurenziano: struttura, contenuto e fonti di una raccolta d’autore,” in *I canzonieri della lirica italiana delle origini*, 153-214). In particular, Guittone would have composed a songbook made of 86 sonnets, which would have inspired both Dante and Petrarch, see Guittone d’Arezzo, *Il canzoniere. I sonetti d’amore del codice Laurenziano*, ed. by Lino Leonardi (Turin: Einaudi, 1994). Cf. Meneghetti, “La forma-canzoniere.”

177 See above n. 173, and for critical opinions on the constitution of the *libro*, see Barolini, “Editing Dante’s *Rime*,” 250-60, and the Introduction to Alighieri, *Rime giovani*, Grimaldi, “Boccaccio editore,” and Giunta’s Introduction to the *Rime* (Alighieri, *Opere I*, 45, 61). Barolini retraces the main trends in the editorial history of Dante’s *rime*, pointing out what is not convincing in De Robertis’s order of the poems, while defending her own choice of looking for a chronological and evolutionary order for the *Rime*. 

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reading. This is, therefore, an interpretation of Dante that puts his lyric production ideologically closer to Petrarch’s, pairing it with those by Guittone and Guiraut. But, in many ways it raises questions concerning the *Vita Nuova* and its unconventional textuality. At the same time, this reading is also distant from that front, rooted in Contini’s interpretation of Dante’s lyric poetry, according to which the poems are a sort of residual corpus, by definition a group of not ordered poems, a production stretching for the major part of his life, thus extremely valuable from many points of view, but that –basically except for the *Vita Nuova*– Dante never authoritatively collected in any systematic series.

### 1.2.2 1921/1939/2009-present. The Canon

Reviewing the titles of the books in which Dante’s *rime* were divided by Barbi, which were preserved only in the commented editions Barbi-Maggini and Barbi-Pernicone, will help to ascertain the guiding principles in the constitution of this order:

*Rime della «Vita Nuova»*
*Rime del tempo della «Vita Nuova»*
*Tenzone con Forese Donati*
*Rime allegoriche e dottrinali*
*Altre rime d’amore e di corrispondenza*
*Rime per la donna Pietra*
*Rime varie del tempo dell’esilio*

This order reveals an early phase of Dante’s inspiration, constituted by the Stilnovo, that is the poems of the *Vita Nuova* and those considered coeval. Then, after these two initial books, the *tenzone* with Forese Donati comes as an *intermezzo* before the other poems in elevated style, divided in sections according to the criterion of theme and style: allegorical and doctrinal poems, other love and correspondence poems, and the *petrose*. In the last book, the poems not

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178 In the commented edition, the first volume *Rime della ‘Vita Nuova’ e della giovinezza* (eds. Barbi-Maggini, [Florence: Le Monnier, 1956]) is comprised of the poems up to the third book. The rest is contained in the second volume, *Rime della maturità e dell’esilio* (eds. Barbi-Pernicone [Florence: Le Monnier, 1969]).
fitting any of these sets find place. It is noteworthy that the *tenzone* with Forese and the so-called *rime petrose* occupy two separate sections, clearly disclosing the non-chronological quality of this order. In fact, this classification exhibits hermeneutical paradigms, such as the allegorization of the poems, that Barbi (and then Maggini and Pernicone) deliberately intended to call attention to, and to which both the plain titles and the commentary referred.\(^{179}\) This same interpretive framework lies behind those editions using this same order without the section-titles. From Contini onwards, even though the intentions of the editor are usually stated in the introduction, and—as we have seen for Giunta—its application might not be connected to or entirely approving of the interpretation of the poems maintained by Barbi, readers still find themselves confronted with Dante’s *rime* classified and ordered according to specific principles, and thus implicitly with that original reading of the poems. Order is not a fundamental element in textual criticism,\(^{180}\) yet it is one of the external features most influencing the reader of a collection of poems. Thus, the elimination of Barbi’s explicit classification of Dante’s *rime* in books is insidious, because it proposes an hypothetical order to the reader, who will be led to a specific understanding, but without any explanatory rubric.\(^{181}\) In the Introduction, the significance of the order in ancient anthologies for the interpretation of the single poems and the collection as a whole has already been emphasized. Yet, we shall again stress that in modern editions, even though solid and explicit introductions are usually

\(^{179}\) Cf. Vincenzo Pernicone, “Nota sull’ordinamento delle «rime»,” in Alighieri, *Rime della maturità*, 705-14. There Pernicone explains the main paradigms governing the order applied in the edition, along with those of precedent editions and those proposed by other scholars, such as Carducci and Lamma.

\(^{180}\) From the ecdotical point of view, the order, as any combination of texts, should be considered a significant innovation; yet it might be considered a conjunctive error at most, but not a separative error. Furthermore, if there is any possibility that the same order has been produced independently (polygenesis), then the combination of texts, paratexts, and order lose any value as significant errors. As for Dante’s *canzoni*, Grimaldi pointed out that there is the possibility that Pucci recreated Boccaccio’s order using diverse materials (Grimaldi, “Boccaccio editore”). Cf. Chapter 3.

provided, the order still plays a leading role in the process of interpretation of texts, and also on the characterization of the envisioned readers.

This order heavily relies on a tradition going back to the 1527 Giuntina. The sixteenth century milestone edition of Italian lyrics is the editio princeps of most of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century poetry, containing 289 poems by 23 authors divided into eleven books. It is an oriented edition designed by Bardo Segni following Bembo’s theories, as an archaeological collection of the past glories.¹⁸² It is opened by Dante’s poems, which occupy its first four books.¹⁸³ The first two books are dedicated respectively to the poems of the Vita Nuova and to other lyrics, mainly in diverse meters, while the third and fourth books of Dante’s lyrics are dedicated to the canzoni. The Giuntina is remarkable for its early collection, selected and freed from many spurious poems circulating under the name of Dante, and for the inclusion of the poems from the prosimetra, and especially those from the Vita Nuova, without any prose. This choice inaugurates a way of reading Dante’s poems that is still reproduced today, tending toward the understanding of his corpus as a songbook, a Canzoniere witnessing to the major

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¹⁸² De Robertis interpreted the Giuntina as a polemical response from the point of view of the Florentines, who in his opinion reacted to Bembo’s theory of imitatio limited to Petrarch and Boccaccio: they would be proposing a vaster canon for younger poets, who should embrace the municipal language of Florence, and not the supraregional Petrarchan language. Dionisotti did not agree with De Robertis: the Giuntina, instead, would comply with Bembo’s theory, by proposing an anthology through which it was possible to read the tradition Bembo himself had reconstructed; so the Giuntina would give prestige to Florence, but at the same time the new canon would not be called into question. I subscribe to this latter position: in Gorni’s words, this anthology has an antiquarian sense, it represents a museum, where the texts are collected not to be imitated, but according to an historical pietas and to a linguistic interest for the past glories of the vernacular, materializing the list of Bembo’s Prose, book II. For a discussion of the peculiarities of the edition see Sunetti e canzoni, vol. 1; Bologna, “Tradizione testuale,” 604-08; Carlo Dionisotti, “Machiavelli e la lingua fiorentina,” in Machiavellerie (Turin: Einaudi, 1980), 334-35; Guglielmo Gorni, “Di qua e di là dal Dolce Stile (in margine alla Giuntina),” in Il nodo della lingua e il verbo d’amore (Florence: Olschki, 1981), 217-41. The Giuntina has been reprinted up to the eighteenth century, Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 2.2 1074 et seq.

¹⁸³ The other books contain Cino da Pistoia (book five), Cavalcanti (six), Dante da Maiano (seven), and Guittone (eight). In book nine there are poems by various authors, while book ten has uncertain poems. Book eleven publishes two ancient sestine along with Dante’s sestina (“due sestine ritrovate in uno antichissimo testo insieme con la sestina di Dante”), and sonnets in trezzone between Cino, Dante, Cavalcanti, Dante da Maiano, Onesto da Bologna, Monna Nina, Chiaro Davanzati, Guido Orlandi, Salvino Doni, Ricco da Varlungo e Cione Baglioni.
steps of his life as a man and a poet. However, although with an early and eminent tradition, this order has just a few certain points of reference, and thus, ordering Dante’s poems according to a primitive unifying principle, and especially chronologically, remains almost an impossible task. It has already been mentioned that, since the nineteenth century, the rime from the *Vita Nuova* might not only be included as the first part of the *Canzoniere* by Dante, but they might also be interspersed with poems considered coeval and/or product of that same inspiration. Recently, this has been the choice of Barolini (2009), who followed what had already been done by Foster and Boyde in 1967. Since it gives cohesion to a corpus that ultimately has (almost) none, this choice might seem particularly invasive. In fact, it does not introduce any innovation that is more influential than what the Giunti and then the other editors did, until De Robertis himself, since any order in the case of Dante’s lyric corpus seem more similar to an hypothesis than a certainty. Indeed, Contini in the first place defined every critical edition as an “ipotesi di lavoro,” a “working hypothesis,” just as any other scientific act. In order to begin exploring how ignoring the actual history of a text can be treacherous, theory shall be abandoned. I will, thus, focus on a specific and peculiar instance: Dante’s *tenzone* with Forese Donati.

### 1.2.3 The Tenzone with Forese: Not Worthy of Dante!

Dioneo, in *Dec. IV* 10, narrates the story of a young woman from Salerno, who marries an important, aged surgeon, Mazzeo della Montagna, who provides her with everything that a

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184 Fenzi emphasizes that Barbi’s order allows for understanding Dante’s intellectual journey between the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convivio*, and ultimately it may not be seen in contrast with the hypothesis of a *libro delle canzoni*, because they are based on different premises: one is a chronological-stylistic/thematic order focused on their composition, while the other retraces what Dante would have later done with his own poems (*Le Canzoni di Dante*, 14-15).

woman would need. Yet, “ella il più del tempo stava infreddata, si come colei che nel letto era
male dal maestro tenuta coperta” (IV 10, 4 “for most of the time she felt chilly, because the
surgeon failed to keep her properly covered over in bed”). Here Dioneo emphasizes, from
the very first narrative paragraph, the reason why the woman finds a lover who can
compensate for the husband, who does not want to have sex with her, and finds alleged
medical excuses to avoid her. Boccaccio, in order to describe the sexual incompetence of her
husband, uses a familiar metaphor, but he is also quoting Dante’s first sonnet to Forese
Donati, _Chi udisse tossir la mal fatata_, whose second quatrain says “Di mezzo agosto latruovi
infreddata;| or sappi che de’ far d’ogn’altro mese!| E no’l le val perché dorma calzata,| merzé
del copertoio ch’ha cortonese” (ll. 5-8 “You’ll find her frozen in mid-August-so guess how
she must fare in any other month! And it’s no use her keeping her stockings on-the bedclothes
are too short...”). Boccaccio’s rewriting of these verses makes explicit the comic and
recreative quality of the sonnet. As Dioneo states in the first paragraph, he is going to leave
the “dolorosa materia,” advocating also for the main sexual interpretation of the original
text, which is made clear by the parallel to Riccardo di Chinzica (_Dec_. II 10), who shares with
Mazzeo the very same avoidance of sex. Since Dioneo is the one charged by Boccaccio with
the task of rewriting the _comico-realistic_ by Dante, this gives us a very concrete perception of

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186 Transl. from Boccaccio, _Decameron_, ed. McWilliam, 353.
187 Alighieri, _Rime_ 2002, vol. 3 456-57. Transl. from _Dante’s Lyric Poetry_, vol. 1 149. Boccaccio’s quote of
the _tenzone_ is often cited by critics, see for instance Alighieri, _Rime della ‘Vita Nuova’_, 280-81.
188 The sexual reference is also indisputable in the original sonnet, where the lack of sexual activity, of
which the husband is responsible, is bad for the woman’s health. Some interpreters (including Barbi), however,
tend to qualify it. For instance, there are still doubts concerning the identification of the _nido_ (nest) of l. 11: Barbi,
followed by other commentators (Alighieri, _Opere I_, 293-94; _Dante’s Lyric Poetry_, vol. 2 246), opts for its
interpretation as “marriage-bed,” while De Robertis, sustained by the GDLI, reads it as a specific reference to
the female sexual organ (Alighieri, _Rime_ 2005, 461; cf. _Poesia comica_, 141). In the last lines Dante accuses Forese
of poverty, introducing the voice of his wife’s mother, who says that she could have better married her daughter,
referring to the proverbially rich house of the Count Guido. This passage is also quoted by Boccaccio in _Dec_. VII
8, 47, a further evidence of his knowledge of the text. Cf. Alfie, _Dante’s Tenzone_, 100-21.
the register and the style of these texts. This very register, the reference to sexual impotence with which the tenzone opens, along with the other accuses—poverty, gluttony, dishonesty etc.—has indeed troubled critics in recognizing Dante the Poet as the author of these sonnets.

De Robertis summarized the question perfectly right, writing that the series of sonnets has been “equiparata … a un ‘ingaglioffamento’ del vate, con trasposizione di un giudizio morale in giudizio estetico” (“equated ... to the poet-prophet ‘becoming a rascal’, transposing a moral judgment on an aesthetic one”). Barbi explored in depth the issues concerning this tenzone, whose belonging to Dante had already been questioned multiple times. For instance, Fraticelli in the 1856 edition filed the tenzone among the apocrypha, and offered the following note for the first sonnet:

È veramente meritevole di riprensione il grave abbaglio del Fiacchi (uomo peraltro stimabilissimo), il quale, trovando avendo nel Codice Alessandri, già da me citato altre volte, il presente Sonetto, prestese darcelo siccome inedito e siccome di Dante Alighieri. ... il Morelli infatti gli comunicò la notizia che in un Testo a penna da esso posseduto, questo Sonetto stava pure col nome di Dante Alighieri; e col nome di Dante io stesso l’ho rinvenuto in un Codice Riccardiano, coll’aiuto del quale ho potuto compiere l’undecimo verso che nelle stampe andava mozzo. Di qui s’apprende quanta autorità possano fare i precedenti editori, e quanta fede debba riporsi ne’ Codici.

Fraticelli explicitly claims that manuscripts should not be trusted as for attributions, implying that the modern critic knows better, especially when Dante is the subject: Fiacchi, “who on the other hand is very respectable,” deserves indeed to be scolded for having attributed such a text to Dante. Barbi for his part wrote that it does not matter “se possa piacere a noi suoi tardi ammiratori che Dante si sia abbandonato a cose indegne dell’alto suo intelletto e dell’alto suo sentire” (“if we, his later admirers, might like that Dante abandoned himself to things not

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worth of his high intellect and of his elevated feeling”). In reading Barbi and the other previous scholars, the subject matter for the decisive question of the attribution is not plainly philological, but also deals with ideological residue. The textual tradition of the six sonnets, except for one manuscript dating back to the seventeenth century, is fragmented. But four out of six appear in manuscripts that certainly date back to the fourteenth century: BNCF, Banco Rari 69, where the sonnets of the *tenzone* are placed in a Dantean series, and the famous canzoniere BAV, Chigi L VIII 305, where the same poems are explicitly attributed to Dante and Forese. And the series is also quoted by the Anonimo Fiorentino, a commentary on the *Commedia* dating back to the second half of the Trecento. Andrea Lancia too, who writes in 1341-43, seems to be referring precisely to the *tenzone* in his glosses to *Purgatorio* 23.40-48. The *tenzone* certainly dates back to the fourteenth century and the Chigi is usually considered a reliable source, especially as for Dante, as we will see in the next paragraph. The discussions on the *tenzone* clearly points to the ways in which cultural hegemonies shape the canon and cultural creation: by chastising Dante’s corpus, critics state that such poetry is unacceptable, proposing restricted norms.

Critics have not only disagreed on the attribution of the *tenzone* to Dante, but also on its general interpretation. There are, indeed, objective difficulties in deciphering the literal meaning of these sonnets, mainly due to the lack of the external references, which has led to many discussions. More generally, Barbi is firmly convinced of the playful tone of the series, even though some passages are insulting, while other interpreters tend to consider the *tenzone*

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192 Alighieri, *Rime*, vol. 3 451. These codices will be both analyzed in depth, because they are fundamental witnesses to Dante’s canonization as an author, see below.
194 Ibid., 292.
more seriously, acknowledging a certain degree of rivalry between the two supposed friends.\footnote{Contini and Giunta, while highlighting the stylistic qualities of the \textit{comico-realistic} genre, share this opinion (Alighieri, \textit{Rime} 1946, 91-92). The latter in particular parallels the tone of the tenzone with the insulting menaces that commoners exchanged, and that were sometimes registered in criminal books as evidence against the accused (Alighieri, \textit{Opere} I, 288). Foster and Boyde write that “D[ante] opens the attack with a mocking, highly offensive innuendo” (\textit{Dante’s Lyric Poetry}, vol. 2 245).}


It is instead fundamental to refer to what Giunta writes in his introduction to these sonnets. He recalls that this tenzone is an anomaly in the Italian tradition (that is one of the reasons why its authenticity has been doubted), since at that time, the end of the Duecento, the comic genre, the \textit{comico-realistic}, had not developed into dialogue, as it had happened with the troubadour \textit{tenzioni}.\footnote{Alighieri, \textit{Opere} I, 286.} In his opinion, this peculiarity might be explained in three ways: 1. other similar instances have been lost, and these sonnets have been preserved only because they bear Dante’s name; 2. the unlikely (if not impossible) hypothesis that it is a fifteenth-century forgery inspired by the encounter with Forese in Purgatory; 3. the commonly accepted interpretation of its uniqueness: “Dante, sperimentale in così tanti altri settori, sfrutta per primo all’interno del genere tenzone un
registro – l’invettiva, il vituperio, la lite – che era noto ai trovatori ma che non aveva mai messo radici in Italia” (“Dante, experimental in so many fields, is the first to use a register inside the genre *tenzone* – the invective, the insult, the fight,– that was known by the troubadours, but that had never put down roots in Italy”). Thus, experimentation is the focus of the discussion and the preeminent criterion through which Dante’s literary persona is defined, but whose contour is not unanimously shared. The moralistic perspective of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century was explicit, and as such, opposed by Barbi and del Lungo. However, even in the more recent discussions concerning stylistic matters that same point of view emerges: Dante’s ever-present tendency to experimentation is put into doubt when it is not exercised in elevated style, nor has a vigorous moral aspiration. When Dante, as happens in the *tenzone*, indulges in the *comico-realistico*, with linguistic or syntactic plays, in low style without the infernal moral framework, doubts arise. Barbi included the *tenzone* in the corpus of Dante’s lyric, yet—as we have already seen— he made a separate book out of it (book III). Although this is justified by several stylistic and thematic reasons, this choice strongly separates it from those poems of the period of the *Vita Nuova* (book II) to which it is contemporary. Indeed, the *tenzone* has been traditionally dated to 1293-1296, thus later than those lyrics, after Beatrice’s death and the completion of the *Vita Nuova*. But, since the only secure time references are the death dates of Alighiero, 1283, and of Forese himself, 1296, it is technically possible that it was written even before 1293. The shorter time span ’93-’96 derives from the idea that the *tenzone* originates from an inspiration entirely incompatible with

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198 Ibid., 286-87.
that of the *Vita Nuova* and of the coeval *rime*. Barbi’s choice is, therefore, correct, since the *tenzone* is placed close to the supposedly precedent or maybe coeval *rime*, yet the strong division in different books underlines the interpretation of Dante’s inspiration into airtight compartments. Contini writes that the dating to the period ’93-’96 better explains Dante’s mature art. Barbi claims that the period of writing of the *Vita Nuova* should not be considered appropriate to the exchange of those sonnets, and grounding on the dialogue in *Purgatorio*, he maintains that it is more probable that it is an interval, subsequent to the composition of the prosimetrum. But more generally there seems to be no clear-cut separation between these supposed phases. I do not entirely subscribe to Giunta’s almost postmodern interpretation of Dante’s inspiration, according to which Dante could theoretically have written any poem in any style at any time. I share the idea, introduced by Contini, that there is a progression in Dante’s literary career, according to which there are phases that at a certain point get surpassed. Nevertheless, it does not seem possible to exclude completely the possibility that the *tenzone* is coeval to the *Vita Nuova*, as Giunta himself writes, also claiming that there is no actual reason to postpone, at the maximum, the dating of these sonnets. As though the *tenzone* might not be ascribed to a too juvenile period, because of its refined stylistic features and the overall high quality of the poems by Dante, at the same time, since—as Barbi

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200 Barolini stresses even more than Barbi and Maggini this impression by putting the *tenzone* in the second volume of her commented edition (Alighieri, *Rime giovanili*, and *Dante’s Lyric Poetry: Poems of Youth*); though sharing Barbi’s order, while interspersing the *Vita Nuova*’s poems with the coeval ones, the six sonnets have been left out from the first volume, containing *Le Rime della Vita Nuova e del tempo della Vita Nuova*. Grimaldi, who instead follows the division in books by Barbi separating the *rime* of the *Vita Nuova* from the coeval ones, also leaves the *tenzone* for the second volume of his edition. He writes tough, that it is not possible to surely date it (Alighieri, *Vita nuova-Rime*, 293).

204 Alighieri, *Opere I*, 290.
himself writes— an exchange of sonnets does not take so much time, the span of its composition might be expanded, also comprehending the period when Dante was occupied with the *Vita Nuova*. It is also peculiar that critics maintain that Dante would not have written the tenzone at the same time as the *Vita Nuova* with respect to the fact that many other poems were excluded from the prosimetrum for a variety of reasons, including stylistic diversity.

For what interests us here, however, it is noteworthy that all these discussions seem ruled by the idea that Dante’s poems might be classified through hypothetical paradigms, according to a sort of “theory of inspiration” that supposedly allows a compartmental division in composition epochs. Thus, Dante, or better the Dante-function, tends to be traditionally portrayed as always aspiring to Paradise, to be intended both in a moral and in a stylistic sense, and episodes like the tenzone are considered deviations. Even the hermeneutics placing itself outside this paradigm tends to compare the poems to the *Commedia* and thus, as it usually happens with the *canzoni petrose*, the most innovative *rime* are seen in the light of what Dante will write, in a constant stylistic development. This criterion, along with the ways in which Dante’s experimentation is supposed to express itself, is the same used to classify and interpret the *rime dubbie* (uncertain poems), many of which are given to or taken away from Dante according to what “degree of experimentation” the critic is willing to concede him. Before confronting the *rime dubbie*, it seems relevant to explore one of the ancient books containing the tenzone, the *canzoniere* Chigi. Indeed, looking at the manuscripts provides a thought-provoking new perspective on Dante’s reception, and in particular it gives concrete evidence

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206 Cf. Alighieri, *Vita nuova-Rime*, 4-7, to which I refer the reader for further bibliography.
207 For a positive and productive example of a study connecting the petrose to the *Commedia*, see the traditional Blasucci, “L’esperienza delle «petrose».”
of how our contemporary (or almost contemporary) organization of the cultural field differs from the Late Medieval and Early Modern period.

1.2.3.1 Codex Chigi L VIII 305

The tenzone with Forese Donati is contained within one of the most important collections of the early Italian lyric tradition, the *canzoniere* MS BAV, Chigi L VIII 305. The analysis of the structure of this famous book will allow us to better focus on how our contemporary perception of Dante as a lyric writer differs from what his almost contemporaries received, and consequently from how they portrayed him as a cultural authority. Exploring the reception of an author through the materiality of the text transmission is productive if it is concentrated on a particularly significant artifact (for instance, an authorial autograph book), or if it deals with a complete corpus. Since we do not have all the evidence from the past, and time has lost and erased much, we do not have a quantifiable amount of evidence, and thus it is difficult to complete this type of study using sample groups, because it would be selecting in a sample that has already been selected randomly. The matter is not just using the materiality to sustain an opinion, but thoroughly studying the materiality to discover clues to build an interpretation; that is why it is crucial to consider all of the available evidence. For Dante’s *rima*, however, a complete account of this issue is not possible due to the large number of extant manuscripts, so it is necessary to find new methodologies to address the reception and canonization of Dante as a lyric writer. It also becomes necessary to find other ways that prevent completely arbitrary outcomes. As for MS Chigi L VIII 305, its antiquity and close relationship with Dante’s own literary theories justify its preeminent role in a study concerning the reception and canonization of Dante. But it has been conceived and copied after Dante’s death, in Florence, thus definitely out of his supervision. Therefore, it must be respected as an early and
important interpretation of Dante, which encapsulates interesting and fruitful readings of his works. Yet, not being written under the control of the author, it bears its compiler(s)’s subjective understanding of its contents.

The *canzoniere* Chigi was copied in the second quarter of the century, probably in the 1330s-40s, by a scribe close to the laboratory of Francesco di ser Nardo da Barberino, the patron of the so-called “Danti del Cento.” 208 The Chigi is an elegant parchment book, written in a chancery script in full-page, with decorated initials; it is a rather luxurious *libro-registro*, belonging to the merchant milieu.209 It contains a large collection of early Italian lyric, comprised of those poets who wrote right before Dante, or better, whom Dante authorized in his writings, along with his contemporaries. Indeed, as Borriero has proved, while the main organizing criterion is meter (the codex is comprised of three sections of *canzoni* + ballads, alternating with three sections of sonnets),210 in positioning the authors it follows the canon Dante himself established. He is not the first author, but he is preceded by Guinizelli and Cavalcanti, while Cino and other minor authors follow him. In more detail, Guinizelli, Cavalcanti, and the *Vita Nuova* occupy quires 1–4; Dante’s *canzoni* and ballads (comprised of *Fresca rosa novella*) occupy quire 5, where Cino’s corpus follows in a new page.211 In his works, Dante places himself at the summit of the literary canon, building on Guinizelli’s poetic revolution, accompanied by his fellows poets, the first friend Cavalcanti and Cino: the Chigi exactly represents this cultural genealogy.

208 Borriero, *Intavulare*. Ch (Chig. L.VIII. 305), 133-34; Signorini, “Il Canzoniere Chigiano,” 224. Pomaro in particular attributes it to the scribe known as “the principal hand of the *Cento*,” who has not been identified (Pomaro, “Ricerche d’archivio,” 273-74).
211 Borriero, “Quantum illos proximius,” 284, “Nuovi accertamenti” and “Sull’antologia;” Capelli, “Dante, dantismi”. Cf. Borriero, *Intavulare*. Ch (Chig. L.VIII. 305). Some of its quires have been misplaced, but not in this first section (Ibid. and “Nuovi accertamenti”).
In a previous study, I explore the ‘Dante canon’ purported by this book, and especially by the first Dantean section comprised of *Vita Nuova*, *canzoni* and ballads, claiming that the first position the prosimetrum has in this section demonstrates the sensibility of the copyist/compiler of this book toward the authority of the author, so that the poems arranged by the author, the *Vita Nuova* itself, come first, violating the metrical hierarchy governing this *canzoniere*.\(^{212}\) I also underline that it is one of the few early manuscripts containing the *Vita Nuova* that has a section of poems in the lower, *comico-realistic* style. Given this framework, which should be kept in mind as a point of reference, we shall now elaborate on this second section.

The Chigi contains approximately fifteen sonnets by (or attributed to) Dante, or misattributed, along with some addressed to him; the *tenzone* with Forese is not complete, it contains only four of the six pieces composing it: *Chi udisse tossir la malfatata-L'altra notte mi venne' una gran tosse*, *Bici novel, figliuinol di non so cui-Ben so che fosti figliuinol d'Allaghieri* (f. 62v). That is the first and the third couple composing the *tenzone*, while the central two pieces are absent (just as in MS Banco Rari 69). The sonnets occupy a whole page, and the rubrics correctly attribute them, with the correct mention of the sender and the recipient of each one. They are preceded by a series of sonnets by Guinizzelli, among which the last two have a strong comic streak (*Chi vedesse a Lucia un var capuzzo*, and *Volvol te levi, vecchia rabbiosa*, c. 62r).\(^{213}\) The *tenzone* is instead followed by sonnets by Cino, which do not have any particular comic quality (*Sì m'hai di forza e di valor distrutto*, *Graziosa Giovanna, onora e 'leggì*, and *Poscia ch'io vidi gli occhi di costei*, c. 63r).\(^{214}\)

\(^{212}\) Banella, “The ‘Dante Canon’.”
\(^{213}\) *Poeti del Dolce Stil Novo*, 51-54.
\(^{214}\) Ibid., 419-20, 472-73, 394-95.
except for *Picciol dagli atti, - rispondi’ al Picciòlo* (sent to Picciòlo da Bologna), in which Cino expresses his contempt for the recipient.\(^{215}\)

The seamless alternation of sonnets in different registers gives us the perception that, for medieval readers, these genres were not categorically separated. Instead, they were considered possible variations of writing in the lower style embedded in the very choice of the sonnet, the lower metrical scheme. Since there is no Italian anthology dedicated only to collecting the *comico-realistic* production, the inclusion of this kind of poetry in a vast collection like the Chigi is not unusual.\(^{216}\) It is also noteworthy that, in this micro-section, the succession Guinizzelli-Dante-Cino gets respected, while the register changes. The *canzoniere* Chigi contains other poems belonging to the *comico-relistico*, such as most of the production by Cecco Angiolieri, and Cavalcanti’s *Guata, Manetto, quella scrignutzza*, believed to be a parody of Dante’s praising sonnets for Beatrice: it is placed in a ‘Dantean area’, preceded by Cavalcanti’s sonnets to Dante, *Vedeste, al mio parere, ogni valore, I’ vegno ’l giorno a‘tte ’infinte volte* (f. 58v), *Certe mie rime a‘tte mandar vogliendo, Se vedi Amore, assai ti prieo, Dante*, and the one allegedly by Dante to Cavalcanti *Amore e monna Lagia e Guido ed io* (f. 59r); and it is followed by Dante’s own sonnets, *Non mi poriano già mai fare ammenda/No me poriano zamai far emenda*\(^{217}\) and *Com più vi fere Amor co’ suo’ vincastri.*\(^{218}\) But again, not one of these other poems is definitely comic. The *canzoniere* Chigi, as a fundamental witness to the early canonization of Dante as a lyric writer but also, more generally, as an *auctoritas*, will appear again multiple times in the next paragraphs. For the moment, it gives us concrete evidence not only that genres change over time, as human

\(^{215}\) Ibid., 622-23.

\(^{216}\) As it is shown by the early tradition of the *Vita Nuova*, there are codices that do not have any comic text, cf. Banella, “The Dante Canon.” On MS Chigi I VIII 305 sonnet section see Borriero, “Quantum illos proximius;” cf. *Poesia comica*, 20-21.

\(^{217}\) For the double version see Alighieri, *Opere I*, 154.

sensibility concerning friendship and love relationships does; but also that what might seem unacceptable for us might have been acceptable before. In other words, the paradigms governing literature and life do change over time progressively shaping the cultural field.\textsuperscript{219}

From the specific point of view of literature, and for that particular literature that lyric poetry is, nowadays we are used to the Bembian principle of selection, of words and of contents, which concretely translates into not writing what does not look worth writing because it would strain the required elevated style to be considered a poet worth reading: in Montale’s words, “i poeti laureati | si muovono soltanto fra le piante | dai nomi poco usati: bossi ligustri o acanti” (“the poets laureate|walk only among plants|with rare names: boxwood, privet and acanthus”). In the sixteenth century, Dante was not indicated as a model for writing correct Italian by Bembo, mainly because his eclectic style was unadvisable as a standard type; yet the concept of \textit{decorum}, connected to the decency praised by the ancients, was also a dominant criterion for choosing what to represent or not.\textsuperscript{220} This paradigm, however, was not active in the Middle Ages, the anti-classic age par excellence, where ‘classic’ is comprised of both the idea of remaining in the boundaries of a tradition, which for vernacular writing is rather impossible, and consequently of a shared norm followed as a given by a vast majority. Thus, who planned the Chigi codex collection did not feel the need to deprive Dante of his low style poems in order to give him the status of a cultural authority, as it will instead happen later, especially in the Ottocento, when the Poet could not have wasted time in unimportant and above all, in undeserving diversions.

\textsuperscript{220} Cf. Horace, \textit{Ars Poetica}, 182-84: “... Non tamen intus | digne geri promes in scaenam, multaque tolles | ex oculis quae mox narret facundia praesens.” (‘... you will keep out of sight many episodes that are to be described later by the eloquent tongue of a narrator’). The passage concerns theatrical representation, but it encapsulates the idea of style and social \textit{decorum}. 
This issue concerned the *poesia comico-realistica* on the whole. Recalling some passages of Marti’s 1956 introduction to his edition of the *Poeti Giocosi del Tempo di Dante* (*Jocular Poets of Dante’s Epoch*) may help to put Dante’s case in perspective. Indeed, while recognizing the dignity and literariness of this register, which goes further beyond a flat narration of lascivious existences, he feels the need to frame, or even to justify, the collection he is proposing to the public:

Certo, nelle rime dei giocosi appaiono linguaggio, temi, motivi, figure, che possono turbare profondamente la coscienza del lettore moderno.

... nell’episodio della tenzone di Mastro Adamo con Sinone (*Inferno*, XXX-sgg.) non lo stile “comico” può essere condannato ... dal poeta nell’atto stesso che il poeta lo fa suo, lo elabora con singolare potenza ..., ma la trista e compiaceuta adesione spirituale ai bassi e volgari e bestiali sentimenti che esso può esprimere, ed esprimeva infatti, in quell’occasione. A noi, figli di Hegel e di Croce, può sembrare impossibile una tale dissociazione ed enorme il solo prospettarla. Ma non a Dante ...\(^{221}\)

The poets who decided to write not in the tragic, elevated style, and Dante too when dedicates himself to that register, chose to pursue a definite genre, codified and widespread: for instance, Marti’s edition encompasses more than 620 poems written between 1260 and 1350. Thus, it must not be considered scandalous at all, and—we may add—it was not perceived as such by contemporaries, as it is demonstrated by the manuscripts, which contain in seamless sequences the *poesia comica* along with the *poesia aulica*. Yet, as Marti concerns highlight, this evidence, while well-known by scholars, has not largely influenced editions, which tend to follow the classic and then Bembian perspective, and to separate the *comico* from the *aulico*, or to justify its existence along with poems in more elevated style.\(^{222}\) In spite of the multiple studies evidencing its different way of dividing genres and styles, we still have a tendency to classify

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\(^{221}\) *Poeti giocosi*, 15, 23.

\(^{222}\) Dante is of course not the only author whose poetry is treated this way. Yet, given his importance as forefather of Italian literature (and even language), in his case it becomes more evident.
medieval poetry according to the classical division of style and genres, which was only partially functional in the Middle Ages. While the moralistic perspective is no more predominant, engaging the material significance of the containers of these texts is still not a practice widely embraced, and the evidence of the manuscripts, such as the Chigi, mainly serves textual purposes.

Marti’s quote also introduces into the discourse the Commedia, the highest example of the co-existence of multiple styles. In the next paragraph, going back to the fundamental considerations by Erich Auerbach, I will briefly retrace the relationship between Dante’s tenzone and his poema sacro, that is Inferno 30, where Maestro Adamo and Sinone stage a tenzone, causing Virgilio’s reproach to Dante, and Purgatorio 23, where the viator meets Forese.

1.2.3.2 Sermo Humilis: the Tenzone, Inferno 30, and Purgatorio 23

The Middle Ages inherited the classical theory of styles and genres, which survived until the age of Humanism. Yet medieval writers usually relied on more complex and less normative classifications of styles and genres, than those proposed by Horace, Cicero, or Quintilian. A post rem perspective prevailed, and taxonomies were mainly based on existing literature. As Jauss emphasizes, in the Middle Ages, especially in vernacular literatures, there is no absolute and exclusive commitment to genres, as it was before and would later be.223 Dante touches the theory of genres twice, in the DVE (2.4.5-6) and in the letter to Cangrande (Ep.13).224 Both of these texts give a satisfying account of tragedy and comedy, from the thematic and the stylistic point of view: notoriously, they are respectively defined as the middle style, where there is a

sad beginning and an happy ending, and the sublime style, with a pleasant beginning and a
catastrophic finale; the elegy, instead, is only mentioned as the style of the miserable ones, and
is defined as the lower style, but no account of its narrative development is given. As is well-
known, Auerbach placed emphasis on the role of Christian, and especially Augustinian
thought, and the Sacrae Scripturae in the development of a style, the sermo humilis, in which the
sublime and the humble are fused together, and are capable of delivering the most relevant
truths. Auerbach sees Dante’s Commedia as the acme of this principle of representation, where
all of existence is embraced. Dante’s use of this style and its subsequent reception sheds light
on how the understanding of the author-function shaped centuries of interpretation of the
tenzone and their references in the Commedia.

The tenzone and the Commedia, in a problematic relationship of assimilation and
overriding, share some peculiarities from stylistic and ideological points of view. Indeed, as
many critics have pointed out, Dante in the Commedia could not refuse the comic style. Thus,
when Virgil reproaches Dante for lingering in watching the fight between Maestro Adamo and
Sinon (Inf. 30.136-141), he must not be referring to literature or to the comic style, nor
specifically to Dante’s poems, but to an attention that must not be given to the damned. In
this respect, the episode would demonstrate how Dante moves beyond using the lower style
by itself. Still, as Cudini and others have emphasized, it is not a condemnation of a literary
lusus, but rather of the attractiveness of a refined exchange, a vulgar dispute in elevated style,
which encapsulates the actual turpitude of the condemned souls of Adamo and Sinon.225

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225 Cudini, “La tenzone fra Dante e Forese.” Cf. Durling, “Canto XXX. Dante among the Falsifiers,”
400-04; Alfie, Dante’s tenzone, 60-81.
Critics usually interpret the encounter between Dante and Forese as a disavowal of either a shared moral deviance, taking the tenzone literally, or of its poetic style, the comico-realistico.\textsuperscript{226} Thus, Purg. 23.115-117, “Per ch’io a lui: «Se tu riduci a mente|qual fosti meco, e qual io teco fui,|ancor fia grave il memorar presente»” (“Therefore I to him: «If you call back to mind what you used to be with me, and I with you, the present memory will still be heavy»”), has often been interpreted as a reference to the six sonnets, and to Dante’s and Forese’s common experience, whose guilt and shame still haunts them. As we have already established regarding Inf. 30, it is not necessary to read the canto as the embodiment of such a moralistic perspective or the refusal of comico-realistico style. Indeed, I agree with Azzetta, who argues that in Purg. 23 there is no repudiation of a past moral deviance, which Dante would have shared with Forese, and which would be symbolized by the tenzone. Instead, the passage should be paraphrased as already suggested by Andrea Lancia and the Ottimo commento: Forese asks Dante about his travel in Purgatory, and Dante answers by saying that if he recalls their lives as young men in Florence, Forese will not understand why he is there, the “truth” of his life. Dante, as the early commentators hint, would be referring to his conversion in the literary, philosophical, and theological fields, which is necessary for the very existence of the poem. But there would not be any rebuke for something shameful they shared, since grave, in particular, has to be intended as “hard to understand,” while the traviamento is only that of Dante, and should be placed after Forese’s death.\textsuperscript{227} Also, I maintain as particularly important the idea purposed by Azzetta that the tenzone, while being present through textual references

\textsuperscript{226} Cf. Alighieri, Commedia, vol. 2 665-89.
\textsuperscript{227} Azzetta, “Memoria, amicizia e poesia,” 702-08. Cf. Alfie, Dante’s tenzone, 81-99; Barolini, Dante’s Poets, 46-57. Dante’s rewriting of his own past and path toward salvation is by no means linear and unambiguous, since he follows different paradigms in different moments. Cf. Brilli, Firenze e il profeta, to which I refer the reader also for the discussion of previous bibliography.

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(as many critics point out), is not such a relevant episode that it deserves an entire canto for its repudiation.\textsuperscript{228} I find this interpretation convincing and worth noting, especially considering the prevailing moralistic point of view, which deems it necessary for Dante to repudiate his unconventional experiences, and thus tends to represent his persona as a perfect, beatified figure. The fact that the ancient commentators’ interpretation of the passage has been overlooked for centuries, is indeed rather significant, since it exemplifies our need of an author-function that has to be not only stylistically coherent, but also morally acceptable.

I would also add that the \textit{tenzone} might be categorized as “genre fiction,” which after the Romantic era is considered lower per se: as Benedetti points out, in contemporary times, elevated literature is precisely what is not classifiable in a specific genre.\textsuperscript{229} I argue that medieval genres, as the configuration of the author-function on the whole, to some extent are influenced by contemporary classifications of genres. Thus, the \textit{comico-realistico} tends to be involuntarily put in relation with contemporary comedy, or light verses. In order to further support this claim, it is necessary to consider other parts of Dante’s lyric corpus, and especially the poems of uncertain attribution, the so-called \textit{rime dubbie}.

\textbf{1.2.4 The Rime Dubbie}

Those lyric poems whose authorship is discussed or not sure, along with the apocrypha, are of crucial importance for understanding how an author is seen as a function. I argue that in order to explore the creation of an author, by explicit but mostly by implicit evidence such as

\textsuperscript{228} Azzetta, “Memoria, amicizia e poesia,” 709-11. Alfie, while stressing the relationship between the \textit{tenzone} itself and \textit{Purg}, 23, also concludes that “it is important to make a subtle distinction when speaking of ‘palinode’ in this episode. It is true that Dante takes the opportunity in \textit{Purgatorio} to correct misstatements made in the \textit{tenzone} with Donati, particularly his slander against Forese’s wife. But he does not repudiate the poetics of \textit{improperium} in these cantos. He provides numerous examples of castigation on the terrace of gluttony, and indeed he continues to do so through to the end of the \textit{Commedia}. Had he rejected invective, then the \textit{Comedy} itself ... would have been impossible” (Alfie, \textit{Dante’s tenzone}, 98-9).

\textsuperscript{229} Benedetti, \textit{The Empty Cage}. 
the material construction of books, it is where the authoriality is most slippery and ambiguous that its basis should be most evident. Indeed, this is the reason why Dante’s *rime dubbie* and apocrypha are the perfect subjects in order to study Dante’s reception and canonization as an author through the centuries.

Not even the landmark 2002 critical edition by De Robertis succeeded in convincing the entire scholarly community in a shared corpus of *rime* di Dante. In fact, in addition to the isolated positive or negative comments, expressed in reviews, and other similar interventions, often regarding single poems, it is noteworthy that in subsequent editions the corpus is revised and the list of the *rime dubbie* is significantly changed, both regarding its extension and constitution.230

In comparison with Barbi’s appendix of *rime dubbie*, which was then also adopted by Contini with a different order, De Robertis promotes *Amore e monna Lagia e Guido ed io, Ai faus ris, pour qui trai aves, Se ’l viso mio a la terra si china, Io sento pianger l’anima nel core, Non v’accorgete voi d’un che si smore, Questa donna che andar mi fa pensoso, De gli occhi di quella gentil mia dama, Quando ’l consiglio tra gli ucce’ si tenne* among the certain poems, while excluding from the corpus *Deh, piangi meco tu, dogliosa petra and Nulla mi parve mai più crudel cosa*. Hence, the *rime dubbie* amount to 16 poems, to which three response poems have been added.

Claudio Giunta, although deriving the corpus of uncertain poems from De Robertis, distances himself from the choices of the critical editor in restoring the sonnet to Giovanni Quirini *Nulla mi parve mai più crudel cosa* to the corpus, exactly the sonnet that we have seen

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230 An appendix of *rime dubbie*, along with a series of apocrypha, appears since Fraticelli 1856 edition (*Il Canzoniere di Dante*, “Rime di dubbia autenticità,” 229-37; “Rime apocrife,” 238-328); it contains just six poems: *Ai faus ris* (Dante), *Poi che saziar non posso gli occhi miei* (Cino), *Fresca rosa novella* (Cavalcanti), *Molti volendo dir che fosse amore* (Dante), *Ora che ’l mondo s’adorna e si veste* (G. Quirini), *Per villania di villana persona* (G. Quirini). In the 1834 ed. the judgments, even though almost always the same, did not lead to a general classification, but only to single notes to the poems.
influencing Montale; and in excluding *Amore e monna Lagia e Guido ed io* from the certain poems, which he places among the *dubbie*. Giunta, who follows Barbi’s order of the poems, but like Contini does not include the poems of the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convivio*, does not give a definite position to the poems he accepts in the canon. Instead, he makes them follow at the end of the corpus in the same order they previously had in Contini’s edition, while the appendix of *rime dubbie* is put at the end, without any particular subdivision, except for a title page. In order to better focus editors’s choices, I will summarize the composition of the *rime dubbie* sections in a comparative table, in which also the critical judgments by Emilio Pasquini, who intervened in the discussion concerning the corpus of Dante’s uncertain poems some time before the critical edition came out, are included.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><em>Rime Dubbie</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inn-abito di saggia messagera</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donne, io non so di che mi preghi Amore</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bernardo, io veggio ch’una donna vène [<em>di Cino da Pistoia?</em>]</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voi che guardando ’l cor fediste in tanto</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lo sottil ladro che negli occhi porti [<em>di Cino da Pistoia?</em>]</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
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<td>Iacopo, i’ fui nelle nevicate alpi</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sennuccio, la tua poca personuzza [<em>Dante (?) a Sennuccio (del Bello)</em>]</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
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<tr>
<td>La gran virtù d’amore e ’l bel piacere [<em>di Dante da Maiano</em>]</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visto aggio scritto e odito contare</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
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<tr>
<td>[<em>Tenzone tra un Dante e Chiaro Davanzati</em>]</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tre pensier’ aggio onde mi vien pensare</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
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231 Barolini, in the introduction to her commented edition, does not deal with the attributive question and the *dubbie*, deferring it to the second volume. Yet, in the introduction to *Amore e monna Lagia*, she partially discusses the issue, accepting this sonnet among the certain poems, while questioning De Robertis’s method. In her opinion, the editor lacks of transparency in the classification of the eight poems promoted from the uncertain appendix to the certain corpus. Although De Robertis is quite “creative” in giving the titles to these *rime*, he dedicates many pages to the examination of the witnesses and to the possible attribution to Dante of each poem, where he does not lack any interpretation, even though it should be clear by now that it is always possible to blame any philologist for having interpreted the data according to hermeneutic or even ideological paradigms.

232 The poems added to corpus have the numbers 52-59, Alighieri, *Opere I*, 632-65.

Giunta justifies the restoration of *Nulla mi parve mai* not so much with arguments supporting Dante’s authorship, but instead he states that it is a poem of “indubbia qualità” (“undisputable quality”), which already shows the refinement of more modern poems, of the Trecento cultural environment. Thus, even if it might not be by Dante, it was written by a capable poet, and it deserves to be included in the corpus in order to not be forgotten. Reading between the lines of this argument, the importance it has had for Montale might also have played a role: as we have already seen, Montale, whom Giunta cites as a major episode of its fortunes, not only has quoted it in *La Bufera*, but has drawn major inspiration from it. Having influenced one of the most famous contemporary poets, the sonnet has earned the inclusion in the corpus of the Poet, the canonization among the most influential rhymes of Italian literary history, even besides its real authorship. As Bentivogli points out, *Nulla mi parve mai* is one of the few poems

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<tr>
<th>Per vera esperienza di parlare</th>
<th>Dubbie</th>
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<tr>
<td>Già non m’agenza, Chiaro, il dimandare</td>
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<td>Se credi per bulati o per sapere</td>
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<td>[Tenzone tra Dante (?) e Puccio Bellandi]</td>
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<td>Saper voria da voi, nobile e saggio</td>
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<td>Così com nell’osuro allama il raggio</td>
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<tr>
<td>De’ tuoi begli occhi un molto acuto strale</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non piango tanto ‘l non poter vedere</td>
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<tr>
<td>Io non domando, Amore [o di Cino da Pistoia?]</td>
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<td>Molti volendo dir che fosse amore</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Promoted into the corpus</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ai faus ris, pour quoi traï aves [restituita a Dante]</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Promoted</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quando ’l consiglio degli ucce’ si tenne [restituito a Dante]</td>
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<td>Amore e monna Lagia e Guido ed io</td>
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<tr>
<td>Se ’l viso mio a la terra sichina [probabilmente di Dante]</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Promoted</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questa donna ch’andar mi fa penoso [probabilmente di Dante]</td>
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<td>Non v’accorgete voi d’un ch’essi more [probabilmente di Dante]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Io sento pianger l’anima nel core [probabilmente di Dante]</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Promoted</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
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<tr>
<td>De gli occhi di quella gentil mia dama</td>
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<td><strong>Excluded</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nulla mi parve mai più crudel cosa</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
<td>Dubbie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deh, piangi meco tu, dogliosa petra</td>
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that Pasquini would have maintained among the *dubbie*, along with *Amore e monna Lagia e Guido ed io* (see table above). Since there are minimal differences, Giunta’s commented edition gives us the same portrait of Dante as a lyric poet as De Robertis’s edition. Yet, Giunta keeps the second sonnet, *Amore e monna Lagia*, among the *dubbie*, because Dante’s paternity is justifiable only with a specific interpretation of this obscure poem, while manuscripts attribute it to Cavalcanti.²³⁴ Giunta, as we will see multiple times, is often hesitant concerning attributions and, even when the poem is placed in the corpus, he sometimes cast doubts.²³⁵ Such as in the case of *Degli occhi di quella gentil mia dama*, which he puts in the series of the certain poems due to the ecdotical evidences brought by De Robertis; yet he recapitulates the stylistic flaws of the poem, and he concludes that its collocation among the *dubbie* would have been the best solution.²³⁶

The clear differences between Pasquini’s judgments and the decisions De Robertis made in the constitution of the corpus of *rime dubbie* in the critical edition, show the extent to which this difficult subject depends on the sensibility of the critic, a parameter that leads to divergent choices even in the interpretation of the same facts (as often regards Dante, minute and tricky). Hence Pasquini would reduce the corpus of *rime dubbie* to only seven poems, downgrading all the others to apocrypha; while De Robertis, who does not add any new piece

²³⁴ Alighieri, *Opere I*, n. 168; Alighieri, *Rime* 2005, 304-05; 2002, vol. 2.2 994-96, vol. 3 322-24. As we will see below with the poems whose attribution is uncertain between Dante and Cino, the uncertainty between Dante and Cavalcanti happens in multiple instances, where not following the attribution proposed by codices does not cause problems. For instance, the ballad *Fresca rosa novella* is attributed to Dante in Vat. Lat. 3793, a manuscript which is considered reliable, but we know the poem is by Cavalcanti.

²³⁵ A certain degree of approximation in approaching the issue of the *rime dubbie* seems to come out also from Grimaldi’s choices: even though the second volume of his commented edition has not come out yet, he has already stated that programmatically his corpus will be the same of Barbi; yet, he will have to deal with the various choices made by editors and commentators, and thus it will be interesting to see whether he will have an appendix of *dubbie* in whose introductions he might say that the labelled uncertain poems are instead certain, or whether he will just refuse any critical advance of the last 80 years.

to Barbi’s appendix of *dubbie* and instead eliminates one, promotes eight poems to the principal corpus. As Bentivogli points out, looking more closely the contrast between the two scholars is not particularly firm, and it is mainly due to a primitive gap of severity, giving us instructive instances of how crucial the critical judgment and the position of the critic in the canonization of an author are. Indeed, the two scholars agree in the exclusion of *Deh, piangi meco tu*, and in the evaluation of *Amor e monna Lagia*, which is promoted by De Robertis and kept among the restricted corpus of *dubbie* by Pasquini. Hence, these discussions clearly demonstrate how, in dealing with minute stylistic facts that should make the difference, especially when the attribution is not clearly supported by strong ecotical evidences and the manuscripts appear as not completely reliable, it is extremely difficult to support a definitive argument to decide in favor of either possibility.

Barański tackled this issue, and emphasized the reluctance of passing from the philological reconstruction to hermeneutics, even when philology is transformed into a *feticcio*, an idol. 237 His reflections, related to the consideration of medieval context in the studies concerning Dante’s intellectual formation, might be well extended also to those concerning Dante’s lyric production. Indeed, even though it is a subtle distinction in literary studies, we are confronted with the same difficulty in assessing what is objective and what is subjective. We could also remember what Barthes wrote about literary criticism, a field that encompasses much of what is sometimes portrayed as philological, and thus as indisputably true, which, however, does not pertain to the firm philological field, such as the questions concerning order and attribution, whose data—as we have seen—might be interpreted in completely opposite ways starting from the same premises and with almost equally reasonable arguments.

237 Barański, “«Con quanta vigilanza! Con quanto impegno!»,” 82-83.
“Criticism is not science. -Barthes writes- Science deals with meanings, criticism produces them. It occupies, as has been said, an intermediate position between science and reading; it gives a language to the particular discourse which reads literature and gives one voice (among others) to the mythical language of which the work is made and with which science is concerned. The relationship of criticism to the work is that of a meaning to a form.” But also, since “the critic can in no wise substitute himself for the reader,” writing “is in a certain way to split up the world (the book) and to remake it.”

Since the purpose of this critical inventory is to analyze editors’ choices regarding the dubbie as the touchstone for exploring the various understandings of Dante, while also confronting the early tradition of the rime, I will not focus on the discussions concerning each one of the poems that appears on this list. Instead, I will focus on the two poems De Robertis labels with the caption “Restituita a Dante” (“Returned to Dante”): the sonetto rinterzato Quando ’l consiglio tra gli ucc’ si tenne, and the canzone in three languages Aï faus ris, pour quoi trai aves. Since the latter will be the main subject matter of the next chapter, for the moment we shall focus on the former, along with other significant instances.

It is rather bizarre that the Aesopian fable of the crow that dresses itself in the feathers of other birds in order to be admired is the subject of a sonnet whose rightful belonging to Dante’s corpus of poems is disputed. We shall thus look at the feathers of this poem, and see whether they belong to it, or if the sonnet has improperly been dressed with the name of Dante. That is to say, to retrace De Robertis’s acknowledgment and the elements added by other commentators, in order to focus on what allows its attribution to Dante and, at the

238 Barthes, Criticism and Truth, 32, 38.
same time, what has cast doubts on its authenticity, while highlighting what its inclusion in the
canon does add to our knowledge of Dante as a lyric writer. Already in 2000 De Robertis
proposed to restore Quando ‘l consiglio in the canon, with a double series of arguments: the lack
of competing attributions,²⁴⁰ and some unique features of the text, especially from the point
of view of the form, whose innovative nature would suit Dante.²⁴¹ It is a sonetto rinterzato with
a settenario in perfect rhyme after the uneven verses, with a three-verse coda (AaBBa-AaBBa-
CcDDdCCcD-dEE). In particular, De Robertis notices that it does not merely reproduce the
metrical scheme of the rinterzati sonnets of the Vita Nuova, which have diverse rhyme schemes
and, furthermore, do not have a coda; instead, since it can be divided into cobbole (AaB-BbA-
AaB-BbA-CcD-DdC-CcD-dEE),²⁴² it bears an innovative, though still embryonic, evolution
getting its scheme in relation to the retrogradatio cruciata of the sestina.²⁴³ It is also the most ancient
witness of the coda tristica, whose invention should thus be ascribed to Dante, although he does
not use it anywhere else.²⁴⁴ De Robertis concludes that “il persistere nella sua specialissima
ossessione [la sestina] gli avrebbe fruttato un’invenzione in più” (“persisting in his special
obsession [the sestina] would have yielded an extra invention for him”).²⁴⁵ Then, when asking
himself if there is a shared peculiarity that might be used as a criterion to distinguish the rime

²⁴₀ Two manuscripts attribute it to Dante, while the others witness it as anonymous. The two
manuscripts ascribing it to Dante are the BNCF, II IV 114 and BMI, Redi 184, which contain a certain number
of apocrypha, but at the same time have also less common texts, such as Lo doloroso amor (cf. De Robertis,
“Riabilitazione,” 286-87). We will analyze these codices in the following chapter.
²⁴¹ De Robertis, “Riabilitazione,” 286.
²⁴³ The sestina, allegedly invented by Arnaut Daniel, is a fixed lyric form consisting of six stanzas of six
lines each, and a three-line envoi. The words ending the verses of the first stanza are used as rhyme words in the
other stanzas, rotated in a close pattern, the retrogradatio cruciata, that is repeated from bottom up and top down.
There is no rhyme within each stanza. On the basic traits and the origins of this form, F.J.A. Davidson. “The
²⁴⁴ Antonio Pucci used this scheme very often, and this is why Contini proposed to attribute the sonnet
to him (Alighieri, Rime 1946).
²⁴⁵ De Robertis, “Riabilitazione,” 286.
by Dante, De Robertis ponders whether experimentation might be the determiner. So, in order to attribute *Quando 'l consiglio* to Dante, its author is characterized as a confident observer and interpreter, who is capable of a pointed auto-parody, while the vivid originality of the sonnet, already emphasized by Carducci, would corroborate Dante’s paternity. The demonstration by De Robertis does not rely only on these elements, and instead also produces convincing ecdotic and intertextual evidence that answer the doubts cast by Pasquini on its attribution. Nevertheless, experimentation comes out as one of the fundamental traits of Dante’s lyric writing. This not just maintained by De Robertis’s hermeneutics, and it is a quality generally ascribed to Dante, but according to different perspectives and visions of his lyric production. That experimentation and innovation are peculiarities of Dante’s writing is a shared opinion; yet, the dimensions of this ‘experimentalism’ may significantly vary, as these discussions show.

From the point of view of the content, Grimaldi emphasizes that this is one of the few poems in Dante’s corpus not dealing with love, but it should finally be mentioned that, as Giunta underlines, this sonnet witnesses the knowledge of a less common version of the story.

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246 Ibid., 288, 290.
248 Giunta accepts *Quando 'l consiglio* in the main corpus, but in the introduction to the sonnet he casts some doubts on its attribution to Dante (Alighieri, *Opere I*, 643-48, cf. n. 168). In particular, he recalls that moral poems are among those that more often get arbitrarily attributed to the poet who is considered most wise (Ibid., 646).
249 Pasquini doubts the authenticity of this poem because of an alleged strangeness of the metrical scheme (but see above), while the analytic way in which the fable is told in the sonnet would not suit the rapid reference to other Aesopian fables Dante makes elsewhere. More specifically, he also casts doubts on some forms (*nicistà*, *druda*, *muda*, and *addobbossi*). Also, Pasquini is not convinced by the comparison between the crow that is cold since is left without feathers, and the caught swindler, who sweats (ll. 19-23). De Robertis answers each one of these remarks (De Robertis, “Riabilitazione”): first, he asks what should be recognized as “maniera di Dante,” if it should generally be experimentation or what else (288, and see below); then he discusses each one of the words, putting them in context (289-90); in particular, *addobbossi* (l. 7), even though it is present in Dante, is no more the reading of De Robertis’s critical edition, where it has been substituted by *adornossi*. As for the comparison, it should be interpreted as referring to someone who sweats because of someone else’s warmth, and then gets cold, see Alighieri, *Rime* 2005, 286. Also, interpreting *tal che* as *talché* (so that), makes it even clearer. Cf. Alighieri, *Opere I*, 646-48, and below.
of the bird in borrowed feathers, and in particular the familiarity with other Aesopian
collections than the widespread *Romulus* and *Latin Aesop*. This might not seem like much,
but being Dante and considering that it is a short poem, this new piece of information
concerning the knowledge of diverse classical traditions, along with the invention of a metrical
scheme, does make the attribution of *Quando 'l consiglio* to Dante rather relevant.

Among the rime dubbie there is another text that has received similar evaluation, while
firmly remaining in this corpus: the sonnet to Sennuccio del Bene allegedly from Dante,
*Sennuccio, la tua poca personuzza*. Here, Dante (?) mocks his friend for his appearance, which is
paralleled by a later canzone by Sennuccio where he describes himself as not particularly
handsome (*Amor, tu sai ch'i’ son col capo cano*), and for his manners and love aspirations. As it
happens in correspondence poems, the external references are lost, so the meaning to the
letter is not completely clear, but its general sense is. The sonnet has never been promoted
among the certain poems, and there are also signals that it might be referring to poems by
Sennuccio written in the 1330s-40s. Yet again it has merited attention for its metrical
peculiarities: it is a continuous sonnet, that is with only two rhymes (ABBA-ABBA-ABA-ABA,
respectively -uzza and -uzzo), that are moreover close in consonance with -zz, which is also
among the most rare rhymes and connected to the comic genre, as for instance in Cavalcanti’s

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251 Alighieri, *Opere I*, 644-46. Giunta adds that this version of the fable might also have circulated by
itself.

252 De Robertis, following a suggestion by Chiamenti, underlines a parallel with the *Monarchia* (III iii 17),
where we find those who “corvorum plumis opertis” pretend to be white sheep in the flock of god (Alighieri,
*Opere II*, 1248-51). This metaphor, which does not look completely congruous, has raised doubts in
commentators; for what interests us here, it is noteworthy that, although the passage does not closely recall the
version of the story told in the sonnet, it seems that the fable of the crow/raven disguising itself with other birds’
feathers was familiar to Dante’s mind. Giunta does not avail the paraphrase of verse 21 proposed by De Robertis
in light of the *Monarchia* (Alighieri, *Opere I*, 647-48). Yet *dischiuda* seems to be connected precisely to “se iactant.”


254 Giunta discusses the attributive question and the most recent interventions by Gorni and Piccini:
Guata, Manetto, quella scrignatuza. It is noteworthy that it is one of the only six poems out of the original 26 of the Barbi’s appendix (see table above) that Pasquini, who would not promote any of the pieces in the canon, and instead would degrade most of them among the apocrypha, would keep as a dubbia. Pasquini in his discussion raises strong doubts on the authenticity of this sonnet, and the paragraph dedicated to it convinces the reader that the sonnet will be crossed out from the list; yet in the end the poem is kept among the dubbie because it is “innegabile la bravura nell’uso espressivo di quell’infilata di rime in –uzzo e –uzza” (“indisputable the skill in the expressive use of that thread of rhymes in –uzzo and –uzza”), even though it seems closer to the compositional mode of Cecco Angiolieri and Guido Cavalcanti than that of Dante. There is also an implicit recall of Boccaccio’s authority, who would have drawn inspiration for defining ser Ciappelletto assettatuzzo (Decameron I.1.2, “very neatly dressed”) precisely from this sonnet describing his friend Sennuccio.

Finally, there are four sonnets (Se ’l viso mio a la terra si china, Questa donna ch’andar mi fa pensoso, Non v’accorgete voi d’un che·ssi more, Io sento pianger l’anima nel core), which have been reintroduced in the main corpus of Dante’s poems by De Robertis under the label of probabilmente di Dante (“probably by Dante”), leaving thus open the possibility that they would instead be by Cino. The question remains unsolved. It is certainly possible to discuss the convenience of such a definition: since both in the critical and in the commented edition De Robertis provides a specific section of rime dubbie, it gives an additional gradation on the scale of authenticity, implying that the possibility of their authenticity is high, while implicitly suggesting that those poems labelled as dubbie are most probably apocryphal. Giunta, for Io

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sento pianger, in light of previous studies, writes that probability is almost certainty, but that in any case, just like for the other three poems, we cannot say that it is by Dante without any doubt. These four sonnets display the influence of Cavalcanti’s style in the description of the state of the lover, and thus, according to De Robertis, they are closer to Dante than to Cino. It is their style that makes the decision impossible: the refined and rarified writing elaborated and shared by the group of stilnovisti poets has created a gray area of poems, whose attribution in the manuscripts oscillates especially among Dante and Cino, a situation which is unresolvable even with modern philological tools. For what interests us here, it is important to notice that, being part of a production characterized by a shared set of linguistic and thematic tools, their attribution to Dante does not change his portrait as a vernacular poet, since they get added to a certain number of poems that he certainly wrote as a stilnovista, naturally along with the Vita Nuova. Therefore, not every poem added to the canon has a significant impact on the construction of an author, as on the other hand we have already observed with the sonnet Quando ’l consiglio and we will see with the trilingual canzone Ai faus ris.

1.2.5 Experimentation

The attribution of a work, but also of a single poem, may profoundly change the idea of the author, and, of course, the intellectual profile of the writer. In Dante's case, his lyric corpus is by definition unstable, and therefore changes in its composition are always significant. Still, even outside the question of authenticity, critical paradigms change over time, as does general sensibility, and thus the perception and depiction of an author-function such as Dante is always meaningful. The discussion concerning the rime dubbie makes clear that editors generally

257 Alighieri, Opere I, 654.
agree on defining Dante as an ‘experimental writer’. Yet his profile, especially concerning his lyric writing, may vary, depending on subtle criteria. Indeed, when considering the lyric Dante especially, critics rely on the same idea of “experimental” for defining and circumscribing Dante as a lyric writer, or better, they seem to have the same idea of the author. But they apply that idea quite differently: the author-function is defined in the same way, but it is not the same. For instance, De Robertis’s experimental Dante, who writes an Aesopian fable in verses, a trilingual canzone, and a sonetto mimicking the Bologna’s dialect,\(^{258}\) is a poet who is not afraid of using a varied array of sources and linguistic tools, a much more complex figure than the author Pasquini would define in his hypothetical edition of the Rime, deprived of all these poems. Still Pasquini would probably define Dante as experimental.

Before further exploring this issue in the next chapter by confronting Aï f aus ris, we shall first consider the relationship between the concept of “experimental” and the idea of varietas. In the introduction to his commented edition, Grimaldi points out the varietas of Dante’s lyric corpus, that is its metrical, formal, stylistic, and linguistic variety. He points out that the idea of lyric writing as varietas can be found in many medieval works, from Isidore of Seville to Huguccio Pisanus, and, he argues, was also probably taught in schools. Guido da Pisa, too, applies this concept to Dante’s Commedia - and possibly also to his lyric production - in his commentary. Thus, Grimaldi concludes that metrical and stylistic variety would be embedded in the very definition of a lyric writer, and the poeta liricus would indeed be defined through the qualities of dulcedo and varietas.\(^{259}\) Leaving aside the general issue of what a lyric poet might be,\(^ {260}\) this particular definition, and the ways in which it relates to so-called

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\(^{258}\) I am referring to No me poriano zamai far emenda, for which see below n. 331.

\(^{259}\) Alighieri, Vita nuova–Rime, 300-10. A more extended discussion in Grimaldi, “Petrarca, il ‘vario stile’.”

\(^{260}\) Cf. Curtius, European Literature; Gorni, “Le forme primarie.”
experimentation, may be productive. The concept of *varietas*, in fact, finds itself very close to what is usually regarded as experimentation; yet this does not mean that Dante’s experimentation and *varietas* are necessarily one and the same, nor does it suggest that we should invalidate claims of Dante’s experimentation in favor of calling them *varietas*. Let us consider some of the nuances of experimentation and *varietas*. First, Dante’s experimentation is not limited to the *rime* corpus, but also extends to the creation of new genres and, more generally, to his innovations with both old and new traditions in order to make poetry in unprecedented ways; it is not simply limited to variety in writing. Second, the definition of lyric variety may also be applied to Dante’s contemporaries, thus providing a context for his writing thereby emphasizing the particular characteristics of his works. It is, indeed, self-evident that, considered in its entirety, Dante’s oeuvre is peculiar and unique. Codex Chigi L VIII 305 supports such a claim: this anthology might well be presented as the embodiment of lyric *varietas*, as it contains many authors, writing in different registers, as we have seen above for Cavalcanti and Guinizzelli; but Dante is the only one who appears as the author of a collection, and furthermore of a prosimetrum, the *Vita Nuova*, which fuses multiple genres and traditions, while also being plurilingual in many respects.261 This reference emphasizes the distinction between the general medieval tendency to variety and Dante’s specific attitude. Thus, Grimaldi’s collection of data crucially helps to delineate the boundaries of what might be considered experimentation, but Dante’s steady tendency toward new forms of writing and intellectual communication cannot be completely characterized as simple *varietas*.

Interestingly, Giunta cast doubts on the very existence of a “medieval expressionism,” as envisaged by Contini. In particular, Giunta asserts that medieval *comico-realístic* genre is not

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261 Todorović, *Dante and the Dynamics*; Barański, “The Roots of Dante’s Plurilingualism.”
necessarily a parody of the opposite register; although it might be in certain specific instances, it does not exist only as a countermelody. This claim helps to further delimit the field of experimentation, since the *comico-realistico* does not seem to be identifiable *tout court* with expressionism, intended as an equation between comic and expressionistic (and also dialectal, with the comic insertion of other languages). Expressionism is indeed a category which Contini applied to Dante, and to medieval literature, a category derived from his own contemporary moment, from the expressionism of the twentieth-century avant-gardes surrounding him. Dante pushes the boundaries of *varietas*, and for instance this was implicitly perceived also by Bembo, who did not propose the *Commedia* or any other Dantean work as a model. Yet it should be put into relief that, just like expressionism, experimentation is a contemporary category that we retroactively apply onto a cultural system that, especially in Dante’s epoch, did not know it as a separate type of writing.

These two critical notions are fundamental to confront the subject of the next chapter, the three-language *canzone Ai faus ris*, whose interpretation and attribution to Dante relies on a knot of philological, but mostly critical, paradigms and tenets.

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2. *Aï faus ris*: the Dante-Function between Experimentation and Canon

2.1 *pour quoi traï aves oculos meos?*

“Raphèl mai amècche zabì almi” shouts Nimrod in his obscure language (Inf. 31.67), just as Pluto bursts out in seeing Dante in equally unintelligible words (Inf. 7.1). Demons using unknown tongues are not alone in diverting from Tuscan, but in the Dantean afterworld others express themselves in their own language: Arnaut Daniel speaks Provençal (Purg. 26.136-148); Cacciaguida’s first words are in Latin (Par. 15.28-30); while Virgil evokes Lucifer saying *Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni* (Inf. 34.1).263

The idea of Dante writing in multiple languages and handling multiple styles and genres is a truism, as we have already seen, even outside and before Contini’s critical paradigm of *expressionism* as the quality defining Dante’s writing. Expressionism is indeed the overarching category of which plurilingualism is the most widespread and recognized aspect.264 The editorial and interpretative history of *Aï faus ris*, Dante’s hybrid *canzone* in three languages, is certainly one of the most interesting cases in order to explore Dante’s reception, canonization, and institutionalization as the Poet, particularly because its authenticity is still debated. In this chapter I will review the *vexata quaestio* of the authenticity of the poem, focusing on the elements defining Dante as an author-function, and in particular on the embarrassing implications of a Dante writing a middle style product in French. Thus, I will make some remarks on the style of *Aï faus ris*, particularly on its relationship with Dante’s *canzoni petrose*, and on the significance of writing in French – if and how this fits in Dante’s literary career.

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263 Breschi provides a complete list of all the passages in Latin in the *Commedia* (“Aï faus ris,” 318-19).
Then, I will explore a specimen of its early tradition, to determine whether its early reception differs from following and contemporary perceptions.

Massimiliano Chiamenti explored the editorial history of the canzone, and has emphasized the role of the idea of Dante that was common to the nineteenth century, as particularly witnessed by Fraticelli’s 1856 edition of Dante’s minor works. Fraticelli explicitly states that Dante would have never written a poem in three languages like Aï faus ris; instead, he always strived to “dar lustro all’italiano idioma” (“add prestige to the Italian idiom”). As Chiamenti writes, this position is interesting not so much in itself, but because it influenced Michele Barbi. Indeed, from Barbi’s 1921 edition of Dante’s Rime, until Domenico De Robertis’s edition in 2002, Aï faus ris has been filed among the uncertain poems, in spite of the fact that there is no real reason not to attribute it to Dante. Nonetheless, from the point of view of the Ottocento, the Italian national Poet, father of Italian language, who foresaw the Italian linguistic and even political unity in the DVE, could not have written a poem in which Tuscan was not the unique, and not even the principal medium of expression. Chiamenti’s conclusions are exemplary, and Barbi’s reluctance toward this canzone can definitely be explained by his understanding of Dante (or better, of the Dante-function), which does not embrace the composition of a virtuoso trilingual canzone, especially when one of the languages is French, which was a controversial subject for Dante himself. On the other hand,

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266 Dante grouped together as pertaining to the volgare di si all the dialects of the Italian peninsula, encompassing also Sicily and Sardinia, which was not obvious at the beginning of the fourteenth century (Bruni, Italia, 75 et seq.; Tavoni, “Il concetto dantesco”). Dante’s ideal Italian unity, to be achieved under the aegis of the Empire, and his anti-municipal attitude are emphasized by both the last editors of the treatise, Fenzi and Tavoni (Alighieri, DVE ed. Fenzi, and Alighieri, Opere I, 1065-546). He also considered the vernacular language a political phenomenon, necessary for the construction of a solid state (Bologna, “Un’ipotesi sulla ricezione”). All these characteristics of the DVE influenced Dante’s reception especially in the nineteenth century, when his embryonic ideals were achieved with Italy becoming an independent state.
as Breschi underlines, other authoritative scholars -Witte, Mahn, Boehmer, D’Ovidio, Zingarelli, Scherillo- continued to consider the canzone authentic, and it also seems that Pernicone and Contini would have added it to the canon.267 Before reviewing the vexata quaestio of the authenticity of the poem, its main peculiarities should first be summarized.

2.1.1 Structure and Content.

Aï faus ris is written in three languages, French, Latin and Italian. This canzone, as Dante himself calls it at l. 40, stands out in the corpus of Dante’s rime for its experimental qualities. At first, it reminds of a descort, and in particular of the famous one by Raimbaut de Vaquerais in five languages (Eras quan vey verdeyar);268 but there the languages –except for the envoi– are confined each one in one separate stanza. Dante, on the other hand, tries something even more fascinating from the point of view of the form. He makes the three languages work together in a syntactic continuum. In other words, they do not just answer to each other, which makes it –as Brugnolo pointed out– not really a descort since there is no real conflict among the languages, nor any metrical or rhyming discordance.269 The descort is properly a monolingual musical genre practiced by troubadours and trrouvères, although there are also some instances


268 Raimbaut de Vaquieras’s descort, although one of the most famous of the genre, it is in fact an exception, since it is isometric, while having multiple languages is not one of the qualities defining a descort. For a comprehensive discussion on the descort as a Romance genre, and a register of the poems, see Canettieri, Descorts dicatz. Raimbaut wrote a poem in Provençal and Genoese too, the contrasto with a Genoese woman, Donna, tant vos ai priada; Bonifacio Calvo wrote a sirventes-descort in three languages, Un nou serventes es tardar, and Cerveri de Girona worte a cobra in multiple languages, Nuncha querria eu achar. these poems are usually cited as parallels for Aï faus ris (see for instance Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone trilingue,” 115 and Breschi, “Aï faux ris,” 317), but for the traditions to which it is closer, see below.

269 Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone trilingue,” 111-15. De Robertis and Lazzerini call it disordro (De Robertis, “Dati sull’attribuzione a Dante del discordo Trilingue” and Lazzerini, “Osservazioni testuali in margine al discordo trilingue”), probably because the multiple languages cause some contrast, as the love there represented is contrasted, see below.
among the poems of the Sicilian School. In the latter tradition, it usually has stanzas with internal metrical coherence, but each one differs from the others (canzone eterostrofica).

Aï faus ris is composed of three stanzas, whose metrical scheme is ABC BAC cDEeDFF, and a five-line congedo (envoi) ABbCC, for a total of 44 verses. This is the same scheme of the stanza of Voi che ’ntendendo (which has only hendecasyllables), and of Io son venuto, one of the canzoni petrose (which has only one settenario, and the rhymes in a slightly different order, ABC ABC), and of La dispietata mente, too. Also, the scheme of the sirma is peculiar of Dante. The congedo has the same scheme as that of another canzone petrosa, Così nel mio parlar.

From the structural point of view, as Brugnolo highlighted, its distinctive feature is that the three languages are alternated following the pattern of the retrogradatio cruciata, the “backward crossing” of the rhymes in a sestina. Each language always rhymes with itself, while each one never occupies the same place in the stanza, instead filling in turn all the possible positions. The recursive system of the placement of the three languages, along with its metrical scheme, is what makes this canzone exceptional. The general theme of the canzone is, instead, rather standard, and its content is basically made of platitudes, as Contini emphasized: the lover complains about the behavior of his beloved, who is accused of being false and treacherous. From the text as a whole, it is possible to infer that the woman, the false smile of the first words, gave hope to the lover, but then she disregarded him.

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270 Usually defined as discordi are: Giacomo da Lentini, Dal core mi vene; Re Giovanni, Donna, audite como; Giacomino Pugliese, Donna, per vostro amore (defined by Giacomino caribo, a musical-instrumental short genre). I poeti della Scuola Siciliana, vol. 1 105-52, vol. 2 111-26, 582-94. Cf. Canettieri, Descortz es dictatz, 289-316.

271 Beltrami, La metrica, 263-64. For further discussion, see below.

272 On the metrical scheme see Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone trilingue,” 153-56.

273 “è vietata, in altre parole, la ‘sovrapposizione’ delle lingue” (“in other words, the overlapping of the languages is forbidden”) Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone trilingue,” 127. For further discussion on the implications of this system, see below.
Alas false smile, why did you betray my eyes? And what have I done to you, for you to do me such a merciless fraud? Even Greeks would have listened to my words! If ever others knew, you, my lady, at least well know that a deceiver is not worthy of praise. You know so well how much delight the saddened heart of one who waits can feel. I crave for her so much, and she cares not for me. Alas, God, what a malaise, and what a ruinous misfortune is inflicted on someone who, while waiting, loses time and never touches flower in its green.

I lament, my tender heart, first of all for you, you who should not have lost control just because of a foolish stare from her eyes; and yet it pleases me that darts and rapiers always rise up against myself from her oblique eyes, because of which I will be dead, in faith. Greatly I feel sorry myself, since I am punished, and yet I have no guilt, nor does she say: “All this is harming him:” therefore I stop my complaint. She knows so well that if my heart might swerve to thinking of another, abandoning its love of her, great pain would then my heart feel because of this.

For sure must then this lady have an icy heart and so much harshness, being, in faith, so cruel, unless she have some pity for her slave. And Love knows well, unless I have from her relief, I am enduring a painful death because of her, nor can I save my life, just by hoping, any more. Woe to all my nerves, unless she allows me, by her own truest mind, to see her joyous face. Alas, God, she is so completely intact. But I have fear of her, so great is the pain I have from her: she does not even care to love me at least so little as lasting hope remains in me of her.

Song, now you can go anywhere around the world, since I have been speaking with a triple tongue to make my painful thorn be known around the world. May everybody hear: perhaps the one who torments me will have mercy.

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274 Text from De Robertis (Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 3 243-56). For the two cruces desperationis left by De Robertis, Lazzerini proposed convincing emendations, which were accepted by Giunta: l. 26 e il faus cuers grant paine an porteroit; l. 39 me iam de ipsa. Among the many corrections, it is also noteworthy Lazzerini’s emendation for l. 9: en li esperant qui pas de lui ne cure (Lazzerini, “Osservazioni testuali;” cf. Alighieri, Opere I, 632-33).

The complaint of the lover for unreciprocated love is definitely not a novelty, neither in the Romance literary scenario, nor in Dante’s corpus. Yet Dante does not accuse any other woman of being false, thus *Aï faus ris* bears something unique in Dante’s production. This woman is not impenetrable, nor completely insensitive toward love, and she does not make the poet fall in love with her without interesting in the effects of her glances and in the love she originates (or even instigates), as for instance the *donna Pietra*. In fact, in the second stanza (ll. 23-26), we are told that she would be disappointed if the lover would think about another woman. The theme of the *faus amants* (deceitful lovers), and thus also of the deceitful woman, is one of the more common in the literature in *langue d’oil*. Indeed, it seems perfect for a poem where the *oil* language is used. Yet the woman of *Aï faus ris* does not seem to correspond perfectly to the *topos* of those who do not really feel love, but just fake it, since her displeasure hints to the fact that she would not be completely false. If she gives false hope to her lover, who states that “she does not even care to love me at least so little as lasting hope remains in me of her” (ll. 38-9), she also seems to care about his behavior, thus expressing some feelings. At the same time, though, the above-mentioned lines seem to reveal the lover’s fear that she does not have any real pity for him, and that it would be just his hope, his own imaginative construction. In this case the woman would indeed be a topical *fausse amie*. The theme of the woman who betrays the lover, the *fals’amor*, is also common among the *troubadours*, as for instance in Marcabru, Arnaut Daniel, Bertran Carbonel, Cerverì de Girona, and Peire d’Alvernhe –whom Dante quotes in the *DVE*; as among early Italian poets, such as Giacomino Pugliese, Guittone, Chiaro Davanzati, Onesto da Bologna. The discordance between the poet and the woman

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regarding their feelings and behavior might make *Ai faus ris* close to the genre of the *descort*, where the love contrast is paralleled by the tormented metrical structure, in a tight relationship between form and content of poetry.\(^{278}\)

In the *congedo*, by saying that the *chanson in lingua trina* can be understood and thus hover all around the world, Dante explicitly connects form and content. Yet this explanation of the trilingualism is superficial, and definitely not sufficient to explain the choice of writing in three languages, both from the cultural and the technical point of view. Before confronting with this issue, however, it is necessary to retrace the attribution to Dante and the discussions connected to it, in order to put into light the main characteristics of the poem.

### 2.1.2 The Attribution to Dante

Brugnolo, De Robertis, and Chiamenti provided solid arguments for attributing *Ai faus ris* to Dante. The *canzone* appears in more than seventy manuscripts and early editions,\(^{279}\) in many of which (especially in fifteenth-century codices) it is placed after the fifteen *canzoni distese* in the canonical order, along with the ballad *I’ mi son pargoletta*, often together with various series of *rime* from the *Vita Nuova*.\(^{280}\) *Ai faus ris* usually appears in Dantean series that are explicitly attributed to Dante, while only in a few cases it appears in unattributed series, or anonymous by itself.\(^{281}\) All the three scholars have highlighted the fact that there is no competing


\(^{280}\) Of the more than sixty useful witnesses for the constitution of the text, 2/3 belong to the same family of those by Boccaccio and those derived from them, the b family. *Ai faus ris* and the ballad *I’ mi son pargoletta* are identified by De Robertis as the appendix A, which is usually added at the end of the series of fifteen *canzoni distese*, sometimes along with some *rime* from the *Vita Nuova*, or the *rime scelte* from the *Vita Nuova*, but never with the *Vita Nuova* itself and the *canzoni* (De Robertis, “Dati sull’attribuzione,” 129; Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, vol. 2.2 870). This appendix and the *canzone* itself is, thus, among those lyric pieces that were added to the series of the fifteen *canzoni*, which led to the Giuntina canon. Particularly, it is A that is linked to b, while the *canzone*, when it is alone, might be connected to the other *canzoni*, but usually outside b (Ibid., 877).

\(^{281}\) See in particular De Robertis, “Dati sull’attribuzione,” 133-36.
attribution: the canzone appears as ascribed to Dante, or anonymous. Dante is, thus, the only proposed author for this canzone. Its text has been extensively corrupted in the transmission process, especially as regards the French lines, and its reconstruction has proven hard. Yet De Robertis’s exploration of the tradition of Aï faux ris gives the impression of a solid agreement in its attribution to Dante, especially because the attribution appears in textually unrelated branches. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that the two most ancient codices, MSS Barb. Lat. 3953, by Niccolò de’ Rossi, and BNCF, Banco Rari 69 (ex Pal. 180) transmit it as anonymous. Along with the fact that it is associated to the canonical series of canzoni only later, in the Quattrocento, this circumstance is assumed as the strongest argument for Aï faux ris not being Dante. But there are two principal elements that make the tradition trustworthy, supporting De Robertis’s demonstration of its attribution to Dante: first, the above-mentioned lack of any other attribution; and also, the fact that the tradition of the ballad I’ mi son pargoletta, whose attribution to Dante has never been doubted, is similar to that of Aï faux ris. Particularly, the ballad appears unattributed in many cases that are similar to what happens for the three-language canzone. The fact that the canzone might be considered one of the additions

282 French has only recently been recognized as the third language, while in many witnesses it becomes a hybrid language, among which the 1527 Giuntina stands out, where French has strong influences of Provençal. In the 1856 edition Fraticelli adopted a ‘corrected’ version (i.e., translation!) in Provençal by Galvani (but in the nineteenth century many agreed in this opinion), while it is only with Crescini (whose edition has been used by Barbi in 1921) that French is reconstructed – as much as possible. Indeed, as Lazzerini points out, the transmission of the lines in French, a language that originally also had some authorial imperfections, has been the most tormented. Lazzerini, “Osservazioni testuali.” Cf. Crescini, “Del discordo;” Chiamenti, “Attorno alla canzone trilingue,” 196-98; Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 3 244-45.

283 In particular, Aï faux ris appears attributed to Dante also outside b (De Robertis, “Dati sull’attribuzione,” 137). MS Barb. Lat. 3953 besides being the most ancient, is also the most independent witness of the canzone (Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 3 244, vol. 2.2 1030, 1036-37). Viel argues that it contains a first redaction of the poem (Viel, “Aï faux ris.”) We will analyze these codices in depth in the following paragraphs.

284 De Robertis notices “un continuo riproporsi, ad ogni livello, dell’ipotesi dantesca, dall’età del presunto autore, se Mr [Marucelliano C 152] vale ancora come riflesso di una tradizione ben antica e se in B1 [Barb. Lat. 3953] quello cancellato è il nome di Dante” (Ibid., vol. 2.2 1037)

285 Ibid., 1026-27.
to the canonical series of *canzoni* and/or *rime* from the *Vita Nuova* (but also to the prosimetrum, as in MS BML, 90 sup. 137), is not sufficient to eliminate *Aï faus ris* from the canon of Dante’s lyric poetry, since, from the strictly ecdotic point of view, the situation is similar to what happens to other *rime*. The problem of the attribution must, therefore, involve other pieces of evidence.

The use of the *retrogradatio cruciata* is considered the principal argument to sustain the attribution to Dante, since, as Brugnolo writes, only a poet obsessed with the perfect combinatorial scheme, with the virtually endless circular movement of the *sestina* could have written this *canzone* in Italy at the turn of the Trecento, this poet could only be Dante. Brugnolo arrived at this conclusion exploring the deep structures governing the construction of *Aï faus ris*. In particular, he showed that this peculiar way of organizing the languages matches the profound spirit of Dante’s *canzoni petrose* and of his other *sestine*.  

In addition to the infinite mechanism of language alternation and the correspondences in the metrical scheme with other *canzoni* by Dante, there are many other valuable points that make *Aï faus ris* attributable to Dante. Many textual parallels with other Dantean texts have been proposed, so it seems useful to collect them all-together, in order to evaluate them globally: in the appendix I summarize all the *loci paralleli*, dividing those with the other *rime* from those with the *Commedia*.

The contacts with the four *canzoni petrose* stand out. One of the goals of this analysis is, thus, to ascertain the quality of these correspondences. I argue that the complex of parallels shows that *Aï faus ris*, although being of a different genre, shares the same inspiration with

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286 Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone,” 149-62. Breschi, “Aï faus ris,” 320. It is interesting that Beltrami points out that Dante’s *Amor tu vedi ben* is not properly a *sestina doppia* (as those by Petrarch will be), but a cyclic *canzone*. Beltrami, *La metrica italiana*, 266.
those *canzoni*, both from the point of view of the form and of the content. As early as 1939, Contini, already considering the *canzone* as probably not apocryphal, wrote of an “impallidito vocabolario da rime petrose” (“a pale ‘stony’ vocabulary”), to which the words “dardi e stocchi,” “si crulla” and “cor di ghiaccio” should be ascribed.\textsuperscript{287} Appendix passage n° 4 exemplifies the internal memory and the correspondence of *Al faux ris* with Dante’s *langue*: there are words appearing multiple times, a constellation of terms with similar meanings in multiple contexts (*tempo, perde : verde, fiori/fioretti/fronde*).\textsuperscript{288} First Contini underlined the Dantean quality of the word *fioretto*, even though it is usually in the plural.\textsuperscript{289} Although the most striking resemblance is with *Io son venuto* and *Al poco giorno*, the appearance of a similar springtime setting with the same reproach not to waste time in vain makes particularly interesting the parallel with *Purg. 23.1-3*; or with *Purg. 3.133-135*, where the same rhyme words are accompanied by the flower, and thematically by the hope that love will eventually be reciprocated. In *Purgatorio* the theme of not wasting time in climbing the Mount is recurrent. Dante must not get distracted from the ascent, since stopping implicates jeopardizing the possibility of purging one’s soul. The syntagm *toca di fioretto il verde* might be generally interpreted as ‘reaching the objective’, or in a more terrestrial and precise way as the erotic conquest of the woman.\textsuperscript{290} This second possibility has caused some perplexities among critics;\textsuperscript{291} yet, it would be in perfect

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item The rhyme *verde : perde* is not so common outside Dante’s *oeuvre*: it appears once in Guittone (*Amore è peggio che guerra. O tu, de nome Amor, guerra de fatto ll. 56-57*); later it becomes more common, and it may be found once in Niccolò de’ Rossi (*Magior senno seria, Amor, tacere, ll. 79-80*), and also in Jacopo Alighieri, Boceaccio, Petrarch, and others (TLIO and BibIt).
  \item Pasquini and Stoppelli point out that this would be the only occurrence of the word in the singular, but it does not seem enough to invalidate such a system of parallels permeating the poetic memory (Pasquini, “*Appunti*,” 46; Stoppelli, “*Le opere di dubbia attribuzione*”).
  \item De Robertis and Breschi are more precise (Alighieri, *Rime* 2005, 225; Breschi, “*Al faux ris*,” 326-27), while Giunta remains generic (Alighieri, *Opere I*, 637).
  \item Pasquini, “*Appunti*,” 46.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
harmony with the general spirit of the petrose, where the erotic theme is recurring. To recall a passage with a shared interpretation, in Così nel mio parlar Dante dreams of the sexual conquest—or the actual rape—of the cruel woman, while for instance also in the sextina Al poco giorno there would be a double meaning in the line “solo per veder du’ suoi panni fanno ombra” (“only to see where her dress casts a shadow”), admitting its erotic interpretation as the desire of seeing under her dress. In Aï faus ris the sensual theme is also evident in the usage of the word nervo (l. 33, Appendix n° 10): it certainly gives reality to the person of the poet, who appears as made of flesh and blood, especially considering the intensifying use of mio. It might be connected with Brunetto’s mal protesi nervi as well (“ill-protended muscles” Inf. 15.114), also given the fact that nervus stands for the male sexual organ in many classical authors. Other than the sexual undertone, as Giunta points out, this passage parallels a similar material image in Così nel mio parlar, ll. 24-25. Likewise, for the three-language canzone...

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292 “... e fare’ ’l volentier, si come quelli| che ne’ biondi capelli| ch’Amor per consumarmi increspa e dora| metterei mano, e piacere’l allora.| S’io avesse le belle trece prese| che son fatte per me scudiscio e ferza,| pigliandole anzi terza| con esse passerai vespero e squille;| e non sarei pietoso né cortese| anzi farei com’orso quando scherza;| e s’Amor me ne sferra,| io mi vendicherai di più di mille.” (62-73). “... and gladly would I do so, for in the yellow hair that Love curls and gilds for my destruction I’d put my hand, and then she would begin to love me. Once I’d taken in my hand the fair locks which have become my whip and lash, seizing them before terce I’d pass through vespers with them and the evening bell: and I’d not show pity or courtesy, O no, I’d be like a bear at play. And though Love whips me with them now, I would take my revenge more than a thousandfold” (Dante’s Lyric Poetry, vol. 1 175). De Robertis, grounding on a study by Chiamenti, specifies that the playing bear is not a generic choice, but a specific reference to erotic violence (Alighieri, Rime 2005, 15 n. 71).

293 Lastly Brugnolo (Brugnolo, “Sotto il vestito”), building on a study by Picone, has argued for the sexual interpretation of the line by giving a convincing set of evidences. Cf. Durling-Martinez, Time and the Crystal, 126-27; Kleinhenz, “Erotic Elements,” 89-90. Kleinhenz also highlights erotic undertones in some of the Italian descorte and canzonette (Ibid., 91-94), the closest genres to Aï faus ris. The sextina by Arnaut, Lo ferm voler, which inspired Dante for his own, would also have a sensual/sexual nature, and would narrate the poet’s longing for an erotic reward (Jernigan, “The Song of Nail and Uncle”). For further discussion, see below.

294 Cf. Dante’s Lyric Poetry, vol. 2 271-72, about Così nel mio parlar: “... one is struck first by the use of metaphor. ... Note the hardness, concreteness, and particularity of the metaphors ... . In this poem the concrete nouns outnumber the abstract by 48 to 29, and many of them refer to beings or things unthinkable earlier ... : whilst the abstract nouns lack nearly all the key terms which colour the earlier poems: e.g. dolcezza, gentilezza, salute, umiltate, valore. In short, D goes far beyond the simple mixture of vocabula pexa and vocabula yrsta.”

295 For instance, Horace uses nervus exactly to indicate the male sexual organ, Epodi 1.2: “cuius in indomito constantior inguine nervos / quam nova collibus arbor inhaeret,” just as Juvenal (VI 13), Cicero and Catullus. Cf. Lanci, “Nervo.”
we can say that something not so much lyric shines through the lover’s pain caused by the cruel woman, so that this poem too seems to participate in the renovation of the *trobar clus* carried on by the *petrose*. Another example is the theme of the ferocious death caused by Love, who does not help the lover but instead increases the sufferance, which is carried on in lines 30-32 (Appendix n° 9), and is recurrent in Dante’s poems, especially in the *petrose*, and particularly in *Così nel mio parlar*. Thus, from this series of examples it should be clear that *Aï faus ris* does not only show a pale vocabulary similar to the *petrose*, but it shares the same inner passions of those *canzoni*.

The word *fioretto* appears as a *senhal* in the ballad *Per una ghirlandetta*, where the woman is called Fioretta, which is a *courtois* reworking of the name of the goddess Flora, not particularly diffused in the Italian lyric tradition, but common in Romance and medieval Latin literatures. Grimaldi points out that the mere use of the words *fiore* (l. 3) and *Fioretta* gives a sensual shade to the ballad, given that the flower in medieval literature stands for the woman and the love relationship with her. He also adds that the springtime setting has to be related to the more general folkloric theme of the spring rebirth. This ballad holds a relevant place for *Aï faus ris* and more generally for Dante’s connection with French literature and culture. Giunta identifies quite a few characteristics connecting this poem with the *oïl* lyric tradition. First, the theme of the *ghirlanda* does not seem to be very common in the Italian Duecento, while the equivalent theme of the *chapelet* is pretty common in the *oïl* tradition. Furthermore, *Per una ghirlandetta* would be rather close to the French genre of “objective texts,” that is to say

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297 All the commentators observe the affinity with the other names/ *senhals* of Dante’s women: Violetta, Lisetta, and the “pargoletta.”
299 Yet Grimaldi lists some Italian poems in which there is a *ghirlanda* (Ibid., 688).
mostly descriptive texts with third-party characters. Also, the diminutives in -etta recall the French tradition of the genres à refrain, just as the presence of someone speaking, who is different from the voice of the poet. Although the imagery seems cliché, at a closer look nothing similar has been composed in Italy. In particular, its metrical scheme (xyz ABABbyz made of novenaries and septenaries) is atypical: not only does it not have any parallel in the Stilnovo, but it is unique in the entire medieval ballad repertory. The ballad’s last stanza is also peculiar: there Per una ghirlandetta unusually talks about its own music (ll. 11-16):

...  
Le parolette mie novelle,  
che di fiori fatt’han ballata,  
per leggiadria ci hanno tol’t’ella  
una vesta ch’altrui fu data:  
péò state pregata,  
qual uom la canterà,  
che li facciate onore.  

Thus this poem was intended to be performed with music, getting even closer to that middle style of poetry, which was distinctive to the musical and the oil traditions. We will come back to this point later; but it is interesting to highlight that Per una ghirlandetta points toward the

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300 Alighieri, Opere I, 173-76. Barolini and Grimaldi, in their introductions to the poem, connect the diminutives to the Stilnovo, particularly to Cavalcanti’s ballads (Alighieri, Vita Nova – Rime, 687-88, 691; Alighieri, Rime giovanili, 206; the ghirlanda is also related to the ornaments of the Florentine women, especially on Calendimaggio, cf. Ibid., 208).

301 Given the metrical scheme and the use of the novenario (novenary), an unicum in Dante, which might have been influenced by the octosyllabe, the Occitan dansa seems to be the closest form to Per una ghirlandetta (Alighieri, Opere I, 174). In the DVE the novenario is considered a low style verse, but it is defined as a triple three-syllable verse, which is not of the kind used in this ballad (except l. 12), but a particular novenarry used by Guittone and his circle (Alighieri, DVE, ed. Fenzi, II v 6, 177; Opere I 1432-33). In the codices Per una ghirlandetta appears reshaped in more canonical schemes, because its form was unusual for the time; the text as it is was judged a popular reworking of the ballad, while it is, instead, its real form (Alighieri, Rime della ‘Vita Nuova’, 207). Dante himself, calling the text “parolette mie novelle,” seem to allude to the novelty of this poem by merging the concepts of new and juvenile (Ibid., 205).

302 “These new little verses of mine, which have made a ballata of flowers, have taken, to adorn themselves, a garment given to another: so I pray you, lady, be gracious to whoever sings them” (Dante’s Lyric Poetry, vol. 1 39).

303 In particular it seems to be one of the first examples of a contrafactum, a poem sung with music that was not composed specifically for it. There are other interpretations of this last stanza, in order to avoid the musical quality of the ballad, but they seem rather unsustainable (Alighieri, Opere I, 176-77). Also, the link as cobla capfinidas of the ripresa to the stanza is a characteristic of the poesia per musica (Ibid., 172-73).
same intellectual and cultural environment to which Ai faus ris also seems to have to be related. This begins to depict a branch of Dante’s invention, a visual angle from which the writing in langue d’oil begins to look less isolated in his production.\textsuperscript{304}

Appendix n° 11 and 18 show other cases of crossed parallels and reworking: there are rhyme words recurring multiple times, together with an apparently anonymous syntagm, venga/vegno a veder, which in fact frequently appears in Dante’s works, particularly in the rime of the Vita Nuova. Chiamenti also underlines the same rhythmical pattern in Inf. 14.60, while in Purg. 27.7-8, even though the lexical parallel is not cogent, it is still noteworthy that the allegrezza, happiness, finds itself again close to the integritas, which, as Giunta writes, should be intended as one of the three elements constituting beauty according to Thomas Aquinas, together with claritas and debita proportio.\textsuperscript{305} Brugnolo, for his part, sets forth the parallels collected in n° 17 to support the attribution to Dante. According to him, this would be one of the occurrences of a rhythmical and syntactical construction that is typical of Dante, and often used by the young Dante. Also, the rhythmical and syntactical structure of l. 35 is used several times in the Commedia, as for instance in Inf. 16.83 and Par. 2.4.\textsuperscript{306}

A much-debated passage of the canzone, evidently connected to Dante’s other poems, is the syntagm gravis mea spina at verse 42, which parallels the crudele spina appearing in Io son

\textsuperscript{304} Giunta implicitly casts some doubts on the authenticity of this poem, writing –after his analysis– that, given its metrical scheme, rhetoric, themes, and the relationship words-music, Per una ghirlandetta is a strange text, which “sembra, più radicalmente alludere a un’altra cultura letteraria – quella dei generi lirici oggettivi francesi – e a un’altra più tarda età” (Ibid., 177). But, as we will see, Per una ghirlandetta might seem less isolated if we also consider Ai faus ris a product of the young Dante.

\textsuperscript{305} Alighieri, Opere I, 640.

\textsuperscript{306} Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone,” 157-58. Brugnolo highlights that, even though ben+future tense does not appear in the Commedia, there are many occurrences of ben+verb, more often at the beginning of the line. We can add that there are multiple variations of ben sai, which is used multiple times in Ai faus ris; it is not something specific of Dante, and it is instead diffused at the turn of the Trecento; yet it is noteworthy that it is so well represented in Dante, even outside the Commedia.
venuto (l. 49, Appendix n° 14), its exact Italian translation. The use of the word spina as an absolute synonym for sorrow and pain, as a particular love-thorn in the hearth, even though it has a close parallel in Cino and it is well represented in the TLIO database, at the same time does not seem extremely common.\footnote{Alighieri, \textit{Opere I}, 640. Stoppelli writes that it is common, but he does not support his claim ("Le opere di dubbia attribuzione"). For instance, in the same sense it is used three times by Cecco Angiolieri, who writes "La quale spina Amor noma la gente" ("The thorne which people call Love," \textit{Credenza sia, ma si 'l sappia la gente} l. 9).} It mostly appears in vegetal contexts with a figurative meaning, as it happens in both the Dantecan poems. Brugnolo has already pointed out the crossed connections with \textit{Io son venuto} along with the other petrose, and at a closer look there is an intimate connection between these passages from any perspective, since form and meaning are exactly the same, in an identical context. Also, considering De Robertis's suggestion of a biblical undertone, given the connection with St. Paul's \textit{stimulus},\footnote{Alighieri, \textit{Rime} 2005, 127.} the use of the same word spina in a context with a similar connotation, does not appear as the likely work of someone who is writing a Dantesque cento. The connection between \textit{Aï faus ris} and \textit{Io son venuto} does not seem contrived, and instead it offers evidence of a shared inspiration. Chiamenti, preceded by Contini (who in turn cites Zingarelli and Crescini), emphasizes the fact that the word \textit{spina} here might be a reference to the Malaspina family, consequently dating the poem at the years of Dante's stay in Lunigiana, 1306-08 ca. Other scholars, such as Pasquini and Brugnolo,\footnote{Brugnolo, "Sulla canzone;" Pasquini, "Appunti," 47; in general, Pasquini gets rid of this \textit{canzone} pretty quickly.} exclude a connection with the Malaspina. Indeed, there seem to be no reason in the text itself for relating it to this family, and thus the reference to the Malaspina has disappeared from more recent commentaries.\footnote{Alighieri, \textit{Rime} 2005, 227; Alighieri, \textit{Opere I}, 641; Breschi, "Aï faus ris," 332; \textit{Libro de las Canciones}, 462.} Furthermore, there are other reasons to suppose that \textit{Aï faus ris}
might be dating back to an earlier period of Dante’s cultural development, as we will see in the following paragraphs.

Among the most discussed passages of Aï faus ris, there is the mention of the Greeks (l. 4). Even though there is no explicit reference to other Dantean texts, it is indeed in considering other passages from his oeuvre that this one gets illuminated. Starting from Contini, all the commentators have interpreted this passage as a way to express the lady’s pride, since the Greeks are a usual example of pride. This is also true for Dante, and the Greeks are charged of pride in the sonnet Un dì si venne and of course in Inf. 26. Stoppelli argues that the deafness of the woman, which is not a literary topos, would directly recall that of Ulysses in the Inferno, who would not listen to Dante because he is Greek, and consequently arrogant. Such an explicit reference is interpreted as evidence of someone who writes getting inspiration from Dante, and not something that Dante would do within his own writing. Yet Giunta, then followed by Breschi, who gives more strength to this claim, argues that the Greeks are also usually characterized as false and unfaithful. Therefore, the reference to the Greeks in relation to the woman would support her representation as false and disloyal, and would not be validated solely by Ulysses’s contemptuous behavior. The Greeks would have a double significance, which is indeed well-represented inside and outside Dante’s body of work. The connection to the Commedia does not disappear, instead it becomes deeper, since Ulysses and Diomedes are not condemned for pride, but exactly for being fraudulent counselors. The accusation of pride is also noteworthy because it would connect Aï faus ris to the theme of

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311 Inf. 26.73-75: “Lascia parlare a me, ch’i’ ho concetto | ciò che tu vuoi; ch’ei sarebbero schivi, | perch’ e’ fuor greci, forse del tuo detto.” (“Let me speak, for I have conceived what you wish; for perhaps they would shun, because they were Greeks, your words”). They also might possibly not understand Latin, thus connecting fraud and falseness with the use of multiple tongues, see below.
312 Alighieri, Opere I, 637; Breschi, “Aï faus ris,” 324-27.
Medusa, which is recurrent in the *Commedia* and in the *petrose*. Indeed, just as Medusa, the woman has the power to transform who looks at her into stone, because who looks, both in the *Commedia* and in the *petrose*, metamorphoses into what is looked. However, the *obduratio cordis*, that is the heart turning into stone, was considered a consequence of pride: the lady of *Cosi nel mio parlar*, just like Medusa, who is also told to have been punished exactly because of pride (a tradition which seems known by Dante), makes, indeed, her lover become stone, since she is the *donna pietra*. Thus, the pride of the lady of *Ai faus ris* dovetails with the stony qualities of the woman of the *petrose*.\(^{313}\) In particular, being made of stone has to be implicitly connected with pride, which in turn was often, as we have seen for the common definition of the Greeks, paired with the tendency to commit treason.\(^{314}\)

Internal memory is particularly important for Dante, thus his auto-citations are highly significant.\(^{315}\) *Ai faus ris* counts 44 verses, and there are as many as 19 passages which can be related to other *rima* or to the *Commedia*.\(^{316}\) As we have seen, they do not have the qualities of a *cento*: form and meaning go in the very same direction. The corresponding passages are massive and, moreover, spread on various sides, permeating the three-language *canzone* on multiple levels, so that thinking of a compiler writing with Dantean bricks seems hard. The Appendix shows that there are, indeed, rhythmical, syntactical, ideological parallels, along with


\(^{314}\) Pride connoting falseness and treason is quite common, see for instance the joust of virtues and vices, where -well before *Inf. 26*- there is an interesting link treason-falseness-pride, and the personification of Pride is determined through the epithet “that false traitor”: “La Humilitate ardita | fæcese innançi vacçu, | àla presa inn–un lacçu, | quella falsa tradente [la Superbia]” (Poeti del Duecento). Cf. Breschi, “Ai faus ris,” 325-26, 333.

\(^{315}\) Mercuri, “Genesi,” 243-44.

\(^{316}\) There also references to other works by Dante: Chiamenti has pointed out that l. 21, “ch’io son punito ed aggio colpa nulla,” parallels the first sentence of the *Epistola* II (Chiamenti, “Attorno alla canzone,” 195): “… me miserum dolere oportet, qui a patria pulsus et exul immitterus.” While at l. 8 the biblical verb *prestolatur* (*Is 8 17*) might be connected to *Epistola* VII 19 (Breschi, “Ai faus ris,” 326).
modules only slightly varied, and echoes that seem due to involuntary memory; while nothing is used as dead material, as construction pieces got from a looming author.\textsuperscript{317} In fact, the material is appropriated in such a way that it definitely seems to be a composition by the same person, Dante.

2.1.2.1 External References

Since, as we have already mentioned, Dante is not prodigal in citing other poets, it is interesting to pinpoint the external references appearing in \textit{Aï faux ris}. The table is comprised of both the texts that are earlier than the \textit{canzone}, and of some coeval poems, which may not be considered as sources, but general parallels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>\textit{Aï faux ris}</th>
<th>Thibaut de Champagne, \textit{Sin, ne me celez mie} l. 60 (Lazzerini, Breschi, Giunta) n'en porteroiz c'un \textbf{faus ris}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Peire d'Alvernhe, \textit{Ad desembrar del pais}, ll. 41-42 (Lazzerini) Ar an ses cor e'ls \textbf{fals ris} tot aisi cum l'abelhis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Thibaut de Champagne, \textit{Qui plus aime plus endure} ll. 8-10 (Breschi) ainz m'a mis en nonchaloir cele qui \textbf{n'a de moi cure} Ounques riens ne fu si dure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>je l'esper [t]ant, et pas de moi ne cure\textsuperscript{318}</td>
<td>Chastelain de Couci, \textit{Quant la saison} l. 8 (Giunta) J'aim et desir ce qui \textbf{de moi n'a cure}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rinaldo d'Aquino, \textit{In amuroso pensare} l. 36 (Contini) omo che tempo aspetta, tempo perde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a colui ch'aspettando il tempo perde</td>
<td>Guittone d'Arezzo, \textit{Giudicare e veder del tutto fermo} l. 6 (Breschi) ove fuggir n'è tardo avan rei stocchi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Niccolò de' Rossi, \textit{Simpliçimente, puro, senza fele} l. 14 tu m'an dici come de mili stocchi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ma e' mi piace che li dardi e stocchi</td>
<td>Meo de' Tolomei, \textit{El fuggir di Min Zeppa} l. 14 (De Robertis) Or chi ti crulla? (: nulla) [in the manuscripts of the \textit{Commedia}, \textit{crullare} is a reading for \textit{crollare} (Giunta)]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{317} Cf. Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone,” 162.

\textsuperscript{318} Breschi suggests also a thematic contact with Cino da Pistoia, \textit{Novellamente Amor} ll. 9-14.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 26   | li faus cuers grant paine an porteroit | Thibaut de Champagne (Breschi)  
Li rosignous chante tant l. 13  
Que de toz biens s’est leur faus cuers partiz  
Coutume est bien, quant on tient un prison l. 20  
Qui la prient de faus cuer baudement  
Niccolò de’ Rossi, Ne la mia mente regnava culei vl. 6, 11  
Non conosette voi el suo falso core  
…  
falsa donna et exemplo d’onni male! |
| 28   | et tant d'aspresse que, par ma foi, est fors | Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, Egual quan veg verderuor v. 22 (Breschi)  
si je muer per bone foi |
| 42   | ut gravis mea spina | Cino da Pistoia, Cercando di trovare l. 3 (Giunta)  
punto m’ha ’l cor, Marchese, mala spina |
| 7, 24, 30 | Tu sai ben…  
Ella sa ben…  
Bien set Amours… | Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, Donna, tant vos ai priada l. 26  
que voi no sei, ben lo so  
Thibaut de Champagne (Breschi)  
Je ne voi mis nului un gient ne chant l. 35  
Que bien savez ja n’iert en reprouvier  
Nas bons ne puot ami confortar l. 39  
Trop savez bien le cuer d’un homme enblor  
Emperor ne roi n’ont nul pouvoir l. 23  
Vous savez bien de mou au parestroit  
Coutume est bien, quant on tient un prison l. 25  
Vous savez bien qu’en on conoist en lui  
L’autre nuit en mon dormant l. 25  
Trop savez bien decevoir |
| 16-20 | moi : loi | Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, Egual quan veg verderuor l. 20, 24 (Breschi)  
si je n’ai vos e vos moi.  
…  
no’m partrai de vostre loi |

In comparison with the numerous loci paralleli within Dante’s own œuvre, the number of these references is rather small. While well-grounded in Dante’s langue, Aï faus ris looks independent from the previous tradition and also from what is being written in contemporary times. It does not seem possible to recognize a major influence, especially regarding the Italian verses. It is

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319 TLIO does not recall any other appearance of the syntagm.
noteworthy that in the French lines there are multiple references to poems by Thibaut de Champagne, the only trouvère Dante mentions in his *DVE*. As Lazzerini emphasizes, Peire d’Alverne also appears in the treatise, and he too seems to have inspired the *incipit*, and thus the hearth-theme of this *canzone*. The contacts with the French stanza of Raimbaut de Vaqueiras *descort* are also stimulating, and especially the same rhyme-words *moi : loi*.

Line 9, but particularly line 38, seem to find a parallel in an anonymous sonnet contained in MS BAV, Vat. Lat. 3793, pertaining to the so-called *siculo-toscani* poets, *Se del tuo amore giunta a me non dai*, whose last verses are “perché lo fai, amore, e nonn-ài cura|che fai mentire l’amarosa cera?” Besides the returning rhyme word, it is also the presence of multiple rhetorical questions in the poem, along with the significant accusation to the woman of being false, more precisely of having a false smile, “lo tuo riso non sia falso aprovato” (l. 8), that relates this sonnet to *Ai fous ris*. The poet accuses the beloved lady of smiling, thus, instilling hopes of a reciprocated love that instead never comes true. This sonnet is connected to another poem of the Sicilian School, the anonymous *canzone Amor, non saccio a cui di voi mi chiamic*. It is also contained in MS Vat. Lat. 3793, but it belongs to the main corpus of the poets of Frederick II’s *Magna Curia*. It is a misogynistic poem governed by the theme of the false love, the anti-courtly theme that is also present in *Ai fous ris*. It is noteworthy that it

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320 Chiamenti, “Attorno alla canzone,” 189-91, and see below. According to Barbieri, Dante would have drawn inspiration for the punishment of the tormented souls in *Inf.* 23 from a poem of the trouvère Thibaut de Champagne, which could be the direct source of the pain applied by Dante to hypocrites (Barbieri, “Cil porteron en Enfer”).


322 *I Poeti della Scuola Siciliana*, vol. 3 958-60.

323 Ibid., vol. 2 847-57.

324 The attribution to the Abate di Tivoli has been proposed (Ibid., 848).

325 There are other instances of false women in early poems before Dante, such as in Guittone, Chiaro Davanzati, or Giacomo Pugliese (cf. Breschi, “Ai fous ris,” 334), but these two poems seem particularly close to our *canzone*. 

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explicitly mentions the Notaro, Giacomo da Lentini, as its recipient, the polemic peak of an ironic and aware *canzone* opposing the *fin’amor* praised by the Notaro himself. As for the contacts with *Ai faus ris*, again this poem is characterized by a similar rhetorical question (l. 48 “Amor, perché lo fai?”), it has the rhyme word *cura*, and, as in the three-language *canzone*’s first verse, “Aï faus ris, pour quoi traï aves,” the lexemes false and traitor appear close: “falsa, la traditrice” (l. 25). This *canzone* cannot be considered a close source for *Ai faus ris*, less than the sonnet *Se del tuo amore*. Yet both poems, along with the other given external references, contribute to situating the trilingual *canzone* in the Romance milieu of the second half of the Duecento, amid middle-style poetry, when the Italian tradition was still heavily influenced by what had been composed beyond the Alps. Later on, Italian lyric writing becomes more independent and, while more refined and with a solid tradition, it is also less cosmopolitan, so that the connections with the treatment of the theme of the false love by the early Italian writers is a first hint for situating *Ai faus ris* within the thirteenth century.

2.1.3 Multiple Languages: Tradition and Genre.

Critics usually cast doubts on the authenticity of the poem because it would not be worthy of Dante due to its style, which is considered low or popular and all things considered not well-suited for the ethical father of Italian language. But why? Its content is not original, it is made of platitudes, yet formal experimentation cannot be moved to the background. In the evaluation of *Ai faus ris* the prejudice against multilingual texts has played a major role. Elwert summarizes the issue in these terms:

Si le phénomène du mélange linguistique en littérature a été relativement peu étudié, c’est sans doute parce qu’il s’agit d’un phénomène marginal. Mais c’est aussi peut-être parce qu’on l’a considéré comme une anomalie, simple curiosité déconcertante, indigné de l’appréciation esthétique.
Si ce problème a été négligé c’est, sans doute aussi, parce que l’on pensait que l’expression littéraire ne peut être parfaite que si elle est réalisée au moyen de la langue, dite maternelle, de l’auteur.326

Critics have considered multilingualism an aberration, not worthy of aesthetic appreciation. Also, there is a shared, implicit belief, which seems particularly strong with regards to Dante, that is that literature achieves perfection only when it is the expression of the author’s mother tongue. We shall thus strive to deconstruct these assumptions in order to investigate the significance of such an isolated and innovative text, in which not only languages, but also registers and genres are fused together, in such a way that is not surprising in Dante’s perspective.

The first two verses of Ai faus ris have been extensively discussed. Here, there are references to biblical texts, while in particular “et quid tibi feci?” recalls the Biblical incipit of the lost letter Dante wrote to the Florentine people, “Popule mee, quid feci tibi?” (the one mentioned by Leonardo Bruni),327 which in turn quotes the prophet Michea (6:3); these words are also in the adoratio crucis of the Good Friday.328 Besides the open reference to another work by Dante, which might sound suspect, the quotation of biblical texts, with the subsequent parallel between the relationship poet/woman with that god/chosen people, have made De Robertis talk of appropriation of the Scripture,329 which Breschi and Lazzerini see as parodic. Stoppelli adds that, while the Dantean references would be too evident, there could also be a suggestion from Psalm 122 (1–2), all of which he considers ironic, especially because it happens in a plurilingual text. But, as all the commentators observe, references to biblical texts can be

found in other poems by Dante, such as for instance in *Deh, Violetta* and *Com più vi fere Amor co’ suo’ vincastri*, without particular parodic undertones.\(^{330}\)

The Romance tradition of the *descort* has, indeed, a parodic and ironic undertone, while the languages contrasting each other, sometimes miming the languages of the speakers as in a *contrast*, result in peculiar effects.\(^{331}\) Nevertheless, except for single small syntagms lending themselves to a popular characterization,\(^ {332}\) in *Aï faux ris* there is nothing that points decisively toward low style. The Latin is not particularly refined, yet Chiamenti already noticed that it is not a cento.\(^ {333}\) As regards the French, it is not polished, it has been defined ‘French by an Italian’, but it is difficult to ascertain its qualities because it has been corrupted beyond repair due to its unstable transmission.\(^ {334}\) There are, in fact, bizarre words, such as for instance *malure* (l. 10), which might be interpreted or as an Anglo-Norman version of *malheure*, or as a hybrid word in which *malheur* – old French *malëur* (bad omen) is fused with *malbeure* (misfortune).\(^ {335}\)

Nonetheless, the use of three languages in *Aï faux ris* does not seem to have any parodic connotation. Although its style is not utmost elevated, it is middle style, and in particular its *lingua trina*, rather than having a necessary comic implication, seems a virtuosistic element of style. It is indeed a stylistic device that is diffused throughout Europe in areas that are not even

\(^{330}\) Grimaldi for instance writes that “C’è qui [*Com più vi fere Amor* l. 8], come spesso in Dante, una sovrapposizione tra lessico cortese e biblico” (Alighieri, *Vita nuova-Rime*, 728). Cf. Barański, “The Roots of Dante’s Plurilingualism,” 112.

\(^{331}\) Such a conscious usage of linguistic variants might be well conceded to Dante, given his interest in different vernaculars shown in the DVE. Also, De Robertis publishes the sonnet *No me poriano zamai far emenda* not in the Tuscan version, because he attributes the language of the 1287 *Memorie Bolognese* to Dante, who would have mimicked the vernacular of Bologna (Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, vol. 3 325-31, and 2005, 307-10; Alighieri, *Rime giovanili*, 157-65; but cf. Alighieri, *Opere I*, 158-59).

\(^{332}\) See above the parallels with Rinaldo d’Aquino, in the use of a proverb, and with Meo de’ Tolomei, along with the terrestrial tone of some passages of the *canzone*. Marchiori writes that in fact the Italian lines of *Aï faux ris* show a lexicon with a certain degree of innovation that matches Dante’s corpus, Marchiori, “Considerazioni linguistiche.”

\(^{333}\) Chiamenti, “Attorno alla canzone,” 200.

\(^{334}\) On the French, see above.

close to each other, that might be intended as formal expressionism.\textsuperscript{336} In particular, for the Middle Ages the distinction between form and content cannot be considered as a clean cut, and form is always meaningful per se.\textsuperscript{337} This seems to be the case of this \textit{canzone}, where the form, both from the point of view of the language and of the structure, is elaborate and baroque; while the content is traditional, the umpteenth variation of the cruel woman theme. As it may be inferred from the judgments by Contini and the introduction by Barbi-Pernicone or Barbi’s note in the 1921 edition,\textsuperscript{338} the fact that this typical situation is described in three languages, fusing themselves in a syntactic unity, does not mechanically make \textit{Aï fous ris} a parody; rather, a \textit{divertissement} tinged with irony.\textsuperscript{339} Indeed, except for the mechanism of the alternation of three languages, its style is not particularly elevated in any of the languages, but it cannot be considered low style either.

Antonio da Tempo, in his metrical treatise \textit{Summa Artis Rithmicai Vulgaris Dictaminis} (1329-1332), discusses the different types of sonnet in multiple languages, the \textit{semiliteratus} (Latin and vernacular) and the \textit{bilinguis} (Italian and French). He describes their peculiarities and gives an example he wrote for the occasion; but none of these is specifically characterized as being stylistically lower than a monolingual poem.\textsuperscript{340} A concrete instance close to Dante is the

\textsuperscript{336} Brugnolo (“Sulla canzone”) lists all the different plurilingual traditions, see below. Cf. Brugnolo, “Plurilinguismo;” Elwer, “L’emploi des langues étrangères.”

\textsuperscript{337} This is one of the concepts on which Contini’s reading of Dante’s \textit{rime} grounds on, but it is also a more general principle permeating Medieval and Early-Renaissance culture. \textit{Nomina sunt consequentia rerum} writes Dante himself in the \textit{Vita Nuova} (XIII.4), implying that meaning is embedded in the very name of things. Cf. Alighieri, \textit{Vita nuova-Rime} ad l., 134-35 (with further bibliography); Curtius, “Etymology as a Category of Thought,” in \textit{European Literature}, 495-501.

\textsuperscript{338} Alighieri, \textit{Le opere: testo critico}, 138.

\textsuperscript{339} Elwert writes that Dante “justifie sa polyglossie par son désir de donner plus de publicité à ses griefs; de la forme du descort, il fait une plaisanterie.” (“L’emploi des langues étrangères,” 425). Although I do not completely subscribe to this evaluation, Elwert’s idea that Dante is somewhat playing with the conventions of the genres is valuable.

\textsuperscript{340} In the \textit{semiliteratus} sonnet the lines in Latin are composed by the same author, respecting the accentuative rules of the vernacular; in the \textit{metricus} sonnet, on the other hand the Latin lines are citations from classical authors. Antonio da Tempo, \textit{Summa}, 34-5. Cf. Duso, \textit{Il sonetto latino}, XVI-XVII.
sonnet Iudicium hoc intentio mea, an anonymous answer to Cino da Pistoia’s sonnet Vinta e lassa era l’alma mia. Cino’s poem describes a situation that is very close to what is said in the first sonnet of the Vita Nuova, that is, the poet who asks his fellows to help him interpret an enigmatic dream. Cino’s proposal is rather successful and there are eight extant answers by known poets, but also anonymous ones, among which there is the above-mentioned sonnet in Latin and Italian. Being a correspondence poem, it uses the original rhymes, regularly alternating the two languages. As for its contents, it is consistent with the other seven answer-poems, interpreting Cino’s dream in a comparable way. In the Latin lines some vernacular words are latinized: Dio in vocative, and the words coco and atavit, which is also a Gallicism.

The poet who answered Cino must not have been particularly talented in writing Latin verses. Duso pinpoints other formal flaws in the poem, that is, the identical rhymes of ll. 2 and 6 (hai : hai), and the imperfect rhyme gula : parola : mola (ll. 10-12-14), which by the way could be considered guilttoniana. Yet, on the whole, the poem does not seem to strive toward the comic answer, and what looks like macaronic might not have been intended to joke on Cino’s love dream. Even the closing of the poem, with the realistic image of love that weights on the hearth like a mola (a millstone), is instead a topical image deriving from the Bible. However, even in the case that the anonymous poet added some comic remarks, it does not seem that these should be necessarily related to the choice of writing using Latin as well. Duso, in her study of the corpus of the extant sonnets in Latin and Italian, establishes that, even though

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342 The eight answers are to be found in only one codex (MS BNM, Ital. IX 529), where some parts of their text are materially damaged (Poeti del Dolce Stil Novo, 665-77; Marrani, “Identità del frammento”).
343 Duso, Il sonetto latino, XIX, 5; Poeti del Dolce Stil Novo, 674. Marrani points out that many words, among which he cites coco and mola, return in the sonnets forming the tenzone, and thus it is possible that each poet knew more than just Cino’s first sonnet (Marrani, “Identità del frammento,” 172).
there are instances of parody and irony conveyed through the use of two languages,\(^{344}\) there are also completely serious *semiliterati* sonnets, such as for instance those written by Giovanni Quirini.\(^{345}\)

Thus, all things considered, *Aï faus ris* can be judged as a *canzone* of middle style. Particularly, I argue that having three languages does not necessarily imply that it is a popular poem, imbued with parody. On the contrary, it makes it a fascinating hybrid poem. The tradition of the *descort* does indeed have a parodic and popular streak, yet we have already said that *Aï faus ris* is not properly a *descort*. The solution might be found in what Giunta writes in his commentary: even if this *canzone* is definitely literary, it shares many of the peculiarities of the musical genres of poetry, in which many plurilingual poems might be found. Thus the presence of multiple languages in a *canzone* which is not a *descort* cannot but assimilate *Aï faus ris* to this tradition. And the three languages are, indeed, its peculiarity and what makes this *canzone* unique.

Dante creates following three main patterns: 1. renovating a lively tradition; 2. inventing texts without any tradition; 3. creating a new object by merging different traditions.\(^{346}\)

\(^{344}\) This is particularly evident in the sonnets composed later, in Florence by authors such as Domenico da Prato and Burchiello, where Latin represented humanistic culture, and Tuscan vernacular culture. But in this same period for instance Coluccio Salutati wrote not parodic *semiliterati* sonnets (Duso, *Il sonetto latino*, XXIII-XXVIII, 21-24).

\(^{345}\) Duso lists other *semiliterati* sonnets that can be dated by the 1330s, and thus coeval of *Aï faus ris* (and also of Antonio da Tempo’s treatise): the anonymous *Mens opponentis excep magno dono*, which has arrived to us without the *sirma* and is preserved in a 1286 *memoriale bolognese* (Duso, *Il sonetto latino*, XVIII, 3); *Si come l’ape nel tempo da fiori*, by Giovanni Quirini, and thus earlier than 1333, when the author died (Ibid., XIX, 5-6); *Che fo casone, Amor, che ’l to servo* (whose subject is love) and *O tu che non temi cosa veruna* (which is moral-religious) by Niccolò de’ Rossi (Ibid., XX-XI, 11-12, 13); *Amar si vuole non pur con la lingua* by Antonio da Tempo (Ibid., XVI-XVII, 18-19). Giovanni Quirini uses a solemn language and his sonnet do not show any particular contrast between Latin and Italian, and instead Latin seems to be used to elevate the style, like in his completely Latin ones; while in Niccolò de’ Rossi there is some disparity in the use of the languages and there are also some dialect words in the Italian, even though his poems still do not seem ironic or parodic (Ibid., XIX-XX; cf. XXIX, where Duso proposes a classification of the different types of *semiliterati* sonnets, where the parodic ones are just one among the possibilities, not even the most numerous).

Aï faux ris can be placed in the third category. Brugnolo put Aï faux ris into the Romance and more generally Late Medieval context, and pointed out that Dante, in this canzone, merged two main traditions of writing in multiple languages: the ‘horizontal’ one, consisting in the writing in multiple vernaculars; and the ‘vertical’ one, consisting in the writing in vernacular and Latin, which in Italy is attested only by the semiliteratus sonnet. Antonio da Tempo, who writes his metrical Summa in 1332 in Verona, establishes the two categories, differentiating the semiliteratus sonnet from the sonetus bilinguis, that is, a sonnet in multiple vernaculars, concretely in Italian and French. Particularly, in Aï faux ris, where the semiliteratus and the bilinguis are fused together, Brugnolo sees the main opposition as the one between the vernaculars and Latin, since they are separated linguistic registers. Except for this canzone, in Italy there are no literary poems in French and Italian, but also more generally, in multiple vernaculars, except those written for their treatises by Antonio da Tempo and his later translator in vernacular, Gidino da Sommacampagna. Yet, it is a genre that is well-represented in the poesia per musica, musical poetry. Since there is no text in Italian and French that has not been written for music, Aï faux ris finds itself implicitly related to minor genres of poetry, tied with music. Hence, it not only merges two literary ways of mixing languages, but also includes music in the discourse.

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347 Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone,” 116. Brugnolo quotes the Ley d’Amors, where a distinction is made between the cobla partida, where multiple vernaculars are used, and the cobla meytadada, where there are Latin and vernacular. Aï faux ris would belong to a tradition of writing in Latin and vernacular, mostly diffused in northern France, but also in England and northern Italy, witnessed since the eleventh century, where the two languages are united from the semantic and the syntactic point of view, while rigidly occupying distinct groups of lines (Ibid., 119). The English tradition of the proverbia trifaria is, though, independent (Ibid., 122-24).

348 Antonio da Tempo, Summa, 34-38. Antonio, while discussing the sonetus bilinguis, adds that “soneti bilingues ... pussunt etiam misceri tres vel plures linguae seu idiomata plura simul in soneto, prout colligitur ex modis suprascriptis et infrascriptis penes recte intelligentes” (Ibid., 38).

349 Ibid., 118-19.

350 Ibid., 121. Antonio da Tempo, Summa, 37. For further discussion, see below.
Given its middle style, Galderisi suggested to relate it to the French genre of the *chansonette*, or the *canzonetta* of the Sicilian School. Except for slight rhetoric and metrical qualities, the *canzonetta* is still a *canzone*; yet it is a musical genre ideated for being performed. Beltrami points out that in thirteenth-century Italy the word *canzonetta* indicates everything that Dante left out from the *DVE*, that is minor forms, which are characterized by style, subject, possibly by being intended for music, and by the metrical scheme, where mostly septenaries and other short verses are used. Carapezza maintains that the *canzonetta* would be a subgenre in the sphere of the Sicilian School. Thus, the genre of the *canzonetta* would be comprised of the non-aulic *canzoni*, characterized by: stanzas with simple structure, almost always isometric; middle style; and “popular” themes. Also, the figures of sound are less employed. According to Carapezza, there are signals that the isometric *canzone* made of shorter verses than the hendecasyllable, that is, what has been identified with the *canzonetta*, would have been intended to be set to music. Indeed, manifold sources show that this genre of *canzone*, which Dante using the diminutive *cantilena* defines as *comice* (compared to the *tragica cantio*, which he has discussed), were used in musical performances. In particular, it is noteworthy that the occurrences of the word *canzonetta* demonstrate that it was not a distinct prosody form, but a

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351 Galderisi, “*Cianson pouvés*,” 45, 64.

352 The principal form of the *canzonetta* can be recognized in the *ballata*, while the different types are distinguished not so much for metrical reasons, but instead for melody, contents, linguistic form and regional origin (there are the *ciciliana*, the *viniziana*, the *napolitana*, the *calavrese*); another specific kind is the *barzelletta*, that is a *ballata grande* made of octosyllables (Beltrami, *La metrica*, 118-19; cf. 296-97).


354 *DVE* 2.8.8: “cum comice fiat hec coniugatio, cantilenam vocamus per diminutionem: de qua in quarto huius tractare intendimus” (Alighieri, *DVE*, ed. Fenzi, 204); “it is because, were the style of the stanzas comic, we would use the diminutive and call it a *canzonetta*, a form I intend to discuss in the fourth book of the present work.” (Alighieri, *DVE*, ed. Botterill, 73).
kind of canzone that tends to be an intermediate characterization for its style (monometry, short verses, relatively simple metrical scheme) and theme.355

In the poesia per musica, which, as Gallo points out, will flourish a few years later,356 the use of two vernacular languages, French and Italian, was paralleled by the use of different music notation systems, the Italian and the French one. The contrast of notation shares the same poetic of the contrast of languages. For instance, in the madrigale by Niccolò del Proposto La fiera testa, the refrain is in French, creating a sense of separation and contrast from the stanzas, that are in Italian and Latin.357 These poems date back to later in the fourteenth century and seem to originate in Northeastern Italy.358

So far, though, we have compared Ai fans ris mostly with poems in two languages, while the canzone is comprised of three. In fact, the tradition of poems in three languages is rather rich, but in Italy it spans from 1332 to the early Quattrocento, thus it is more recent than our canzone, which must have been written before Dante’s death in 1321.359 The tradition of three-language poems is comprised of the above mentioned madrigale by Niccolò del Proposto, describing the coat of arms of the Visconti family (which a manuscript attributes to

355 Ibid., 330-32.
356 Among the extant poesie per musica, many of them are in Italian and French. Their structure may significantly vary. Maestro Piero, Ogni diletto e ogni bel piacere (It./Fr.), ABA BAB cD cD: the languages alternate and do not rhyme with each other, Fr. with Fr., It. with It. Piero belongs to the earliest generation of trecento composers, flourishing 1340-1350. (Poesie musicali, 6-7). Niccolò del Proposto, La fiera testa che d’uman si ciba (It./Fr./Lat.), madrigale ABA CDC EE; lines 1, 3, 5 It.; 2, 4, 6 Lat.; 7-8 Fr. (Poesie musicali, 96-97; Musica e poesia, 289-306, see below). Saffir m’estuet et plus non puis durer (Fr./It.): ballata AbB; CD CD; DeB lines 1-3, 9-10 Fr.; 4-8 It. (Poesie musicali, 287); L’antico dio Biber fra sette stelle (It./Fr.): madrigale ABB B; ADD E; lines 1, 4, 5, 8 It.; 2-3, 6-7 Fr. (Poesie musicali, 363); Gallo points out that this poem duplicates a scheme where the lines in French are placed between two Italian lines: the Italian expresses the subject, the French the action, and the last line in Italian is a comment (Gallo, “Bilinguismo,” 239). Along with these, also a completely French madrigale composed in Italy must be mentioned: La douce cer e un fier animal, set to music by Bartolino (Poesie musicali, 237; Gallo, “Bilinguismo,” 237; Musica e poesia, 307-42).
357 Gallo, “Bilinguismo,” 239.
358 Ibid., 241.
359 Even not acknowledging its authenticity, it has certainly been written before 1325-1329, the dating of its earliest codex, MS BAV, Barb. Lat. 3953, see below.
Petrarch), the *ternari* by Matteo Corregiaio, the *terza rima* by Ghidino da Sommacampagna, a tenzone between Ghidino and Francesco di Vannozzo, and a sonnet by Simone Serdini. All the critics agree on the fact that *Ai faus ris* turns out to be the earliest systematic poem in three languages of Romance literature. Furthermore, even though in Italy there will be an analogous production, it certainly deserves a special position, which so far has not been recognized to it, probably because of its uncertain attribution to Dante, relegating it to the less known section of his corpus.

Eventually, we should focus on the significance of using French. Brugnolo connects the French-Italian sonnet to the *sonetus semiliteratus*, and claims that the former derives from the latter, a variation where Latin has been substituted with the most important vernacular of the time, French. Thus, in *Ai faus ris* French would have been chosen according to the conventions of the genre. Yet, this genre seems to be more musical than literary, since Brugnolo himself points out that there are no literary poems using these two languages in the Italian area. In any case, the choice of French does not seem fortuitous, but almost necessary, especially at the crossroads of literature and reality. Indeed, besides the cultural and the political spheres, French was also a language used for daily communication, and Dante must have been well aware of this circumstance. It is necessary to remember that the dimension of the *elocutio* was extremely important as regards French, a fact that makes this vernacular different from Provençal and also from classical Latin. Even though French as a written culture proposed models to follow through book circulation, France was also an hegemonic

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360 See Lannutti, “Polifonie verbali,” and below.
361 Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone,” 117-18, 125-26; Duso, *Il sonetto latino*, n. 24 XIV; to which I refer the reader for further bibliography.
world power, both political and economical, that was establishing itself in Europe by conquering the neighboring reigns and princedoms toward a national unity, resulting in a language and culture having an actual and practical role, especially in Italy and in a commercial city like Florence.\footnote{Cf. Elwert, “L’emploi des langues étrangères,” 425.}

Brunetto Latini as an intellectual perfectly embodies this overlapping of language and politics in the relationship with French culture: his production is symptomatically divided between Italian, French, and Latin, where the latter is both the language of his notary and public official appointments, and also the original language of the works he translated as a 
\textit{volgarizzatore}.\footnote{Inglese, “Latini, Brunetto;” cf. Cf. Bolton Holloway, \textit{Twice-Told Tales}. For further discussion, see below.} Dante’s criticism in the \textit{Convivio} toward those Italians who write in other vernaculars, despising their own,\footnote{1.11: “perpetuale infamia e depressione delli malvagi uomini d’Italia, che commendano lo volgare altrui e lo loro proprio dispregiano” (“To the perpetual disgrace and humiliation of those contemptible men of Italy who praise the vernacular of others and disparage their own” Alighieri, \textit{The Banquet}, trans. Lansing).} has always been interpreted as an outburst toward French, the vernacular par excellence, using which it was possible to reach a wider audience, just like Brunetto or Marco Polo and Rustichello did. It was indeed true that using French allows to enter a circuit of speakers and also readers, that might be termed universal, which could stand comparison with that of Latin, and that, in particular, was expanding in Italy also as a written language.\footnote{On French-language culture in Italy, see the classic Meyer, “De l’expansion de la langue française;” for the Italian area as a whole, and the competition between the vernaculars, see at least Picone, “The Formation of Literary Italian,” Cornish, \textit{Translatio Galliae}, Cornish, \textit{Vernacular Translation}, 70-9. Morlino, “Spunti per un riesame” gives an up-to-date overview of this crucial cultural phenomenon especially for the Venetian area.} French was, indeed, already reaching the status of a global language.\footnote{Cf. \textit{French Global}, and in particular the introduction by Christie McDonald and Susan Rubin Suleiman (Ibid, X-XXI).} Even though for Dante, as it is possible to chiefly infer from the \textit{DVE}, French as a model for lyric writing was not as strong as Provençal, it was a solid culture that, as it is well-known, was
diffused in Italy, where in the second half of the Duecento there was not yet a culture capable of putting up a firm resistance. The Occitan tradition still offered the principal lyric example which, following their predecessors, was still exploited by the lyric poets of Dante’s generation. However, on the other hand, in the second half of the Duecento, writing in Provençal would have been a belated choice, since after the Albigensian Crusade (1209-1229) Occitan was the banner of a declining culture, which was rapidly assimilating itself to that of northern France.369 A language, in sum, that suits the purging soul of Arnaut Daniel.

The *congedo* of *Aï faus ris* declaims that, speaking in three languages, the *canzone* may wing herself anywhere in this world. Besides this pretended reason, which –given the complexity of the *canzone*—may sound ironic, the *lingua trina*370 of *Aï faus ris* might also represent the confusion and despair of the lover also through the signifier. Both explanations of the choice of writing in a triune language turn out not to be satisfactory, and the manifold plans that this involves -the literary, the linguistic, the political- seem more intricate. Even though it is true that there is no metrical or syntactic contrast, so that *Aï faus ris* cannot be technically called a *descort*, the effect of contrast caused by the whirlwind of language rotation is undeniable. We can therefore conclude that merging languages and traditions is meaning, just as verbal virtuosity is meaning. The structural inventiveness is in itself meaning, and it might in itself pursue cultural objectives. Indeed, it does not really seem possible that the author of such an elaborate literary object might not have reflected on the implications of its creation. We are definitely not confronting the *poema sacro al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra*.371

370 Tavoni connects the adjective *trina* with the *ylioma triphario* Dante mentions in the *DVE* (1.1.9) in order to sustain his interpretation of the passage, that is that Dante is speaking of three different tongues constituting a triple language (Tavoni, “Contributo all’interpretazione,” 427-28).
371 “the sacred poem to which both Heaven and earth have set their hand” (*Par.* 25.1-2).
but still, since there cannot be any Romantic utopia of an immediate writing, its author, certainly not another Coleridge, must have pondered his three-language Kubla Khan, happily for us without being interrupted by a person from Porlock. The author clearly undertook a thoughtful conceptualization, and then production of the poem, in a process that would have caused an inevitable reflection on expressive means, their function and purpose. Even though the canzone is not elevated style, I argue that Ai fave ris, especially put in the perspective of the genres to which it is closer, might be considered even more experimental than the canzoni petrose. Undoubtedly, the result is not excellent in each and every part, still the idea at its core is brilliant. What could be the possible significance embedded in the choice of writing in a lingua trina has emerged multiple times so far, it is thus the moment to question its nature and try to ascertain its relationship with the explicit contents of the canzone, while the following paragraphs will be dedicated to the cultural implications of the choice of French and Latin, along with Italian.

2.1.3.1 The Lingua Trina, or a Nonexistent Language

Pluto’s outburst, just as Nembroth’s unintelligible words, have caused much discussion among the commentators of Dante’s Commedia. Many critics have intensely looked for a meaning hidden behind those words, which are indeed similar to existent terms in languages such as Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic. Yet, as Renzi and Dronke point out, the most productive way for interpreting these lines is to consider them a form of glossolalia (i.e., ‘speaking in tongues’), to be intended as a voluntary creation of nonexistent words.372 The invented languages of Pluto and Nembroth are untranslatable into any rational, human

language. Instead, as any glossolalic speech, they attempt to reach the deeper meaning of things by forcing language: these languages also convey the moral condition of the speaker, they represent the moral essence of the demons, whose irrationality and rage is conveyed through the phonetic syllables that compose words that are nonexistent in any human language. Thus, it is not true that those words do not signify anything; instead, their meaning resides in their phonic materiality and in the sensation provoked in Dante and consequently in the reader. Pluto is angered by Dante’s presence, and probably is speaking to Lucifer, voicing his disdain; while Nembroth, as Virgil says, speaks in a barbarian pseudo-Semitic and post-Babelic language, known only to the giant. The languages spoken by Pluto and Nembroth may be, thus, considered the ultimate form of Dante’s plurilingualism in the Commedia, where not only different registers coexist, but Tuscan is enriched by other vernaculars, Latin, and invented languages, too.

As for Aï faux ris, a striking difference exists between the canzone and the languages of Pluto and Nembroth, that is that the trilingual poem is written in three existing human languages, which provide a definite content. Yet, when considered as a whole, the lingua trina in which Aï faux ris is said to have been written, obtained through the regular alternation of French, Latin, and Italian, is indeed nonexistent, an invented language, although it is possible to assign a meaning to each of its sentences and words, and convey an intelligible meaning throughout.373

By drawing from the symbolic function of language and blurring the lines between signifier and signified, glossolalia reveals the tension intrinsic to languages that may be both unintelligible and universal. In the twentieth century, critics such as Todorov and Jakobson

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explored glossolalia as a way to go beyond the arbitrary meaning of language, as an extreme form of phonosymbolism. Dante’s canzone in three languages is only theoretically similar to a glossolalic phenomenon when considered as a whole, that is, as written in one composite triune language that does not exist. Yet, the explicit declaration of the poet in this sense, along with the systematic pattern of language switching, pushes the boundaries of language as a system of communication and makes Ai fàus ris comparable to glossolalia. Also, Jakobson points out that there are peculiar traits common to almost every glossolalic expression. In particular, an “irresistible perseverance on a” and a “penchant for unusual phonemes” in the original language of the speaker. The first verse of the trilingual canzone falls rather close to this description: in “Ai fàus ris, pour quoi trai aves” there is, indeed, a predominance of the vowel a, which appears in four syllables, and particularly in the first two; while the three words (out of seven) ending in s, a phonic configuration that does not exist in Italian, make this French line sound particularly exotic. So, even if this first verse is understandable French, it also sounds chanting and enchanting to an Italian ear, preparing the ground for the following language switching.

Barański emphasizes how Dante’s plurilingualism does not reveal itself only in the Commedia, but it is evident as early as the Vita Nuova, which is also a plurilingual text. Indeed, in the prosimetrum not only there are passages in Latin (such as some of the words uttered by the personification of Love) so that Latin and Tuscan are two languages that “constitute equal alternatives and are in essence interchangeable;” but there are also different registers and styles. Barański thus shows that pushing the limits of language and of the forms of expression is

typical of Dante from the inception of his career as a poet, attenuating the divide between his earlier works and the *Commedia*: “in order to arrive at the language of the *Commedia*, Dante had first to pass through the different yet related languages of the *Vita nova*.”

Creating new forms of languages, such as neologisms, has been recognized as an essential cognitive state for developing new theories. As Howard Gardner points out, at a certain point creative minds necessarily change the symbolic system in which they operate, they “stretch the symbol system in new ways, in ways that had not been explored before but that, when explored, made sense to themselves as, ultimately, to their contemporaries…[N]o longer do the conventional symbol systems suffice; the creator must begin, at first largely in isolation, to work out a new, more adequate form of symbolic expression, one equal to the problem or product in all of its complexity.” As for Dante, in Barański’s words, we can say that “Dante drew on the many and diverse registers and languages of his world – I use the English term ‘language’ here with the meaning of both Italian *lingua* and *linguaggio* – in order to create a new plurilingual synthesis which revealed the potential of the vernacular, or more precisely of the *lingua di sì*, and established his own standing as the supreme *auctor* and *auctoritas* of this new literary tradition.”

From this perspective *Aï faus ris*, a sort of glossolalic experiment pushing the limits of the division between vernaculars as well as between Latin and vernacular, appears as a critical step in Dante’s plurilingualism. Although it seems to have been discarded and appears not to have yielded any extraordinary fruit, it is still a remarkable example of Dante’s creativity. But

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377 Barański, “The Roots of Dante’s Plurilingualism,” 100.
the choice of three languages may also be a symbol for expressing some of the themes developed in the canzone. The body of the canzone, made of three languages may, indeed, hint to specific ideas purported in its words.

2.1.3.2 A Multiple Nature

We have already mentioned that, from the very first lines, the woman of Ai faus ris is represented as false, as the Greeks are false and full of pride. But there is a keyword, deserving a special attention: fraude (fraud, l. 3). Along with fons (false, l. 1) and ‘ngannator (deceiver, l. 6), it frames the central theme of the poem: the deceitfulness of the beloved woman. Fraud is of course a common concept, and the term frode is well documented in the writings of the time.379 Yet the representation of what is fraude that can be found in the Commedia may be particularly helpful for understanding the trilingual canzone. Indeed, in Inf. 17 Geryon appears in front of Dante, and at line 7 is referred to as “quella sozza imagine di froda” (“that filthy image of fraud”). Dante here illuminates how the beast fits the logic of the Commedia, the image of fraud is placed at the entrance of the circles where it is punished, and then he dedicates many lines to its description and to its behavior. Commentators agree in seeing the mythological monster-king in Hercules’s stories, and mentioned by Virgil in the Aenid, as the source for the name of the beast, while its body is derived mainly from biblical sources, such as the snake of the Genesis and the dragon of the Apocalypse.380 It is important to recall the triple nature Geryon has in classical literature: both Virgil and Ovid emphasize it, respectively writing “orma tricorporis umbrac” (“the form of the three-bodied shade” Aen. 6.289) and “tergemini...Geryonae” (“triple Geryon” Aen. 8.202), “in tribus unus erat” (“he was one in three” Heroides

379 See TLIO ad vocem.
Dante’s beast inherits this peculiarity, but instead of having three bodies, as the king of the Iberian islands of classical literature, it has a tripartite body: the face of a man, the body of a dragon, and the tail of a scorpion. This three-in-one nature of fraud may be connected to the trilingual canzone, whose central theme is indeed fraud. Just as Geryon first appears to be a man, and then unexpectedly changes nature, the canzone begins in French, but then the languages swap places, modifying the nature of the poem, and representing through the signifier the very nature of the woman’s false smile. Fraud is a colored monster, a hybrid beast made of different animals, and the canzone representing the lover’s fraud is a hybrid poem made up of different languages. Furthermore, Inf. 17 begins with Virgil words, where of the beast is said that it “passa i monti e rompe i muri e l’armi!” (“passes through mountains and pierces walls and armor!” l. 2): beginning with Pietro Alighieri, these walls are interpreted as the walls of Troy, which the Greek Sinon made possible to pass by convincing the Trojans to accept the wooden horse. Thus, in the Commedia the embodiment of falseness and fraud is connected to the Greeks, as in Ai fusi ris they are recalled as premier examples of it.

There is another poem in three languages, where there is a mythological beast, made of different parts, representing falseness and deception: the madrigal La fiera testa che d’uman si ciba by Niccolò del Preposto, which describes the Visconti’s coat of arms, represented by a snake with golden wings, and possibly with the color of a leopard, whose belly is covered by a white cloth. The poem is surely more recent than Ai fusi ris, yet it is significant that the two poems share similar thematical connections. While in the trilingual canzone there is no beast,
Lannutti has emphasized that the madrigal seems to be connected to *Ai faus ris*, both for the choice of writing in Italian, Latin, and French, and also for the theme of deceitfulness; while it also shows clear references to the *Commedia*: not only to Geryon, but mostly to the representation of the Siren, another emblematically deceitful monster with a dual nature (*Purg. 19*).  

The madrigal, pointing to both Dantean texts, makes explicit the connection between the theme of fraud and the use of multiple languages we have emphasized. Although in *Ai faus ris* we are left only with an abstract representation of fraud in three languages, I argue that the idea of the hybrid nature of anything involved with fraud, just like the Sirens and Geryon, must be implied in the choice of writing a hybrid poem about falseness, a poem whose own voice is made of three different tongues. Considering that the author of the *La fiera testa* might not be Niccolò, but instead none other than Petrarch, we might take the madrigal’s suggestion of a connection between the use of three languages and the representation of fraud even more seriously.  

**2.2 Dante, France and the French**

*Ai faus ris* is made of three languages that interchange in a complex but rigorous scheme, in which each one in turn occupies all the possible places; but it begins with a verse in French, the language also opening the *envoi*, where the poem is named *chanson*. Thus, even though its scheme is circular, its main language seems to be French, and this is not unproblematic. Some critics argue that its main language would be Italian because in every stanza the prevailing

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384 Lannutti has reconsidered this attribution, and deemed it as trustworthy. Also, Petrarch knew *Ai faus ris*. Ibid., and see below.
385 Cf. Galderisi, “Cianson pouvés,” 64.
language would be the one occupying the rhyming couplet, and in the first stanza this is Italian.\textsuperscript{386} Yet, since poems were indicated through their first verse also in the Middle Ages, as Dante himself shows in the \textit{DVE}, where the reader is supposed to recall the whole poem through its first line,\textsuperscript{387} or the indices introducing many medieval codices, in \textit{Aï faus ris} French looks like the privileged language, even though it occupies a verse less than the other two languages (14 vs. 15). In any case, its mere presence, as Mengaldo wrote as early as in the \textit{Enciclopedia Dantesca}, should say something on Dante’s attitude toward France and the French people. The attribution to Dante of the \textit{Fiore}, a versification of the French \textit{Roman de la rose}, would necessarily change our perspective of the matter; but also the sure attribution of \textit{Aï faus ris} gives interesting insights.\textsuperscript{388} The poem indeed shows a necessary connection with \textit{oil} lyric poetry, a relationship that looks even tighter considering French as its main language. However, besides the editors’ bias, a Dante writing in French is a predictable matter of debate: it is undeniable that he is always pretty hostile, even disdainful, toward French matters. In Dante’s oeuvre there are almost no esteeming remarks concerning the French, to be intended

\textsuperscript{386} Brugnolo, while pointing out the balance among the three languages, which do not oppose each other but harmoniously alternate, also notices that “per ogni stanza vi è una lingua per così dire dominante, quella che, affidata al distico finale a rima baciata, la chiude;” and, in this respect, the first one is indeed Italian (Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone,” 112. Cf. Breschi, “Aï faus ris,” 321; Mengaldo, “\textit{Oïl},” 131). As Brugnolo himself observes, in the other Italian poems in three languages, where languages occupy a fixed place, the first verse is in Italian (Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone,” 117-18, 125-26).

\textsuperscript{387} When Dante uses the poems not to talk about literature, but as examples, he does not necessarily quote the \textit{incipit}. For instance, of Cielo d’Alcamo’s contrast, \textit{Rosa fresca aulentissima}, the third verse is quoted as an example of Sicilian vernacular (1.12.6, Alighieri, \textit{DVE}, ed. Fenzi, 89, 431). Nevertheless, there is an easy explanation for the difference between the two ways of citation: while in this last case Dante is interested in the specific passage as a dialect example, the first verse serves to evoke the whole poem, which has to be considered in its entirety.

\textsuperscript{388} Mengaldo, “\textit{Oïl},” 131.
both as a cultural and political entity. Since a French-writing Dante is all but a given, it might be useful to retrace what is known about his opinions on France and the French.

Even though it might seem the farthest point from our literary subject, we shall begin with the *Monarchia*, where the French appear with a mainly political role. In truth, in the treatise there is no explicit reference to France or the French people, but there would be some implicit mentions: many scholars recognize the French as the *reges et principes* who oppose the Empire (*Mon.* 2.1.3), as the *zelatores fidei* in *Mon.* 2.10.1-3, and as the sons of the devil in *Mon.* 3.3.8 and 17. As Chiesa and Tabarroni emphasize, the *Monarchia* distinguishes itself by not being a contingent work, and thus, by an allusive and sometimes obscure language, aimed at giving the impression of an absolute message. This peculiarity makes it difficult to decipher polemical remarks and references to current events. Should the French be those to whom Dante

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389 An overview of the question can be found in Saffiotti Bernardi, “Francia;” Burgwinkle, “Dante and French literature.”

390 Another much debated issue is the possibility of Dante’s journey to Paris, which should have happened between 1308-1309 and 1310, as it is stated by the early biographers, among which Boccaccio stands out. The trip is also reported in Giovanni Villani’s *Nuova Cronica*, whose information is particularly important because, as his nephew writes, Giovanni was a friend of Dante (cf. Alighieri, *Ep.-Egloga-Questio*, 660-62). Many scholars, such as Indizio, Gargan, and Carpi, hold this to be true, while others think it is rather possible (Petrocchi), or not (Santagata). Fioravanti points out that Dante is well acquainted with French philosophy (cf. Burgwinkle, “Dante and French literature,” 25), he is up-to-date with its new trends, and with the Parisian places and the Sorbonne, as it is shown for instance by his representation of Siger of Brabant, along with the mention of the *vico degli strami* (*Par.* 10.137). Yet Fioravanti writes that Dante, as a married 40-year-old man, would not have fit the student body, which was mainly composed of young boys and clerics (Alighieri, *Opere* II, 18). Besides the main philosophic debates and currents that can be found in the *Commedia* and the *Convivio*, also the writing of the *Quaestio de aqua et terra* would have needed a knowledge of the kind of scholarship belonging to the Sorbonne. The question remains, thus, unsolved.

391 Tabarroni and Chiesa in their edition judge as strongly probable Fenzi’s claim that the French dynasty and its politics are to be seen behind these three allusions to factions (Fenzi, “Tra religione e politica,” 102-10). Palma di Cesnola specifically proposes Robert of Anjou as the target of Dante’s insinuations (Palma di Cesnola, “*Monarchia,*” 53-58). I refer the reader to the above-mentioned edition for the discussion of the different critical positions and all the competing possibilities. Quaglioni (Alighieri, *Opere* II, ad l) instead proposes a more traditional interpretation of the passages, and in particular for *Mon.* 2.10.1-3 identifies the *zelatores fidei* with the radical Guelphs, rivals of the Empire, who could indeed be the same faction alluded in 3.3.8 and 17 that already Nardi identified with Clement V and Philip the Fair. While writing about the dating of the treatise though, Quaglioni, relying on previous bibliography, underlines the particular aversion of Philip the Fair and Robert of Anjou to Henry VII’s descent into Italy, supporting the hypothesis that Dante’s reflection might be connected to Philip the Fair’s response to the 1312 imperial encyclical (Alighieri, *Opere* II, 849-50).

392 Alighieri, *Monarchia*, eds. Chiesa-Tabarroni, LXIV. Also, this makes it very difficult to date the treatise.
alludes in the above mentioned passages, their characterization is definitely not flattering: the Most Christian Kings of France are rapacious, they pauperize the Church, and oppose the idea of a universal empire, that, in Dante’s ideology, equates refusing the broader idea of a universal society, which does not envisage particularism among its values.\footnote{Fenzi relates the allusions in the Monarchia to Hugh Capet’s invective in Purgatorio (Fenzi “Tra religione e politica,” 98, 102 et seq.).}

This representation of the French monarchy dovetails with what we read in the Commedia, where, in a sort of synecdoche, the French mostly appear through their kings. In Purgatory, in the terrace of avarice, Dante meets Hugh Capet, the progenitor of the dynasty, who speaks harsh words about his own lineage, “la mala pianta|che la terra cristiana tutta aduggia” (“the evil plant that overshadows all the Christian lands,” Purg. 20.40-96: 43-44).\footnote{Fenzi argues that the ultimate target of Hugh’s invective would be Saint Louis IX (Ibid., 85-6 and passim). While Cappi does not agree with this point, he does put in relief that Pietro Alighieri’s commentary depicts the Saint King under a bad light (Cappi, “L’interesse per la storia”).} Both the French kings and the Anjou line are blamed for countless misdeeds: Hugh mentions several specific actions of his own offspring, and in particular, stigmatizes in a prophecy the outrage of Anagni (Purg. 20.85-90). Dante accuses the same Philip the Fair, who has to be seen behind the giant of the Earthly Paradise (Purg. 32), of also having deceitfully devalued the Parisian currency (Par. 19.118-20), while in the Valley of the Princes Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX, keeps Philip III company (Purg. 7.64-136).\footnote{A complete list of the references to the French kings can be found in Saffiotti Bernardi, “Francia;” cf. Burgwinkle, “Dante and French Literature,” 23 n. 7.} In the Commedia only Charles Martel of Anjou is positively portrayed. In fact, he not only appears in a positive light, but he is depicted almost as a friend, with whom Dante seems to have had a relationship of mutual intellectual esteem (Par. 8.55-57: “Assai m’amasti, e avesti ben onde;|che s’io fossi giù stato,
io ti mostrava | di mio amor più oltre che le fronde”). 396 Dante is indeed supposed to have met Charles Martel in 1294 in Florence, where he might have been presented to the prince as one of the city intellectuals. 397 It is likewise significant that Charles Martel quotes the *incipit* of Dante’s *canzone* *Voi che ’ntendendo* (*Par.* 8.37). Leaving out the implications of Dante’s auto-citation, which have already been extensively explored by eminent scholars, 398 it is crucial that Charles is a king who explicitly demonstrates an interest in literature, in one of its most noble forms, the *canzone*. Nonetheless, even beyond the references to the reigning family, the representation of France does not differ from what is said about its kings: the vanity of the French is second only to that of the Sienese (*Inf.* 29.123); Buoso da Duera cries his own treason, caused by the money of the French (*Inf.* 32.115), because of which Florentine wives are left alone in their beds (*Par.* 15.119-20). Already in the *Convivio* Dante is consistent with what he will write in the *Commedia*, and when recalling the episode of the attack of the Capitoline Hill by the Gauls, he calls them *franceschi*, French (4.5.18). This is probably an anachronism done on purpose, so that this episode might figure as the first in the series of the robberies through which France has consolidated its power. 399 The French kings, therefore, embody robbery and betrayal, the dissolution of the contemporary world deplored by Dante, whose moral condemnation also encompasses the Florentine economy, which was tightly bound with French markets.

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396 “You loved me well, and you surely had cause, | for if I had stayed down there I would have | shown you more than the foliage of my love.”
397 Walter, “Carlo Martello.” Charles died, probably from the plague, shortly after, in August, 1295, when he was only 24.
398 On the many readings of the canto, a particular focus on the function on the *canzone* can be found in Barolini, *Dante’s Poets*, 57-84; cf. Picone, “*Paradiso* VIII.”
399 “Non puose Iddio le mani propie, quando li Franceschi, tutta Roma presa, prendeano di furto Campidoglio di notte, e solamente una voce d’una oca fé ciò sentire?” Cf. Saffiotti Bernardi, “Francia.”
Dante’s judgments on French literature and culture do not conflict with what we have seen so far. Yet, his opinions specifically concerning the langue d’oïl are not so harsh, and in a certain way even mismatched with his political pronouncements. At the turn of the Trecento, French was not only a literary language, widely used also in Italy, but it was also the lingua franca of European markets. At the same time, the French kingdom was expanding, as was its economy. Mengaldo and Barański emphasize Dante’s unease toward French culture. Both scholars highlight his competitive and militant attitude toward French vernacular and French culture in general, especially in order to promote an Italian illustrious vernacular.⁴⁰⁰ Mengaldo, conflating the cultural and the political view, goes even farther, and argues that Dante harbored a dislike for French language and culture. An aversion that should be well symbolized by Francesca’s readings, that romance of Lancelot representing the most diffused form in which French literature circulated in Italy.⁴⁰¹ Even her name, as Luca Carlo Rossi argues, recalls French culture: hers is a symbolic ‘talking name’ and equates ‘the French’ who, indeed, reads a French novel, since nomina sunt consequentia rerum.⁴⁰²

The DVE is where Dante explicitly confronts himself with the French language and its culture. There, of French, is said that “because of the greater facility and pleasing quality of its vernacular style, everything that is recounted or invented in vernacular prose belongs to it” (1.10.2):

Allegat ergo pro se lingua oïl quod propter sui facieliorem ac delectabilorem vulgaritatem quicquid redactum est sive inventum ad vulgare prosaycum, suum est: videlicet Biblia cum

⁴⁰⁰ Barański writes of the “unease that Dante felt throughout his life about the implications of the widespread presence of French culture in Italy, as well as the effort he exerted in fashioning new, specifically Italian genres” (Barański, “The Ethics of Literature,” 217). Cf. Mengaldo, “Oïl.”
⁴⁰¹ Ibid.
⁴⁰² Rossi, “Il nome,” 39. Rossi argues that we cannot be completely sure whether Francesca really existed or not; even if she was actually called Francesca, Dante would have exploited her name for developing his discourse on the responsibilities of literature and its authors.
Troianorum Romanorumque gestibus compilata et Arturi regis ambages pulcerrime et quamplures alie ystorie ac doctrine.\textsuperscript{403}

The “facility” of French was a shared opinion, that –as all the commentators underline– reproduces for instance what Brunetto Latini says in his \textit{Tresor}.\textsuperscript{404} It was frequently extended to lyric poetry too: to this vernacular was usually ascribed popular and musical poetry, exactly what we have recalled for \textit{Aï faus ris}.\textsuperscript{405} But also the \textit{trouvères} writing in a more elevated style do not typically indulge in hermeticism or in the use of rare and inscrutable words, nothing alike the Occitan \textit{trobar clus}: they tend to prefer an \textit{ornatus facilis}, a more natural kind of writing that balances the light and the grave tones.\textsuperscript{406} Dante then lists the genres related to French vernacular: Bible compilations with Trojan and Roman stories, the Arthurian cycle, contemporary chronicles and treatises. Scholars widely debate which genres Dante is specifically referring to, and in particular, they notice that he seems to exclude the great tradition of the \textit{romans en vers}, which comprehended for instance the \textit{Roman de la rose}. Yet this list seems to be encompassing those genres in which, from his perspective, the \textit{oïl} language is most widely used, and for which it is most appreciated.\textsuperscript{407} Mengaldo sees in this passage an implicitly limitative judgment on the French culture, while the more recent commentators,

\textsuperscript{403} Alighieri, \textit{DVE}, ed. Fenzi, 68-70. Alighieri, \textit{DVE}, ed. Botterill, 23: “Thus the language of \textit{oïl} adduces on its own behalf the fact that, because of the greater facility and pleasing quality of its vernacular style, everything that is recounted or invented in vernacular prose belongs to it: such as compilations from the Bible and the histories of Troy and Rome, and the beautiful tales of King Arthur, and many other works of history and doctrine.”

\textsuperscript{404} Brunetto defines French as “la parleure est plus delitable” (\textit{Tresor} 1.1.7).

\textsuperscript{405} Formisano mentions what is said in the Provençal \textit{Razos de Trobar} as an example (Alighieri, \textit{DVE}, ed. Fenzi, 331).

\textsuperscript{406} Dragonetti, \textit{La technique poetique}, 31-32, 59-61.

\textsuperscript{407} Each one of the terms used by Dante seem to be referring to a single and particular genre of writing in prose; multiple hypothesis have been proposed for the specific meaning of \textit{ystorie ac doctrine}, that is to what kind of histories and treatises Dante is thinking. A clear explanation of this passage, with discussion of previous studies, in Alighieri, \textit{Opere I}, 1234-36; Alighieri, \textit{DVE} ed. Fenzi, 68-70. Fenzi emphasizes that Dante seems to be conscious of the preeminent role that prose is gaining in French culture at that time, and he might also be polemical toward this new trend (Ibid., 70).
Fenzi and Tavoni, tend to consider it as not polemic. Fenzi in particular unties this description of French literature from what Dante writes in the *Convivio*, where in fact the militant tone toward those who do not write in their language, that is to say toward the hegemony of French culture in Italy, is undeniable. All things considered, Dante’s judgment here appears on the contrary rather neutral, and needs to be pondered with the citations of the works in *oïl* language, which, since the *DVE* concerns only lyric language, refer to poetic forms. Considered in its entirety, the *DVE* is unquestionably marked by a competitive tone toward other vernaculars, and the idea that the *vulgare illustre* can be found only in the lyric form is indeed at odds with the peculiarity of French being the works in prose. Dante is, however, habitually rather explicit in his polemics and, even though in the treatise prose is in general considered inferior than writing in verses, it is undeniable that those ascribed to French include key genres in medieval culture at the turn of the fourteenth century, such as the *ystorie ac doctrine*.

As it is well-known, Dante cites only two French poems, high quality products in *langue d’oïl*, attributed to only one poet, the King of Navarre, Thibaut de Champagne: *Ire d’amor que en mon cor repaire* [*Ire d’amors qui en mon cuer rapaire*], in *DVE* 2.6.6; *De fin amor si vient sen et bonté* [*De bone amor vient seance et bonté*], a *chanson* in reality by Gace Brulé, in *DVE* 1.9.3 and 2.5.4. Dante uses the *oïl* poems as examples of the affinity among the Romance languages, of the superior position held by the hendecasyllable, and as illustration of excellent poetic.

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409 The never written third and fourth chapters of the *DVE* might have also included a dissertation on prose: probably the third book should have been dedicated to prose in elevated style, while the fourth should have been dedicated to the poems in lower style, sonnets and ballads (Alighieri, *DVE*, ed. Fenzi, xx, 136-38; ed. Rajna, 214; Alighieri, *Opere I*, 1364-68). In the end, the *DVE* was never finished, because Dante dedicated himself to his masterpiece, the *Commedia*, a narrative poem in verses, in an implicit yet clear position toward the use of prose and of vernacular.

construction. Mengaldo, consistent in his interpretation, claims that Dante’s knowledge of poetry in *langue d’oïl* must have been limited, and that quoting only two poems by one poet must be related to his scarce knowledge of the topic.\(^\text{411}\) Yet Formisano underlines that mentioning these two refined poems is all but a choice determined only by chance. On the contrary, it suggests that Dante’s knowledge of French lyric poetry was not occasional, and that he had seen and used at least a *chansonnier*, a structured book where these poems where preserved in a series. Thus, Dante would have been perfectly aware that an *oïl* lyric tradition was well-established and rather fertile, going beyond the idea that French was a language only suitable for works in prose.

The attribution of Gace Brulé’s poem to Thibaut de Champagne, which does not happen in extant manuscripts, suggests that Dante knew one of those *chansonniers*, most probably ordered by author, where the King of Navarre precedes Gace, whose poems (or at least the one Dante cites) would have probably been anonymous, hence the incorrect attribution.\(^\text{412}\) This fact limits the possibilities of what book Dante could have seen, since only a rather small group of *chansonniers* have this configuration: K, N, X, and V (which does not have rubrics), to which we can add the progenitor of O (which is instead ordered alphabetically).\(^\text{413}\) These codices all come from France, but Dante probably saw and used a

\(^{411}\) Alighieri, *DVE*, ed. Mengaldo, 73.

\(^{412}\) As far as we can infer from extant codices, there is no proved confusion between these two poets. It is most probable that Gace’s poem circulated anonymously, following a series of poems by the King of Navarre. Palumbo reconsidered an hypothesis formulated by Rajna: the wrong attribution of *Ire d’amor* might derive from an accidental omission in the *DVE* codices of a verse by Thibaut and of Gace’s name before the *chanson* that is attributed to Thibaut. In this way, Dante would have quoted two French poets along with the many Italian and Occitan writers (Palumbo, “Tebaldo”). Yet Rajna himself did not really believe in this hypothesis, which is not economical enough, and thus in the end he discarded it, preferring the simpler and more common error of attribution, which can be generated in multiple ways (Alighieri, *DVE*, ed. Rajna, 151).

book rather similar to them: these are luxury manuscripts, sumptuously decorated, where the poems are usually accompanied by musical notation. If Dante read oil lyric poetry in artifacts of this kind, he certainly had the idea of a tradition which circulated and was also produced in the highest social classes. Their composition criteria are not completely alien from the books containing early Italian lyric, the canzoniere P, BNCF Banco Rari 217, is typologically comparable, and the same could be said for many of the Provençal songbooks circulating in Italy. Yet the French chansonniers could not give Dante any other impression than that of an opulent and noble literary tradition.414

The bias against a productive frequentation of French literature by Dante and his alleged scarce knowledge of French lyric tradition have influenced the editors of the DVE not only in matters of interpretation, but also in the construction of the text. The position of the three incipit of the oil poems is a revealing question, therefore, that involves more than bare textual criticism. In his edition of the DVE, Mengaldo, following what had already been done by Rajna, in the list of the illustrious canzoni of 2.6.6 moves the incipit of Ire d’amor que en mon cor repaire from the second place it has in the manuscripts, where it breaks the series of Provençal poems, to the end of this first series; in this way it occupies a middle position, between the Occitan and the Italian poems. This change of position is needed because this citation would be out of place: according to the editors, it should most probably be a marginal annotation that incorrectly entered into the text. Fenzi, discussing this passage along with the other lists of poems of the DVE where there are oil lyrics, points out that Thibaut de Champagne and Girault de Bornelh are a consistent pair, which appears multiple times.415

414 On the MSS containing Thibaut’s poetry see Baumgartner, “Présentation des chansons.”
415 Alighieri, DVE, ed. Fenzi, CXVI.
Hence, he concludes, it is not possible to take as a given that the position they have in the manuscripts derives from the wrong interpretation of marginal notes, while the unnecessary and thus belittling repositioning of the French *incipit*, after the Provençal poems, seems to correspond to our modern lyric canon, which may not necessarily coincide with Dante’s ideas.\textsuperscript{416}

We have already seen that Dante, when writing the French verses of *Aï fous ris*, shows familiarity with the lyric tradition in *langue d’oil*, among whose authors Thibaut de Champagne is the preeminent. All *DVE*’s commentators underline the ideological affinity of the two French poems Dante cites with Guido Guinizzelli’s *Al cor gentil*, and thus with Dante’s own poetics. However, quoting Thibaut de Champagne, *Rex Navarre*, in the *DVE* appears rather appropriate on many levels. He is not only the most recognized French poet of his epoch, but he is also a key figure in the political scenario, in which he occupies a peculiar place, especially in the perspective of Dante as a theorist of the vernacular. We shall thus focus on him.

### 2.2.1 The Worthy Thibaut

Theobald IV Count of Champagne and Brie (1201-1253), and I King of Navarre from 1234, was famous as a *trouvère*, as he was politically influential. His poems are mostly love *chansons* but also cover many other genres. The *chansonniers* dating back to the end of the thirteenth century are usually opened by his works.\textsuperscript{417} The placement at the beginning of these medieval anthologies is not neutral but a place of honor reserved to the most famous and revered authors, which is probably also due to his superior social class: in these books, from which

\textsuperscript{416} Ibid., CVII.

\textsuperscript{417} On Thibaut see at least *Thibaut de Champagne*, and the introduction to *The Lyrics of Thibaut de Champagne*. 

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Dante translates *rex Navarre*, he is indeed designated as *li roi (Thibaut) de Navarre.*

Dante quotes one poet, who is considered the most important in his own world, but there are two other relevant points that make Thibaut the perfect representative of the *langue d’oil*, on which it is interesting to reflect. First, Thibaut is a king-poet, in a strong link between a reign and its language, that is one of the main themes of the *DVE*. Also, as the King of Navarre, technically he does not come from France.

The Kingdom of Navarre does not belong to the Kingdom of France, understood as the northern reign ruled by the Capetians. This can be illustrated with what Dante himself writes about the borders of France in the *DVE*, and also with Brunetto Latini’s *Tresor*. In *DVE* 1.8.6 Dante states that the territory of the *langue d’oil* is the part to the north of Provence, delimited to the east by the Germans, and enclosed to the north and the west by the English sea (which encompasses the Gulf of Gascony) and the mountains of Aragon, which must be identified with the occidental Pyrenees. Mengaldo highlights that including Gascony might be problematic, since its language was not French – but it was not Provençal either. Nevertheless, Fenzi is the only commentator who relates Dante’s geographic description to the declared place of origin of the most important *trouvère* the Kingdom of Navarre, which is in northern Spain. Navarre comprises the occidental Pyrenees and borders Gascony. Thus, he concludes that Dante might have supposed that French language stretched up to those regions. On the other hand, Brunetto generally talks about Gaul, in which he distinguishes Burgundy, Gascony and actual France, correctly excluding Navarre. As all the *DVE* commentators point out,

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418 Luciano Formisano, “Le rime provenzali e francesi. II. I trovieri,” in Alighieri, *DVÉ*, ed. Fenzi, 334-35. For instance, the rubrics of the manuscripts of the family which Dante might have known, where Thibaut’s poem are put at the beginning, are: MS K “li rois de nauarre,” N “Ces sont les chansons que li Rois thiebaut de Nauarre fist,” X “Ci commencent les chansons \ li Roy thiebaut de Nauarre.” See below.  
Dante might not have had an extremely precise geographical knowledge, and furthermore, as Fenzi writes, he might not have known the King of Navarre’s actual homeland, Champagne. Even though it is not possible to ascertain exactly what Dante knew on this topic, I would argue that the choice of a poet who is defined as not French, but from another formally independent kingdom, beyond his actual origins and the language spoken in Navarre, is not accidental. It is indeed rather appropriate, according to Dante’s political, cultural, and linguistic theories. It dovetails not only with the representation of the French we have recapitulated, but in particular with the core idea that a political and cultural unity is necessary to sustain a civilization, which vividly expresses itself in the definition of the vernacular as *aulicum* and *curiale.* In this way, French lyric poetry is not bound to the rapacious French kingdom, nor is the banner of the corrupt Capetian dynasty, but is represented through another family and another kingdom.

In the *Commedia* the house of the Counts of Champagne is positively portrayed (Inf. 22.52), while Navarre is depicted as one of the victims of French greed (Par. 19.143-44). The dynasty of Champagne, and particularly both Thibaut IV (I of Navarre) the *trouvère* and his son, Thibaut V (II of Navarre), in reality belonged to the French cultural and political system, and they were also relatives of the reigning house. Thibaut IV grew up in the French court and, although there were numerous conflicts and their relationship was difficult, he was one

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422 The “worthy Thibaut” (“il buon re Tebaldo”) is usually identified with Dante’s contemporary Thibaut II of Navarre, son of Thibaut I and son-in-law of Louis IX. But this is not incontrovertible, due to the uncertain identification of the Navarrese (Palumbo, “Tebaldo II”; cf. Alighieri, *Commedia*, ed. Chiavacci Leonardi, vol. 1 662-63; Alighieri, *Inferno*, 353). Picone suggests to identify the Navarrese not with Ciampolo (as maintained from the early commentators on), but with the French poet Rutebeuf, who belonged to the court of Thibaut II. This hypothesis would add significant nuances about Dante’s knowledge of French culture (Picone, “La carriera del libertino”).
of the closest nobles to Louis IX. It should also be recalled that Thibaut was accused of being the lover of Louis’s mother, Blanche of Castile; whilst Thibaut V was Louis IX’s son-in-law, and he died while travelling to bring the Saint’s bones back to France. Dante’s historical knowledge is usually rather accurate and, since this is contemporary history, it would be peculiar that he did not have any idea that Thibaut I and II of Navarre were the Counts of Champagne. In the DVE calling Thibaut just king of Navarre might have been suggested by the rubrics of the codices Dante probably had seen. Yet, connecting the only poet in langue d’oil to a frontier area, which was a sovereign kingdom since the ninth century and still formally independent from France until 1314, and calling him just rex Navarre seem too right and appropriate not to be suspect. It would be strange if Dante did not know that Thibaut I was also IV Count of Champagne, since there were precisely in Champagne some of the premier trade fairs regularly attended by Florentine merchants. For instance, Brunetto Latini in 1264 registered a society of Florentine merchants in Bar-sur-Aube, where one of the Champagne fairs was held. Consequently only quoting the King of Navarre looks like a way for dividing the political from the cultural sphere, thus saving a French lyric tradition that is implicitly separated from the Capetian kingdom.

In the DVE French is represented by a king, and thus it is implicitly portrayed as a vulgare aulico and curiale, whose supreme expression are the lyrics written by that same king-trouvère. It is not possible to draw a simple and linear parallel between Thibaut I and Frederick II, if nothing else because the latter is the rightful Emperor, while the former is the ruler of a

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424 Le Goff, San Luigi, 171, 241 and passim.
kingdom that, according to Dante’s universalistic theories, should be subject of the Empire itself. Yet the idea of a language that is used at its best in a court fits the political theories that Dante expresses in the treatise.

In conclusion, in the DVE French does not seem to be either neglected or marginalized, as it might seem at first glance. It is true that it is not as prominent as Provençal and of course Italian are. Nevertheless, the three citations and the careful choice of the leading poet make French play a minor but positive role. For what interests us here, the DVE shows that Dante was familiar with poetry in langue d’oil and that his opinion in the 1300s was not extremely harsh, which makes the idea of him writing in French not particularly anomalous. His attempt to write in French could also suggest that he aimed at challenging and even surpassing its authority. Clearly, having precisely Thibaut (the King-poet who is placed at the beginning of the chansonniers) as the person he cites suggests that Dante may be interested in displacing his authority. But Dante has not written an elevated style chanson in French, and – just as I am dedicated to acknowledge the qualities of Ai faus ris—at the same time it does not seem possible to attribute to this canzone the same theoretical weight of the DVE or of the canzoni distese. Unquestionably Dante wants to show what is possible to do in Italian, Latin, and French, through a peculiar scheme. Yet, the poem does not reach the same ideological level of those elevated style poems quoted in the DVE. Dante challenges the poetic tradition in Italian, but also in French and Occitan, with his own canzoni in Italian, which are implicitly but significantly mentioned as the best examples of writing in the most illustrious vernacular, that is Italian. The relationship among Romance vernaculars and their ranking might be clarified when compared to the construction of the canzone in three languages, to which it is now time to go back.
2.2.2 Si saccia per lo mondo...

In *Ai faus ris* there is no hierarchy among the three languages, as in many plurilingual poems, such as the *Carmina Burana*, and in this *canzone* Italian is placed at the same level of French and Latin. While Brugnolo pointed out the lack of contrasts among the languages, Galderisi has emphasized the true constitution of a *lingua trina* where the code switching from one language to the other is almost erased in a fluid continuity. *Ai faus ris* is just a *cantilena*; it cannot be considered a cultural manifesto. Yet, a *canzone* in which Italian is on equal terms with Latin and French looks like an embryonic way of promoting the *volgare di sì*. As we have seen, French was almost necessary in a multilingual context, but it was also the language of commerce, a *de facto* European language, and also a global language. Latin was the language of the classics, whose appropriation through their translation in the vernacular, the *volgarizzamento*, was a major issue in the cultural agenda, especially in Florence. At the same time it was also a language currently used, as for instance by notaries in their work, and a spoken language, as in University practice. Thus, using Tuscan along with Latin and French puts the arising vernacular in a close connection with the two most important languages of the time, from both the strictly literary and the social point of view. Italian vernacular in this way is proved

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428 The *volgarizzamenti* diffused classical culture among those who could read but did not know Latin, the *illetterati*. Translation was also seen as demonstration of cultural empowerment, and the vernacular was not only the language of the uneducated or of the illiterates, especially in Florence at the turn of the fourteenth century. The Italian vernacular, and in particular Tuscan, at the end of the thirteenth century was still a language with a limited cultural authority; yet as Dante chiefly demonstrates in his multifaceted oeuvre, the vernacular was quickly becoming authoritative. As the *volgarizzamenti* of rhetorical works demonstrate, Brunetto and his contemporaries were eager to give vernacular writers the tools for composing in elevated style, while reading the works of the ancients was perceived as a way to re-conquer their own culture. On the phenomenon of the *volgarizzamenti*, see Porta, “Volgarizzamenti dal latino;” Cornish, *Vernacular Translation*, to which I refer the reader for further bibliography; cf. Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients*, 174-229; Eisner, *Boccaccio and the Invention*; Lepschy, “Mother Tongues.”
to be as noble and powerful, as the other culture languages par excellence. This peculiarity, other than giving crucial insights on Dante’s thought, can also be useful for dating *Aï faus ris*.

The boundaries with the *petrose* give two major possibilities for dating *Aï faus ris*: before the exile, in 1295-96; or in 1304-05, a time span which could be pushed to 1308 if *spina* (l. 42) is interpreted as a reference to the Malaspina family. The first possibility is preferable, because *Aï faus ris* looks incompatible with the *DVE*, written in 1304-1306; or rather it looks like a very early stage of its theories. Thus, the maximum time span for its dating would approximately be from 1295 to 1304; but I would suggest that a poem like *Aï faus ris* fits better at the end of the Duecento. In Florence, before the exile, maybe after having met the young Charles Martel, and – why not? – having discussed literature with him, Dante writes a *canzone* that is a sort of manifesto of the plurilingual culture permeating the Late Middle Ages, with the not secondary goal of giving Italian the same relevance of the two real European languages of the time, Latin and French. Later on, when the idea of a *vulgare illustre* became clear in Dante, and the relationship with the other vernaculars and with Latin became competitive, and Dante himself became a militant intellectual praising the unity of the Italian vernacular under the aegis of the Empire, a poem like *Aï faus ris* is no more acceptable.

As Barański writes, “Dante’s vivid sense of the plurilingualism of his world made him aware of the fluidity of the cultural situation at the beginning of the fourteenth century,” but his point of view changes over time, as his views on language as a cultural vehicle do. I am aware that, since the continuity of concerns with the *DVE* associates the two works, the poem could also be interpreted as an attempt to experiment with something different, after the

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430 Barański, “Experimentation,” 571.
DVE. Indeed, the plurilingualism of *Aï faws ris* could be seen as a step toward the *Commedia* and away from the *DVE*, especially given the strong anti-municipal perspective Dante has in the treatise (1.6.3). I contend, however, that, although the Romance perspective connecting the two works does not provide a secure sense of their chronology per se, the *canzone* appears incompatible with the representation of Italian as the most illustrious among the vernaculars, as it is implied in *DVE* 1.10.2 and 1.19.2-3.\(^431\) Moreover, it does not seem to match the evolution of Dante’s linguistic practice. The *Commedia* is, indeed, the experimental plurilingual and pluristylistic *poema sacro* written in the Italian vernacular for which he feels to deserve the laurel crown. Although plurilingualism, also present in the form of passages in other languages, such as Latin and Occitan, is one of its main characteristics, no one would say that the *Commedia* is written in a language other than Italian, or that any other language enjoys a comparable status or function. Given that it is not possible to establish any sure chronology, I propose as a mere hypothesis to consider *Aï faws ris* among the first steps that will lead to the composition of the *Commedia*, before or even simultaneously with the wide-ranging theory of the *DVE*, where Italian comes to occupy the preeminent position leading

\(^431\) Dante does not discuss in length this issue, yet the passage is telling in its brevity. Both of the most recent editors, Fenzi and Tavoni, prefer the reading “videtur” to “videntur,” going back to Rajna’s text: so, not only the *volgare di sì* has two proper qualities, instead of the single one of the *oil* and *oc* vernaculars, but the Italian vernacular looks also closer to the *gramatica*, and this linguistic privilege surpasses those ascribed to the other two Romance languages, giving to Italian a premier position. “Tertia quoque, <que> Latinorum est, se duobus privilegiiis actestatur preesse: primo quidem quod qui dulcius subtiliusque poetati vulgariter sunt, hii familiares et domestici sui sunt, puta Cynus Pistoriensis et amicus eius; secundo quia magis videtur initi gramatice que communis est, quod rationabiliter inspicientibus videtur gravissimum argumentum.” (Alighieri, *Opere I*, 1238-40; Alighieri, *DVE*, ed. Fenzi, 70-2). “Finally, the third part, which belongs to the Italians, declares itself to be superior because it enjoys a twofold privilege: first, because those who have written vernacular poetry more sweetly and subtly, such as Cino da Pistoia and his friend, have been its intimates and faithful servants; and second, because it seems to be in the closest contact with the *gramatica* which is shared by all - and this, to those who consider the matter rationally, will appear a very weighty argument” (transl. from Alighieri, *DVE*, ed. Botterill, 23, corrected to match the Latin text with *videtur*). See also Tavoni, “Volgare e latino.”
to the main poem, where the other languages play a crucial role, but are definitely in the second place.

From the textual point of view, Ai faus ris had a separate diffusion from the other canzoni. This might reflect a change in Dante’s career, and a marginalization of this experiment which could descend from the very author.⁴³² Dante could have written a canzone in three equally important languages, but not after the DVE, where French is not despised as a lyric vernacular, but its importance is resized in favor of the preeminence of an Italian vernacular. Dante envisaged the vernacular not just as a cultural phenomenon, but he intended the vulgare illustre as curiale too, that is a political means to build a civilization.⁴³³ The canzone’s anonymous circulation, thus, might be connected to the role as a cultural authority that Dante progressively embraces, writing in the Tuscan vernacular and participating in the political and cultural life of his time, first in Tuscany and later in the courts of northern Italy, imagining an Italian cultural unity under the guidance of the Holy Roman Emperor, the great enemy of the French monarchy. This is only a conjecture, yet it is important to point out that such an evolution might be documented in the early manuscripts preserving Dante’s poetry.

2.3 The Books

Ai faus ris has quite a large tradition, amounting to more than seventy codices, to which early printed editions may be added; but only four manuscripts can be dated to the Trecento: the oldest is MS BAV, Barb. Lat. 3953, a book owned and partially copied by Nicolò de’ Rossi from Treviso between 1325-1329. In addition, we have three codices dating back to the second

⁴³² Although its only definitely independent witness is MS BAV, Barb. Lat. 3953, it seems to get grouped with b fairly late, Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 2.1 424 et seq., vol. 2.2 869-77, 1026-38: 1034, 1036, vol. 3 243-45. Cf. De Robertis, “Dati sull’attribuzione.”
⁴³³ Bologna, “Un’ipotesi sulla ricezione.”
half of the fourteenth century: MSS BML, Plut. 41.15; BNCF, Banco Rari 69 [ex Pal. 180]; Perugia, Biblioteca Augusta, I 20.434 In this paragraph I will analyze these four codices because they represent the circulation and reception of *Aï faus ris* before its canonization as an appendix to the fifteen *canzoni* in the canonical order. Another important book, which contains *Aï faus ris* partially independent from the systematized *canzoni* and which is believed to go back to its early diffusion, is MS Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, C 152. Since it is more recent (it dates to the second decade of the fifteenth century) and shows a peculiar reception of Dante’s poetry, the one belonging to the musician milieu, I will analyze it in depth in the following chapter. The Quattrocento tradition of *Aï faus ris* is very cohesive, and it is tightly connected to the circulation of the series of *canzoni* in the order in which they appear in Boccaccio’s codices and the appendices related to it. For this reason, I will also investigate it more fully in the next chapter.

*Aï faus ris* also appears in two of the most significant early printed editions of Dante’s lyric poetry, the 1491 *editio princeps* of Dante’s *canzoni* and the 1527 Giunti edition. These editions arise from the Quattrocento most diffused Dante canon, seeing the core group of *canzoni* accompanied by the poems of the *Vita Nuova*, and/or other poems, and through the print industry mechanism they facilitate its circulation and consequent consecration in the canon. It is indeed noteworthy that *Aï faus ris* finds itself peacefully integrated in the canon, without any hesitation regarding its author. These editions are the joining link between the Late Medieval and Humanistic canon and the contemporary one, thus emphasizing the censorship to which this *canzone* (along with other poems) has been more recently subject.

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434 These three MSS have been dated according to their palaeographic qualities. *Aï faus ris* is also contained in MS BML, Tempi 2, which is an autograph by Antonio Pucci, and thus it has been written before 1388. But the *canzone* has been added later, when the codex belonged to the Benci, thus I will discuss it below.
2.3.1 The *Princeps* and the *Giuntina*

The *princeps* of Dante’s *canzoni*, which encompasses *Aï faus ris*, is an edition of Cristoforo Landino’s commentary on Dante’s *Commedia*, printed in Venice on November 18, 1491 by Pietro Cremonese (Pietro Piasi), edited by Pietro da Figino, a Franciscan friar, who explicitly signs his edition.\(^{435}\) From the material point of view, it is a large folio (295x195mm), decorated by 97 small woodcuts, and three in full page scale, one for each *cantica*.\(^{436}\) The *canzoni*, which directly follow the *Commedia* after a blank line, are printed in three columns, and are introduced by a plain rubric: “Cancione dello excellentissimo poeta dante aldigeri fiorentino Comminciano qui feliciter” (f. 315v).\(^{437}\) Except for the fifteenth, from the seventh to the last *canzone* there is a specific rubric for each poem, and for *Aï faus ris*, which is the last one, it says “Canzon francesa” (f. 319v, Fig. 5). The final rubric says “Qui finisse lecanzone de danthe,” thus again confirming the acceptance of it in the canon. As I mentioned before, in the Quattrocento, *Aï faus ris* usually followed the *canzoni* along with the ballad *I’ mi son pargoletta*. Here this configuration is at its simplest, seeing only the *canzone* in three languages following the canonical *canzoni* in the sixteenth place.\(^{438}\)

Landino’s commentary on the *Commedia* was very successful at the end of the fifteenth century, and this is one of the seven incunabula that were produced after its publication in

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\(^{435}\) The colophon at the end of the *Comentum* (f. 315v) reads: “Et Fine del Comento di Christoforo Landino Fiorentino sopra la comedia di Danthe poeta excelle(n)tissimo. E impresso in Vinegia per Petro Cremonese dito Veronese: A di .xviii. di noue(m)brio M.cccc.Lxxxxi. emendato per me maestro pietro da fighino dellordine de frati minori.” Parker points out that this is a novelty (Parker, *Commentary and Ideology*, 137).


\(^{437}\) The Casa di Dante in Roma preserves a peculiar copy of this incunable, that is the one with handwritten comments by Pietro da Figino himself, and decorated with ca. 400 drawings by Antonio Grifo. This precious book has been reproduced in a *fac simile* (Salerno, 2014).

\(^{438}\) From the textual point of view, the 1491 print belongs to the b family, thus it is close to those codices where *Aï faus ris* is put at the end of the series of 15 *canzoni*, mostly forming the appendix A (Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, vol. 2.1 336-6, 451-9, for further discussion see chapter 3).
1481. In the sixteenth century it was printed another seven times, so that it became the most diffused commentary on Dante of the time, until at least the eighteenth century. As Procaccioli writes, when Venetian publishers printed Landino’s Comento, they were aware that their readers did not want a Dante, but a Landino, that is to say, a text transmitting knowledge on the poem, and in particular a commentary that, through the vernacular, made it possible to access classical culture.\footnote{Procaccioli, “Cristoforo Landino,” 13. He also writes that who did want a Dante would have preferred Manuzio’s edition of the poem. It was published in 1502, so this paradigm is not entirely applicable for the Cremonese-Figino edition.} As for the layout, Landino’s first edition inaugurates a series of books where the Commedia appears enclosed by (or even smothered in) the commentary, and where illustrations play a major role. Landino planned to have 100 images by Botticelli, but in the end only nineteen were inserted in the 1481 print. On the other hand, Aldo Manuzio’s 1502 edition of the poem subverts what had become a typographic standard comprised of text-commentary-image by presenting the bare text, and in a octavo book, while folios or quartos were favored before. The 1491 edition by Piasi complies with the standard before Aldo, but it stands out specifically because of the insertion of the series of canzoni. In this respect, it recalls Boccaccio’s anthologies, where the canzoni follow the Commedia. Besides evident differences, and the fact that Boccaccio included also the Vita Nuova and his Dante biography, it is interesting that Piasi proposes a selection of works in a more elevated style, just as Boccaccio did.\footnote{For the discussion of Boccaccio’s anthologies, see chapter 3.} Given that Boccaccio’s canon was comprised of only fifteen canzoni, Piasi did not take his selection as a model, even though he reproduces them at the beginning of the series. But the core idea of the canzoni following the Commedia for their stylistic and also moral peculiarities seems
comparable. This also makes the presence of *Ai falso ris*, which Boccaccio probably knew\(^441\) but did not copy in the series, more significant.

Parker emphasizes how the materiality of this edition complies with the typical trend of the last decades of the fifteenth century, which concerns Dante but also Petrarch, as Cannata points out: large books, in roman types, with lengthy commentary, and images. These editions of Dante’s *Commedia* were intended to present it as a moral and scholastic text, thus representing Dante as a cultural authority. Between 1481 and 1497 there is a prominence of commentary over original work, and “even a tendency to dwarf the text itself.” Piasi’s 1491 edition, as the others before Aldo’s new stance to present the text free, portray Dante as an *auctor*, author and authority, and thus the *Commedia*, but also the *canzoni* that accompany it in the same book, as a work worth of studying, not just reading. Their intended public was not composed only of scholars, so this interpretation of Dante’s oeuvre had to be shared also by the general literate public of the last quarter of the Quattrocento, probably well-educated and upper-class.\(^442\)

Landino, who succeeded Marsuppini as professor of rhetoric at the Florentine Studio, dedicated himself to the study of the classics along with the major modern poets, Dante and Petrarch. His commentary, as it is well-known, is a fundamental step of the re-acquisition of Dante by Florentine culture, which was promoted by Lorenzo the Magnificent.\(^443\) This intention is demonstrated by the chapters preceding the actual commentary that, more than

\(^441\) As it appears from a search on the TLIO database, *falso riso* (“false smile”) is not a widespread syntagm in the Trecento, yet it appears multiple times in Boccaccio’s works, namely in the *Filostrato*, in the *Elogia di donna Fiammetta*, and in the *Filocolo*, suggesting a possible influence by Dante’s *canzone*. Also, most probably Petrarch knew it, see Brugnolo, “Sulla canzone,” 159.

\(^442\) Parker, *Commentary and Ideology*, 124-58, on Piasi in particular pp. 136-37, quote from 137. Cannata, *Il canzoniere a stampa*, 54-55,

\(^443\) For an overview on Landino’s commentary, see Procaccioli, “Cristoforo Landino” to which I refer the reader for further bibliography (Ibid., 14-5).
an introduction to the work and to its author, celebrate Florence, its culture and civilization. Landino’s *Comento* is not only the first Dante published in Florence, but it is also a praise of the poet and his elevation as a symbol of the city itself. The commentary is strongly grounded in the fourteenth-century commentary tradition (and particularly on Francesco da Buti), to which neo-platonic allegory is added, in order to make it more modern and consistent with Florentine culture. All things considered, the neo-platonic allegory, which has little to do with Dante and his thought, masks the real meaning of the poem and it does not help to explain its peculiarities, such as its realism, *pathos*, architecture. The *Comento*, contrary to what Poliziano was developing in his contemporary courses in the same Studio, was not primarily intended as an instrument to understand the text: through Landino’s commentary, Dante becomes a moral and didactic poet, whose reading serves to the building of the citizen.444

Pietro da Figino was a Lombard friar who studied theology, but who also knew vernacular poetry very well, and in particular Dante, as is demonstrated by the many notes in his copy of the 1491 edition, now in the Casa di Dante in Rome. He decides to add the *canzoni* to the neo-platonic moral reading of Dante by Landino, and this choice might be connected to the same neo-platonic reading that was purported in Florence for Dante’s lyric in general, as is demonstrated by the reception of the *Convivio* in this period among Florentine intellectuals of the Laurentian circle. The association of the *canzoni*, which were mostly believed to have been written for the *Convivio*, with the *Comento* suggests their reading as moral and didactic texts in a neo-platonic key. The inclusion of the three-language *canzone* in this collection is noteworthy because, even though it is defined as French, does not have an overt moral

content, and was never believed to belong to the prosimetrum, it is not separated from this elevated collection of Dante’s poetry.

*Aï faus ris* is not included in the 1518 edition of Dante’s lyric poetry by Gugliemo da Monferrato in Venice, nor in its reprint in Milan by Agostino di Vimercate. Nevertheless, it appears in the milestone 1527 Giunti edition. As we have already seen, the Giuntina, because of its completeness and its polished canon, has inspired the editors of Dante’s lyric poetry up to this date. Specifically, *Aï faus ris* is the last poem of the second book. Out of the eleven books of the Giuntina, Dante’s poetry occupies the first four. The third and fourth books of Dante’s lyrics contain the *canzoni*, while the previous two respectively encompass the poems of the *Vita Nuova* and all the other lyrics. The three-language *canzone* is at the center of Dante’s section, and definitely part of the Dantean canon; but at the same time, it seems to have a liminal position. It is not put together with the *canzoni*, it is not even at the end of their series, as it was especially during the fifteenth century, and as it is shown by its *princeps*. Being the last of the second book, preceded by the then famous *canzone Morte, perch’io non trovo a cui mi doglia* (in reality by Jacopo Cecchi), *Aï faus ris* is the last piece of the most diverse series of this Dantean anthology, entitled in general terms “Sonetti e canzoni di Dante Alaghieri” (“Sonnets and *canzoni* by Dante Alaghieri”). Yet, at the same time, it is connected to the “love and moral *canzoni*” that begin on the next page with *Così nel mio parlar*, a text that is close to it for form and meaning. Thus, the three-language *canzone* in the Giunti edition seems to be separated from the canonical group of *canzoni* and connected to the varied, almost experimental section of Dante’s lyric poetry, while it seems to function as a connection between these books and

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445 See above §§1.1.4 and 1.2.2
446 The rubric says “Canzoni amorose e morali di Dante Alaghieri.” The fourth book encompasses the “Canzoni morali di Dante Alaghieri.”
the subsequent ones with the canzoni. In the Cinquecento, the canzone is not considered the more elevated genre of poetry anymore, its preeminence being progressively eroded by the sonnet. Thus Ai faus ris, even though it is not in the same book of the canzoni, is put among a diverse but still canonical series, in a pivotal position. In fact it is the material and poetical bridge that seamlessly connects the first two books to the second two books of the Giunti Dantean section.

2.3.2 Trecento Manuscripts

In the fifteenth century Ai faus ris regularly circulates along with the ballad I’ mi son pargoletta, or by itself, but mostly at the end of the series of the 15 canzoni distese. While this situation characterizes those codices dating back to the fifteenth century, fourteenth-century books look rather different. First, as already mentioned, there are just a few codices dating back to the Trecento, where, moreover, the three-language canzone is independent from the ballad, and also from the canzoni series.447

Nicolò de’ Rossi’s anthology, MS BAV, Barb. Lat. 3953, has been at the center of many studies. It is indeed a peculiar book, particularly famous for preserving not only an anthology of early Italian lyric, but also Nicolò’s own poems. Significantly, it does not just contain lyric texts. It has been written by multiple hands, and it is composed of two main sections. The first one includes a retelling on the epic theme of the Trojan War, in Latin, with major insertions in French; a French letter by Iseult to Tristan; an Occitan sirventes, Nus hom non val nen doi esser presatz by Guilhelm de Montanhagol; a series of Italian lyrics, mostly canzoni, in which are

447 De Robertis points out that Ai faus ris appears alone also in other codices, such as MS BML, Pal. 118 (sec. XVin), where it is put in-between the rime scelte and the appendix B, with the canzone, and in MS BML, Conv. Soppr. 122 (sec. XV, first half), where there are the canzoni, but in a different section. Ai faus ris can be found alone, without the ballad, in 28 MSS (Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 2.1 870).
included some with a Latin commentary. This first section is closed by Francesco’s da Barberino *cobbole* and a drawing of the *Trionfo d’Amore*. The second section contains an anthology of sonnets. Dante’s *canzone* in three languages is not close to the other *canzoni* by Dante, and here it appears anonymously (p. 44). This circumstance has raised doubts concerning its attribution to Dante, especially given the fact that the Barberini codex is its most ancient witness. There, its rubric seems to have been erased. But the page does not give definite clues, and it could also be possible that it had never been written.

1. hand α: De excidio et bello troiano [Latin with French quotes]; Iseult’s letter to Tristan [French/ Franco-veneto?]; Guilhelm de Montanhagol *Nus hom non val nen doi esser presatz* [Occitan].

hands β & γ [Nicolò de’ Rossi]: *canzoni* by Nicolò de’ Rossi (*Color di perla* with Latin explanation), Bindo Bonichi [with interlinear Latin prose version], Guido Guinizelli, Cino da Pistoia, Zoanne de Bonandrea, *Aï faux ris*, *canzone* di Auliver, Folgòre da San Gimignano [sonnet], Stefano Protonotaro, Dante, *Nomina virtutum*; Bindo Bonichi, Nicolò de’ Rossi, Nicolò Quirini e fra Guittone d’Arezzo, (pseudo)Aristotle’s letter to Alexander; *Secretum secretorum*; Guido Cavalcanti [*Donna me prega* with pseudo-Egidio’s commentary]; Francesco da Barberino, *canzone* and *Trionfo d’Amore* (with drawing).

2. hand α: sonnets.

The first unit of the Barberini codex is definitely the most interesting part of this book. Punzi recognized a unifying theme, that is, the theme of *virtus*, explored in different ways in each

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449 Not only is it its most ancient witness, but it is also its ‘most independent’ witness: the MS constitutes a textual group by itself. Furthermore, according to De Robertis, for the other *canzoni* by Dante it would descend from earlier materials, probably coming from Florence (the lost intermediate MS g, Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, vol. 2.1 95-6). Also, in this MS *Aï faux ris* lacks the third stanza, and this led Gorni to hypothesize a different ordering of the stanzas, which in the end has been proven wrong (Gorni, “Nota sulla canzone”). More recently, Viel (Viel, “*Aï faux ris*”) has seen in this copy a shorter first redaction of the poem, while also suggesting that it has been written when Dante, in exile, was in the Veneto: while the cultural environment of the Veneto is the perfect space for its circulation (see below and Chapter 3), I do not deem as necessary for Dante to have been there to compose such a poem, whose sources he might have well known in Florence.

450 De Robertis hypothesizes that someone must have shown opposition to the attribution to Dante of this poem, which in his opinion was originally attributed to him. De Robertis concluded that the rubric, where most probably there was the attribution, must not have been cancelled by the principal copyist, who usually does not leave blanks, but replaces the text. Also, the blank space might have contained “Dante,” that is the attribution rubric of his other poems in the codex. In this scenario, the censorship should have been enforced not by the collector or the copyist, but by a subsequent reader. Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, vol. 2.2 1036.
text, which dovetails with Niccolò’s interests in philosophy and particularly in Aristotelianism, which in this book is represented by the letter of the pseudo-Aristotle and the Secretum Secretorum.\textsuperscript{451} Brugnolo, moreover, hypothesizes that this first part would have been compiled for an intellectual and politician from Treviso, Guecello Tempesta, following his literary attitudes, but also to be a sort of speculum morale of sentimental education and civil ethics. As for the selection of lyrics, most of the poems concern the ‘doctrine of Love’, alternating with moral and ethical-civil canzoni. Significantly, the Dantean section ends with the apocryphal canzone praising Henry VII, \textit{Vertù che ’l ciel movesti}. This unifying theme, according to Brugnolo, would be supported by the only one sonnet copied in this section, which is indeed Folgore da San Gimignano’s sonnet on the decadence of courtly values.\textsuperscript{452} But this book was never given to Guecello, so that Nicolò would have then added the second section, the one containing sonnets.\textsuperscript{453} Punzi highlights other themes connecting the texts, and in particular, she argues that \textit{Aï faus ris} is connected by the theme of the vision to the previous canzone by Giovanni di Bonandrea, \textit{Scende da monte mirabel altezza}, while the eyes leading to death recall Iseult’s letter. Lastly, it shares the concern of finding the right words to express the sufferance with the Auliver’s canzone, following it; this poem is written in the language of Treviso, and it might also be connected to \textit{Aï faus ris} for its experimental qualities.\textsuperscript{454} While the poem preceding \textit{Aï faus ris}, \textit{Scende da monte mirabel altezza}, is an experimental canzone in ottava rima. The canzone in three

\textsuperscript{451} Punzi, “Le metamorfosi,” 208-10.
\textsuperscript{452} Brugnolo, “Ancora sui canzonieri,” 75. Brugnolo also puts in this context the four canzoni in morte by Cino, along with the moral Occitan sirventes (Ibid.).
\textsuperscript{453} In 1329 Guecello surrendered Treviso to Cangrande, who was an adversary of Niccolò, who left the city when he gained power over it in that same year. Brugnolo, following this hypothesis, narrows the dating of the MS, from 1325-1335, to 1327-29. While 1329 seems more than acceptable, since the book would have been composed before Niccolò left Treviso, 1327 is a more unstable term, based on a complicated biographical story, and thus, I prefer to maintain the larger timespan, and consider the Barberini codex dating back to 1325-1329.
\textsuperscript{454} Punzi, “Le metamorfosi,” 208. This canzone is considered an example of medieval expressionism in the classic commentary by Contini, \textit{Poeti del Duecento}, t. I 509-11.
languages is, indeed, enclosed in a group of poems that are not written in Tuscan and have no common metrical schemes.\textsuperscript{455} The Barberini codex, besides the major metrical division canzoni-sonnets,\textsuperscript{456} does not seem organized by author, but it seems to group the lyrics mostly by topic. Thus, that the three-language canzone is separated from the other poems by Dante does not look suspicious, since it is put in a group of poems with which it shares form and language peculiarities. Regardless of these specific links, what needs to be put in relief is that experimentation, taking the form of multiple styles and multiple languages, but also different mises en page each one fitting the quality of the text or of the text-commentary, is a peculiarity of the Barberini manuscript. In this book there are multiple languages and dialects interacting with each other, at the same level—such as in the Trojan narration\textsuperscript{457} and in \textit{Aï faux ris}—or with different functions, like in the Latin commentaries of Cavalcanti’s and Nicolò’s canzoni.

Nicolò’s book is a miscellany, yet it is organized, and its peculiarities make it the perfect environment for a poem like \textit{Aï faux ris}. Yet, it is not the only manuscript containing Dante’s rime showing these characteristics: codex Martelli 12, which was copied in Gubbio probably in the second decade of the Trecento, contains the \textit{Vita Nuova} and a selection of Dante’s canzoni, along with prose texts in vernacular and in Latin: \textit{Conti di antichi cavalieri}, \textit{Proverbia Salomonis}, \textit{Liber Filosoforum} (\textit{Fiori di Filosofi}), \textit{Nomina lapidum et virtutum}, and the \textit{Esposizione dei sogni}; it is also supposed to have included a quire in Catalan or Provençal, now lost.\textsuperscript{458} Even though it does

\textsuperscript{455} De Robertis, “Dati sull’attribuzione,” 144.
\textsuperscript{456} In fact, among the first section of canzoni, we find other texts, such as a sonnet, and also the drawing from Francesco da Barberino, see above. Cf. \textit{Poesia comica}, 42.
\textsuperscript{457} Punzi highlights that French passages are inserted seamlessly in the Latin text: narration, along with syntax, is not interrupted, even though the copyist probably did not know French (Punzi, “Metamorfosi,” 204-05).
\textsuperscript{458} MS Martelli 12 is a parchment codex written in gothic script in the first quarter of the fourteenth century in Gubbio. It has been written by six different hands; Bertelli shows that three of them worked together also in the troubadour chansonnier \textit{P} (BML, MS 41.42); in particular, the hand which dates \textit{P} March 28, 1310 wrote the first section of the Martelli codex, containing the \textit{Conti di antichi cavalieri} (ff. 1–9). As for the second section
not have *Ai faus ris*, I argue that it demonstrates a similar reception of Dante, whose poetry is immersed in a plurilingual and multi-style context, where different languages but also diverse writing registers coexist. Italian vernacular tradition was already autonomous, as it is shown by the three *canzonieri delle origini*, all of which only contain lyric poetry in Italian language. Consequently, these multilingual miscellanies exhibit that cosmopolitanism of the Late Middle Ages from which *Ai faus ris* itself seems to have emerged. The fact that these books were copied in peripheral areas, Treviso and Gubbio, is certainly significant, highlighting a less canonical way of receiving Dante’s poetry. Indeed, the Florentine *canzoniere* Chigi I. VIII 305, which must be from just a little bit later in the Trecento, already reflects the canonization of his poetry and of himself as an author that Dante staged in his works, and mainly in his *DVE*.

As we have already seen, even though it contains a wide array of genres of poetry, it only contains lyrics (along with the *Vita Nuova*, which is considered a songbook) in Italian, mostly Tuscan, vernacular, ordered according to the history of the newborn Italian literature as outlined by Dante.

The Barberini codex was probably compiled with materials which Nicolò de’ Rossi had access to in Bologna before 1320, at least as regards Dante’s main corpus of *canzoni*. But there is no certainty for the sources of *Ai faus ris*, which nonetheless is preceded by the poem by Giovanni di Bonandrea, a professor at the University of Bologna, author of an *Ars dictaminis*, who died in 1321.459 So, despite any resistance or marginalization, *Ai faus ris* finds itself in a

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459 Giovanni di Bonandrea’s treatise always appears anonymous and often without title, so that it is mostly known by its *incipit* “Bononic natus.” Since the name of the author has been erased, it has been
relationship with Bologna exactly when there Giovanni del Virgilio was writing to Dante a *carmen* to incite him to finally write a Latin historical poem in order to get the longed laurel crown, when Dante had already become a renowned poet, leading his own intellectual circle in Ravenna and actively embracing his role as a cultural authority: Dante Alighieri had already become *DANTE*.⁴⁶⁰

The other Trecento manuscripts containing *Aï faus ris* differ significantly from the Barberini codex. They are more traditional anthologies of vernacular poetry, but they give us unique insights on Dante’s reception. The Banco Rari 69 (ex Pal. 180) is the earliest book in which *Aï faus ris* gets (implicitly) attributed to Dante: the three-language *canzone* follows the anonymous series of Dante’s *rime* (among which there are also two *canzoni* by Fazio degli Uberti), while a rubric after it counts all the *canzoni* of the book, “cantiones xxxiiij” (f. 9v), encompassing it as the last piece. Yet it has been copied by a second hand that also copied two poems by Petrarch, preceding it, a *canzone* and a *madrigale* (*RVF* 121 and 159). MS Banco Rari 69 is mainly organized by meter:⁴⁶¹ it contains 17 *canzoni* by Dante,⁴⁶² two by Fazio degli Uberti, followed by the poems from the *Vita Nuova* with other various poems, first single stanzas and ballads, then sonnets.⁴⁶³ It also contains a fragment of the *Commedia* by the main hand, with marginal notes, which follows the *rime* after a blank page in a new quire (Par. 10.31-

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⁴⁶² Donne ch'avete intelletto d'Amore, Donna pietosa e di novella etate, Lì ochi dolenti per pietà del core, Voi che 'ntendendo, Amor che nella mente, Le dolci rime, Amor che movi, I' sento sì, Così nel mio parlar, E' m'incresce di me, Poesia ch'Amor, La dispietata mente, Tre donne, Doglia mi reca, Amor, da che convien, Amor, tu vedi ben, Io son venuto.

⁴⁶³ Quantunque volte, Ai poco giorno, O voi che per la via, Morte villana, Voi che savete, Ballata, i' vo', a part of a *canzone* by Iacopo Mostacci, a fragment of a *canzone* by Lapo Gianni, I' mi son pargoletta, I' son chiamata nova ballatella [Cino], three ballads by Cavalcanti [30-32], a *canzone* by Cino, I' mi senti svogliar, Lasso, per forza, Deb peregriini, I' mi credea, two sonnets by Cino, Chi guarderas gamma sanza paner, four sonnets of the tenzone with Forese: *Chi udise tossir, L'altra notte mi venne*, *Bicci novel figlinol*, *Ben so che fosti figlio*. Then, hand b, adds *RVF* 121 and 159, and *Aï faus ris*.
31.15, 32.90-end). The book in the nineteenth century was believed to be an autograph manuscript by Petrarch,\(^{464}\) and, while this hypothesis has been proven wrong, it is indeed an external signal of its being a rather refined book. It is a paper codex, written in a *semigotica* script that has something in common with the type of writing of the cultural atmosphere Boccaccio and Petrarch shared. In particular, the layout of the manuscript recalls the peculiar way of copying poetry created by Petrarch, as it is demonstrated by Dante’s *sestina Al poco giorno* that, most probably for metrical reasons, is separated from the other *canzoni* and it is copied in the following series of poems in various meters (f. 6v). Most importantly, it is not copied as prose, but its verses are put in column form, just as Petrarch did in his autograph manuscripts in order to emphasize his *sestine*.\(^{465}\) The other *canzoni* are copied as prose (as the second hand does), while from f. 8r sonnets are copied two verses per line, again just as Petrarch did. Since it dates back to the second half of the fourteenth century, this book is among the earliest ones, if not the earliest one, in which Petrarch’s way of copying the *sestina* is adopted; before, it was copied as prose as every other *canzone*.\(^{466}\)

In the last two manuscripts dating back to the fourteenth century, *Aï faws ris* is also accompanied by works by Petrarch: in MS BML, 41.15 it is copied without any apparent break after an anthology of poems, mostly from the *RVF*, while in MS Perugia, Biblioteca Augusta, I 20 it precedes the *Trionfi*.

The Laurenziano 41.15 is a late-fourteenth century manuscript: it has been copied by Antonio of Cortona, a scribe famous for some codices of Dante’s *Commedia*; given a *canzone* 


\(^{466}\) Pulsoni, “Petrarca e la codificazione,” 63 n. 35.
by Braccio Bracci for the death of Galeazzo Visconti, it must have been copied after 1378, while Cursi, considering Antonio’s career, suggests that it probably has been finished no later than the early 1380s. It contains a diverse series of lyrics, among which the great majority are by Petrarch. Even if it witnesses most of the poems of the RVF, it does not respect the author’s order, also adding some Petrarch’s poems that are not included in the RVF, along with poems by others. This section is roughly divided by meter in canzoni and then sonnets. Dante’s canzone in three languages is on the last page (f. 80v), and it is the last poem. The manuscript is made of parchment, and is copied into two columns in an Italian chancery script. All the poems are copied one verse per line, and no difference is made between the genres of poetry. Each poem is introduced by a capital letter (either painted in colors, or red, or brown). Ai faus ris belongs to a last section in which there is no color, and where there are no capital letters, but the space has been left for their execution. It follows a verse letter to the Soldano di Babilonia. The handwriting of this small section is the same as the rest of the codex. The material characteristics of the book define it as a normal Florentine book of the period, which probably has to be ascribed to the medium-high bourgeois milieu of literate people interested in modern vernacular lyric. Yet, Cursi emphasizes its rather noble mise en page into two columns, which recalls academic books and also Boccaccio’s Hamilton Decameron, even though the book is rather small, 172x137mm (it has been trimmed). The layout chosen for sonnets, four per page, is also similar to the mise en page of the only manuscript of the (allegedly Dantean) Fiore.

467 Pulsoni-Cursi, “Intorno alla precoce fortuna.” In particular, on the scribe pp. 193-99, on its dating pp. 181, 199-201.
468 On Petrarch’s poems in this codex, see Ibid., 171-192.
469 These last poems are written on the versus of the last poem of the previous series, so they are not in an independent codicological unit.
470 Cursi, “Prima circolazione,” 238.
The Perugia codex is also made of parchment, and initially it must have been conceived as a rather elegant book, but now it has a quite chaotic appearance. It is written in an Italian semigothic script, into one column, and it is quite small, only 173x125mm. Along with Dante’s *canzone* and Petrarch’s *Trionfi*, copied by the same hand most probably in the fourteenth century (ff. 1-68), the Perugia codex contains a series of other poems added by different hands in subsequent periods. Here, *Ai faus ris* is attributed to Dante by a later hand. Again, in this codex, as in the Pluteo and in the Banco Rari, the *canzone* appears originally anonymous. However, the lyrics in the Banco Rari manuscript, as mostly in the Pluteo, constitute a corpus of adespota, so the fact that Dante’s poem is anonymous is not particularly significant per se. In the Perugia codex *Ai faus ris* should have been introduced by larger capital letters, for which a space in the margin has been left in every stanza, but which were not painted. All of the three codices lack any ornamentation, which was planned but never done. Thus, the lack of rubrics bearing the attribution becomes less significant, since rubrics were usually added when the book was decorated.

The Perugia codex does not give any particular clue on the circulation and reception of the *canzone*, yet it is still interesting that originally it was independent from other Dantean poems and that it was coupled with Petrarch’s work. Indeed, *Ai faus ris* seems to be grouped with the main Dantean canon rather late. Even though it is contained in books encompassing many of his lyrics, such as the Barberini and the Banco Rari codices, it is also separated from Dante’s main lyric series not only from the material, but also from the textual point of view – as I will explore in more depth for the Marucelliano codex. Also, although the attribution is absent, it is in any case noteworthy that this *canzone*, in three out of four codices dating back to the Trecento, finds itself associated with Petrarch’s works. Given the fact that it appears
anonymously in the Pluteo and in the Perugia manuscripts, *Aï faus ris* gets grouped with other works by Petrarch, and implicitly attributed to him. Also, in the Banco Rari 69 it is copied by the second hand that copies Petrarch’s poems, thus its position remains in-between Dante and Petrarch. This circumstance gives us the opportunity for introducing what will be one of the main themes of the following chapter: the correlation between Dante and Petrarch, and particularly their role as lyric models in the second half of the fourteenth century and beyond. As for *Aï faus ris*, it is noteworthy that such an experimental work gets implicitly associated with Petrarch, in a widely shared opinion the classic writer par excellence. Remarkably, this is not true from the Late Medieval perspective. As Brugnolo pointed out, Petrarch knew *Aï faus ris*, and considered it by Dante. Indeed, he quoted it as a *canzone* by Dante in the *sestina doppia Mia benigna fortuna e 'l viver lieto* (RI/F 332, l. 44), a text which dialogues with Dante on multiple levels.\(^{471}\) Also, the three-language *madrigale* *La fiera testa* should be mentioned again, especially because its attribution to Petrarch, suggested by a fourteenth-century codex, has been proposed as trustworthy.\(^{472}\) Lannutti analyzes in depth the *madrigale*, pointing out significant acrostics and intertextual references to support her claim. In particular, as we have already seen, it is noteworthy that the *madrigale* in three languages also shows thematic connections with *Aï faus ris*, such as the idea of deceit and hypocrisy, which dominates the *canzone*, as the idea of using multiple languages to make the text noted.\(^{473}\) It seems rather significant that both texts in three languages are not undoubtedly attributed. Petrarch and Dante, thus, through the lens of writing in three languages, appear closer than it is usually imagined, at least for the


\(^{473}\) Lannutti, “Polifonie verbali,” 56-7. Cf. above, §2.1.3
public of the second half of the Trecento, as manuscripts show with their selections and attributions.

Dante’s plurilingualism is constitutive of his creative mind and, although there have been major shifts in the evaluation (and also appreciation) of this distinctive quality of his writing, it has nevertheless always been acknowledged—and it is hard to imagine things differently. As for Petrarch, his “monolingualism” has been among the major reasons behind his success, especially in the Renaissance. Yet, the early circulation of his works along with Dante, and in particular with a peculiar text like Aï fans ris, points to a necessary re-evaluation of the reception of Petrarch along with Dante, and of how the Dante-function has been shaped in respect to the Petrarch-function, and vice versa.
Fig. 2 MS BAV Chigi L VIII 305 f. 62v

http://www.mss.vatlib.it/guii/scan/link.jsp
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Fig. 5 Comento di Christophoro Landino fiorentino sopra la Comedia di Danthe Alighieri poeta fiorentino, Per Petro Cremonese dito Veronese, Venezia 1491 (copy from München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek).
3. The Dante-function from the Age of Humanism to the Renaissance

3.1 Books of Poetry, Poets and Books

In the words of Jerome, Cicero emended the *De Rerum Natura, On the Nature of Things*, which Lucretius wrote “during intervals of his insanity.” Although Cicero’s 54 BC letter to his brother Quintus is the only reference to the great work of Lucretius by a contemporary, the fact that Cicero took care of the unfinished poem, possibly after the death of its author, is not trustworthy, like the other information given in the *Chronicon* about Lucretius. Yet, Cicero has been connected to the *De Rerum Natura* as much as to make Lucretius become only a pseudonym of Cicero himself in the 1993 tale *Lucrezio e il Segreto di Cicerone (Lucretius and Cicero’s Secret)* by Tiziano Colombi.475 Through the centuries, and by means of more or less informed or aware narratives, from being the alleged editor, Cicero becomes the very author of the poem. This little anecdote illustrates the intellectual enthusiasm that usually rises when a celebrated author touches the work of another author.

The interplay between poets as writers and poets as editors, both of their own works and of the works of others, has always been decisive in the evolution of literature. We have begun our exploration of the manifold shapes of the Dante-function and of Dante as a lyric

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writer from the relationship between a great poet, Eugenio Montale, and one of the twentieth-century leading critics and editors, Gianfranco Contini, whose exchanges emphasize the pivotal role of contemporary literary production in the canonization of past literature, along with the actual concerns of authors for the presentation of the fruits of their inspiration. We have seen how both Contini and Montale urged Einaudi to present their works in determined material ways. But we have also seen how a poem of uncertain attribution like *Nulla mi parve mai più crudel cosa* has gained its place in the Dantean corpus mainly due to its quality having been recognized by Montale, who incorporated it in his own poetry: the authority of the contemporary author, Montale, is enough to promote a poem, to make it worthy of the authoriality of another great author from the past, Dante.476

In the history of the circulation and reception of Dante’s works, there is one poet whose influence has been immense: Giovanni Boccaccio. Yet, Boccaccio will not be among the protagonists of this research. His commitment in the study and diffusion of Alighieri’s works, and his role as the key mediator in the canonization of Dante, and more generally, of vernacular literature has nowadays been widely recognized. Boccaccio was in touch with the first circle of Florentine Dante admirers, such as Andrea Lancia; his books preserve the only extant copies of some of Dante’s minor writings; he was also the first public commentator of the *Commedia*, while being acclaimed as the first humanist in Florence, second only to Petrarch.477 There have been multiple studies concerning his influence on Dante’s reception as a commentator, just as on his interventions in the literary field, while the tradition of the works he copied has been explored both from the textual and from the material point of

477 Boccaccio autore e copista, 61-64.
view. I have contributed to the assessment of his looming influence among the following generations by exploring his edition of the *Vita Nuova* and its reception from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. Although there might be more to say on his intellectual activity and its outcomes, the merited consideration Boccaccio has enjoyed clearly defined the contours of his figure as scholar and editor of Dante’s works. Thus, the analysis of Dante’s reception outside or at the margins of Boccaccio’s pivotal contribution is a fecund, fresh viewpoint for confronting the response to Dante as a lyric writer, and consequently the shaping of the Dante-function. Nevertheless, as we have already seen in chapter 1 through the analysis of the different editions of the *rime*, just as the issue of whether the order of the fifteen *canzoni distese* is Boccaccio’s or not, there are many other questions that are necessarily connected to his intellectual and editorial work on Dante’s oeuvre. Thus, before dealing with other poets and intellectuals, and also with anonymous compilers, it is necessary to briefly retrace the key points of Boccaccio’s intervention on Dante’s lyric poetry, among which the *Vita Nuova* must be included.

### 3.1.1 Boccaccio’s Dantean Anthologies

In a series of lectures spanning from October 1373 to January 1374, Boccaccio was the first public commentator of the *Commedia*. He was appointed to the public reading of Dante by the Florentine comune, a task that Boccaccio considers the cause of the illness that, ultimately, led

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479 Banella, *La ‘Vita nuova’.*
to his death. Boccaccio’s interest in Dante is by no means limited to his major and vernacular works, nor did it begin in his old age.  He read the _DVE_ probably in his youth, he was familiar with the _Monarchia_, and, as we have seen in the previous chapters, he also knew other lyric poems by Dante beyond those he copied, while there is no convincing proof that he read the _Convivio_. In his _Zibaldone_ (MS Florence, BML, 29.8) Boccaccio copied Dante’s _Egloge_ and a selection of letters ( _Epistolae_ 3, 11, and 12), along with the enigmatic letter by frate Ilaro, where the alleged Latin _incipit_ of the _Commedia_ is quoted. In his _Vita di Dante_ he mentions, in this order: the _Vita Nuova_, the _Commedia_, the _Monarchia_, the two _Egloge_, the _Convivio_, the _DVE_, to which he adds prose Latin letters and many other “canzoni distese, sonetti e ballate,” beyond those collected in the _Vita Nuova_. Thus, in the 1350s Boccaccio was aware of the existence of the complete oeuvre by Dante (only the _Fiore_, whose authorship is still strongly uncertain, is missing). This circumstance, however, does not mean that he had the possibility to own or to actually read all of it at length. It is, nonetheless, noteworthy that he introduces the list of Dante’s works by stating that “fare ordinata memoria credo che sia convenevole, acciò che né alcuno delle sue s’intitolasse, né a lui fossero per avventura intitolate l’altrui” (“I believe it suitable that there should be an orderly memorandum, in order that none of his may be attributed to anyone else, or another’s by chance be attributed to him”). Boccaccio is, thus, concerned about the correct portrayal of Dante as an author and he strives to propose an accurate canon of his works. This fact should be remembered when dealing with his editorial work. He might not have been right, he might not have had truthful information, and

_480_ Cf. _Boccaccio autore e copista_, 291.
_481_ An overview of Boccaccio as a reader and scholar of Dante in Edoardo Fumagalli, “Boccaccio e Dante,” in _Boccaccio autore e copista_, 25-31, to which I refer the reader for further bibliography. 
_482_ _Boccaccio autore e copista_, 291-313.
_483_ Boccaccio, _Trattatello_, 481.
_484_ Ibid.; translation from Boccaccio, _Life of Dante_, 61.
in some instances he may have stressed those aspects that better fit with his own opinions; yet, when presenting and representing Dante and his work, he does not seem to be forging anything purposely.  

Scholarly attention has mainly been focused on Boccaccio’s manuscripts containing a collection of the major works by Dante. We have three Dantean anthologies by Boccaccio: MSS Toledo, Archivo y Biblioteca Capitulares, Zelada 104.6; BRF, 1035; and BAV, Chigi L V 176 and Chigi L VI 213, which once were a single codex. There he copied fifteen *canzoni*, the *Commedia*, and the *Vita Nuova* (not in the Riccardiano), along with his own *Vita di Dante* (not in the Riccardiano) and the *Argomenti in Terza Rima* introducing the three *cantiche* of the *Commedia*. MS Chigi L V 176 also contains Boccaccio’s own carme to Petrarch *Ytalie iam certus bonos*, and Petrarch’s RVF (in the ‘Chigi-form’), while the *Commedia*, which today is MS Chigi L VI 213, has been replaced by Guido Cavalcanti’s *Donna me prega* with Dino del Garbo’s Latin commentary.  

Among the many important facts that critics have highlighted concerning these books, one crucial point has to be recalled here: as Eisner emphasizes, Boccaccio considered the formation and diffusion of an anthology as a cultural instrument, and the circulation of a determined collection of works, along with the material presentation of each text, a fundamental way to deliver to the public his own interpretation of the text in question. Boccaccio aimed at the canonization of Dante and at the promotion of vernacular poetry, and he pursued this objective in multiple ways, one of which was the graphic form in which the works by Dante (and Petrarch and Cavalcanti) were presented to readers. Thus, as Cursi

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486 Domenico De Robertis, “Il ‘Dante e Petrarca’ di Giovanni Boccaccio,” in Il codice Chigiano, 7-72 and see above.
487 Eisner, Boccaccio and the Invention, and cf. above.
highlights, for instance the *Commedia* is copied in one-column form at the center of the page, just like the poems from the Antiquity, in order to emphasize its classical, and consequently canonical qualities; while the most famous feature of Boccaccio’s edition of the *Vita Nuova* is the placing of the *divisioni* in the margins, so that the prosimetrum becomes composed of lyric poems and narrative prose, accompanied by marginal glosses. Boccaccio’s copies of the *Vita Nuova* also provide a complex system of references consisting of both capital letters of four different shapes and sizes, and paragraph marks that follow the system of *ordinatio compilativa* used in scholastic university books.\(^8\) This peculiar *mise en page*, establishing a connection with the scholastic universe, materializes Boccaccio’s interpretation of Dante’s prosimetrum, and more generally of his poetry. Dante’s texts are the masterpieces of the newborn vernacular literature, and Boccaccio’s books actualize, through their physical form, his efforts to give authority to such a new tradition. As specifically for the *Vita Nuova*, by emphasizing the existence of an original commentary to the poems by their own author (i.e., the *divisioni*) through their placement in the margins, and more generally adopting scholastic layout and *ordinatio*, Boccaccio puts into relief its philosophical and doctrinal qualities, unconventionally presenting the prosimetrum not just as a text to read, but worth meditating on, and therefore also Dante as the *poeta-theologus* when writing lyric poetry. Through these editorial practices, and also by making consistent anthologies, containing a selected and carefully chosen corpus, he shaped the reception of Dante’s works for centuries to come.

As De Robertis observes, Boccaccio exerts a strong selective preference among Dante’s works: the canon he creates could be entitled “The Tragic Dante.” Indeed, for his

edition he chooses only the completed literary works that are stylistically elevated, excluding other works that, as we have mentioned, he knew. Boccaccio, therefore, portrays Dante differently from what emerges from other codices we have analyzed, such as the canzoniere Chigi I VIII 305 (see §1.2.3.1) or MSS Barb. Lat. 3953 and Martelli 12 (see §2.3.2). Although, as we have seen, these manuscripts differ from one another in many respects, the author-function they depict is still more similar than the Dante-function expressed by Boccaccio’s anthologies. Whether included in multilingual anthologies, as in the latter two codices, or in a wide-ranging anthology of vernacular poetry, as in the former, Dante in those collections is exclusively a vernacular lyric poet, whose work encompasses different genres (the prosimetrum; the high style, moral canzone; the sonnet; the tenzone). Boccaccio, instead, gathers the Commedia and a selected corpus of lyric writings, the Vita Nuova and the fifteen canzoni. It is important to recall that Boccaccio’s books are the only instances of the Commedia copied along with the Vita Nuova. Moreover, not even the canzoni appear along with the Commedia in any other codex. Although the major part of the copies of Commedia, Vita Nuova, and canzoni textually derive from his anthologies, Boccaccio’s selection stands out as peculiar, and does

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489 Domenico De Robertis, “Il ‘Dante e Petrarca’ di Giovanni Boccaccio,” in Il codice Chigiano, 44. The structure of Boccaccio’s Toledo codex has been compared to the structure of Virgil’s codices: “il corpo toledano dell’opera poetica di Dante s’adega insomma alla medievale rota Virgilii,” “nel codice Toledano l’opera poetica di Dante nel suo progressivo e completo insieme è proposta a replicare e rinnovare in volgare l’esemplarità e la classicità di quella di Virgilio;” a particular connection is proposed between the Vita nuova and the Bucolicae (Bettarini Bruni, Breschi, Tanturli, “Giovanni Boccaccio,” 9-20, on page 13). It is an interesting interpretation, which takes into account Boccaccio’s sensibility toward Dante’s stylistic definitions (Alighieri, DVE. Ed. Fenzi, 160-61; cf. Carrai, Dante elegiaco). Virgil’s tradition is certainly among the many factors that influenced Boccaccio in the composition of his anthologies; also, the exclusion of Virgil’s minor works from the anthologies containing his three major works might have inspired Boccaccio’s canon comprehending only the works in a more elevated style, in a binary opposition higher/lower style, as it is implied in De Robertis’s reading of his selection (Bettarini Bruni, Breschi, Tanturli, “Giovanni Boccaccio,” 10). Linked to the uniqueness of the presence of the Commedia in his books, it is a productive paradigm to define the exceptionality of Boccaccio’s editorial collections, especially in the context of lyric anthologies.

490 Alighieri, Kine 2002, vol. 2.1 237. For a detailed analysis, I refer the reader to Banella, La ‘Vita nuova’. The 1491 princeps of the canzoni is, instead, a sort of appendix to Dante’s Commedia with Landino’s commentary, see §2.3.1.
not match the cultural environment surrounding him, nor the most common reception of Dante in the following decades. While there are significant examples of followers of the “Boccaccio dantista,” his choices have often been resisted. In the following paragraphs we will see how this dialectics is embedded in the manuscripts copied by fellow poets.

Boccaccio’s intervention reveals itself as fundamental for the series of the so-called fifteen canzoni distese. He copied the same fifteen canzoni in the same order in each of his three anthologies, always after the Commedia. Their rubrics show a relevant difference: while the Toledo codex, the earliest one, has Latin rubrics, the Riccardiano has vernacular ones, while the most recent Chigi has none. This modification reflects a revision of the subsequent collections as a whole, since the other texts are subject to the same variation. The canzoni’s Latin rubrics are shorter than the vernacular ones, which for each poem provide a sort of small summary of their contents. A vast majority of the copies containing Dante’s lyric corpus derives from Boccaccio’s manuscripts. As for the canzoni, after the 2002 edition by De Robertis, the debate has revolved around the possibility that their order was not created by Boccaccio, but that it preceded him, or that it might even reflect the order Dante himself gave them. As we have already seen in chapter 1, textual evidence is all but incontrovertible and it would be advisable to consider the idea of a Dantean Libro delle canzoni just as an hypothesis. For what interests us here, the important fact is that the selection Boccaccio made, and the order the canzoni have in his manuscripts, is the form in which most of the readers have known

492 For the chronological succession, see Boccaccio autore e copista, 266-72.
493 Interestingly, Petrarch’s RV/F in the Chigi maintain a vernacular rubric.
Dante’s texts between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century. From the strictly material point of view, Boccaccio copies Dante’s canzoni as prose, following what at the time in Italy was the more common way of presenting this genre of poetry. Yet, such an apparently neutral choice becomes meaningful when in MS Chigi L V 176 finds itself in close contact with the copy of the RVF, for which Boccaccio chose the very same mise en page. As it is well-known after the milestone studies by Storey and Brugnolo, Petrarch’s visual poetics is an essential feature of his autograph copy of the RVF, where the material presentation of each genre of poetry, along with their distribution in the manuscript pages, is fundamental for their understanding and for the interpretation of the songbook as a macrotext.\footnote{See at least Brugnolo, “Libro di poesia;” Storey, Transcription and Visual Poetics.} Hence, Petrarch copied the canzoni should be copied as prose, while the sestine one verse per line in column-form, and the sonnets two verses per line. Boccaccio, instead, in his Chigi codex flattens the poetic genres, and copies every poem as prose. This layout is rather significant especially for the sonnets, which in the Florentine tradition were not always copied as prose, but more often on eight lines, two verses per line for the quatrains, and 2+1 for the tercets. There have been many hypotheses concerning Boccaccio’s choice as regards the mise en page of the RVF. Certainly, by using the very same layout, he visually puts Dante and Petrarch on equal terms as lyric writers, an impression that is strengthened by the fact that Petrarch’s collection begins directly in the verso of the last folio containing Dante’s canzoni, in a seamless poetic genealogy.\footnote{Banella, “Se Laurettam quandam;” Cursi, “Boccaccio architetto e artefice,” 48-50.}

In this chapter we will see how the scribes whose manuscripts we are exploring, Antonio Pucci and Andrea Stefani, are in a necessary dialogue with Boccaccio’s choices, both
for the ordering of their books and for the ‘Dante canon’ they propose. Pucci personally knew Boccaccio; his scribal practice as regards the *Commedia* and the *Vita Nuova* reveals the precise intention of reproducing Boccaccio’s editorial choices, while his copy of the *canzoni* is at the center of the discussion concerning the attribution to Boccaccio or not of the order and selection of the fifteen *canzoni distese*. On the other hand, Stefani’s manuscript is one of the most important in the textual reconstruction of Dante’s works, especially because it does not derive from Boccaccio’s copies of the *canzoni*. Therefore, since Boccaccio’s influence should theoretically not have affected him, it will be of crucial importance to underscore the potential differences in the presentation of Dante as a lyric writer.

### 3.2 Antonio Pucci, Campanaio, Herald and Poet

... tante son le cose che scrivere si potrebbono, ma, come disse il sommo poeta Dante, la cui autorità propuosi dinanzi ... (Pucci, *Libro di varie storie* XLVII 2)

In the conclusion of his *Libro di varie storie*, Antonio Pucci (Florence, 1310 c. – 1388) quotes Dante, explicitly declaring that throughout his work he has been proposing the great poet’s authority. Pucci’s encyclopedia is a sort of vernacular *speculum historiale* written in the footsteps of Brunetto Latini’s *Tesor* and *Tesoretto*. Beginning with the Creation and closing with the Final Judgment, it covers the history of the world with numerous diversions and extensions, which make it difficult for the reader to follow the thread of the story. While Pucci must have had a broad preliminary plan, he also indulged in digressions, including pieces of work that make the structure of his encyclopedia rather unclear. Though unfinished, it is definitely a work that Pucci wrote for an audience – indeed, he dedicated it to a *compare*, a friend. Pucci put together what he considered the necessary knowledge for a citizen of his time, that is, a literate man of
mid-fourteenth century Florence, one of the most important and powerful cities of the known world. Although he did not translate anything from Latin, a language which he did not know, and compiled his work from vernacular sources, he aspired to divulge and popularize knowledge. In this educational program ideated by a lower-middle-class man of the mid-Trecento, Dante played a key role as a cultural authority.

Pucci uses Dante’s *Commedia* as a knowledge repository, and Dante is heralded as an authority in a vast array of fields: the poem is a privileged source for mythology and historical figures, while more generally Pucci declares that the foundations of his own work lay on similar philosophical premises, as for instance when he mentions multiple times “that truth which has the face of falsehood” (“quel ver c'ha faccia di menzogna” *Inf.* 16.124), in order to validate the wonders he is narrating. The fact that here Dante becomes a cultural authority, while his *Commedia* is mainly seen as a sapiential work, instead of a great literary product, is not surprising, nor is it peculiar to Pucci. Pucci, though, was also a prolific poet himself and copyist of vernacular works for his own library. Thus, his intellectual activity went beyond the erudite compilation of the *Libro*. Yet the *Libro*, and especially the autograph manuscript in which it is contained (BML, Tempi 2) is crucial for understanding the shaping of the Dante-function from the point of view of Dante’s lyric poetry, and its relationship to the reception and diffusion of the *Commedia* in Florence at the turn of the Quattrocento.

As we have already mentioned, Pucci copied an anthology of Dante’s and other poets’ works in MS Riccardiano 1050, a lyric anthology inspired by Boccaccio’s editions of Dante’s

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497 See below.
498 Varvaro defines it as something more than a collection of excerpts, and something less than an encyclopedia (“Il Libro,” 60).
works, as is the whole *Commedia* he copied in MS Rome, Biblioteca dell’Accademia dei Lincei e Corsiniana, 44 F 26, where he also wrote his own *Argomenti* to Dante’s *Inferno.*\(^{501}\) When Pucci died in 1388, the volume containing the *Libro di varie storie* (MS Tempi 2) was inherited by the Benci family, whose members were intertwined with the main cultural (and also political) Florentine milieux of the fifteenth century. It is noteworthy that private notes and texts of other authors, such as Dante, were added in this volume by the heirs, Lorenzo and then his son, Filippo. But the Benci brothers owned other books containing Dante’s works. Thus, the corpus formed by the books copied and owned by Pucci and the Benci family (over which it is possible to see the shadow of the most important among Dante’s editors, Boccaccio), is a product of a multilayered reception and subsequent transmission of Dante. Hence, it perfectly illustrates how the Dante-function was shaped over different generations, giving us a diachronic picture of readers and scribes who actively manipulated Dante’s corpus and, thus, his figure as an author.

3.2.1 Pucci’s Dantean Books

Pucci had at least two books containing Dante’s works, today’s MSS BRF, 1050 and Rome, Biblioteca dell’Accademia dei Lincei e Corsiniana, 44 F 26. Paired together, they re-form Boccaccio’s anthologies. Yet, the fact that Pucci had two separate books, in which he also added a series of other texts, is crucial. Boccaccio’s Dantean anthologies are the only extant manuscripts in which Dante’s organized lyric sequences, the *Vita nuova* and the *canzoni*, are copied along with the *Commedia.*\(^{502}\) Antonio’s choice seems to manifest such a trend to its fullest extent, displaying a different interpretation of Dante from what Boccaccio proposed.

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\(^{502}\) See above.
through his anthologies. Boccaccio put together all Dante’s works in elevated style, that is *Vita nuova-Commedia-moral canzoni*, leaving out other texts that he must have known, but which did not fit the Dante-function he was shaping: Boccaccio portrayed Dante as a dignified *poeta* placed at the same level of the classics, whose works deserved not only to be read, but also to be carefully studied, as it is chiefly demonstrated by the scholastic layout used for the *Vita Nuova*. Pucci’s copies of Dante’s works are particularly important, not just because, as many other scribes, he shows a resistance to Boccaccio’s ideas; but primarily because, while not conforming to many of his propositions and not understanding any of the essential traits of his visual poetics, at the exact same time he manifests a deep interest in Boccaccio’s editorial work.

At the very same moment of its acknowledgement as written by Antonio Pucci, Annamaria Bettarini Bruni maintained that MS Riccardiano 1050 shows that Boccaccio’s influence is particularly pressing in its physical arrangement. By analyzing in detail the peculiarities of Pucci’s copy of Dante’s *Vita Nuova*, which textually derives from Boccaccio’s edition, like the *Vita di Dante* and part of the *canzoni*, it is undeniable that Pucci wanted to reproduce Boccaccio’s system of *ordinatio compilativa*. There are major imperfections, suggesting that he did not have direct access to Boccaccio’s copies of the prosimetrum. But his effort to reproduce the details of the original edition, in the context of a portion of Boccaccio’s anthologies is indisputable. He copied the series *Vita di Dante-Vita nuova* and then the *canzoni* in separated quires, which he placed in the ‘correct’ series, then filling up the pages left blank with other lyric texts; he strived to divide Dante’s texts, and especially the *Vita Nuova*, through

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letters of different shapes and sizes, resulting, however, in confusion. Yet, it must be emphasized that Pucci: 1. excluded the *Commedia*; 2. placed Dante’s lyric corpus in a wider anthology, containing authors from the early Trecento to his contemporary times, such as Sacchetti and Petrarch.

The lyric anthology contained in Pucci’s Riccardiano codex is not different from other books of the same period and social milieu. Pucci copied those texts he was interested in, in a paper codex, using his merchant writing, which appears not particularly refined to our eyes, but is a fairly good realization for a non-professional scribe. The group of poets that fill up the blank pages around Dante’s selection is composed by writers of the age of Dante himself, up to Pucci’s contemporaries and friends, such as Boccaccio. It is remarkable that Petrarch follows, in a separate quire dedicated to his *canzoni* and *sestine*. The pairing of Dante and Petrarch, which will become more and more common in Florentine lyric anthologies at the turn of the Quattrocento, is still fairly unusual before 1388, the latest possible date for the manuscript to have been copied. Yet, in the context of Pucci’s interest in Boccaccio’s editorial practices, it must be remembered that Dante and Petrarch are precisely the two authors on which Boccaccio’s Chigi anthology is centered.

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504 Banella, “The Fortunes” and *La Vita nuova*, 153-63, 256-64.
505 Robins, “Antonio Pucci, Guardiano.”
507 Cavalcanti’s *canzone* is added much later by Boccaccio, probably in 1368-70, in place of the *Commedia* (Corsi, *La scrittura e i libri*, 15-82; Cursi, “Cronologia e stratigrafia”). Although it is merged with another poem, Pucci has copied Cavalcanti’s *Donna me prega* right after the *Vita nuova*, again following what Boccaccio does in his books.
In Antonio’s lyric anthology, while Dante’s materials are diverse, the Petrarchan section is homogenous, both for the selection in terms of genre, and for its placement at the end of the volume, where Petrarch’s poems are followed only by texts written to or for himself. But, notably, Pucci included in his selection all the *canzoni* and *sestine* of Petrarch’s RVF in the ‘forma Chigi’, the Chigi-form whose name derives precisely from Boccaccio’s Chigi codex, its first and complete witness. The poems are orderly copied and correctly placed in the series, and the few perturbations seem to be due to a deteriorated source. This circumstance also suggests that Pucci did not create in the first place the selection of *canzoni* and *sestine* from a complete copy of Petrarch’s songbook; instead, he must have found them already separated from the other meters. It is impossible to determine whether Pucci derived his Petrarchan corpus from the tradition of the Chigi-form of the RVF because it was the one owned by Boccaccio, or because it was common in Florence in those years. It is noteworthy, however, that Pucci had a substantial selection of Petrarch’s poems, which were not extremely diffused at the time. Also, the mere presence of poems from the RVF sheds light on the progressive emergence of Petrarch as poetic authority. Such a careful selection of his poems, in comparison to Dante’s more varied corpus, illuminates the ways in which Dante exerts authority not only as regards this codex, but more generally throughout Pucci’s activity as poet and scribe.

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509 In detail, the Petrarchan section is comprised of: RVF 22, 23, 28, 29 (only ll. 1-7), 37, 50, 53, 66, 70, 71, 72, 73, 80, 105 (first stanza, followed by the sixth stanza of 119), 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 135, 142, 264, 268, 270, 206. That is, all the *canzoni* and *sestine* of the Chigi-form except RFV 30, and with the addition of RFV 206. Given the fragmentation of 119 (which in the Chigi-form is the next *canzone* after 105) and 29, it seems that Pucci copied from a damaged copy of the collection. To this selection, other poems follow by Bindo Bonichi, Sennuccio del Bene, and Fazio degli Uberti, a series closed by Franco Sacchetti’s *canzone* written after Petrarch’s death, *Or è mancata ogni poesia* (cf. §3.4.1.1).
Given that his biography opens the anthology, to which the *Vita Nuova* follows, Dante appears as the most important author in the Riccardiano codex. After some folios, we find the series of Dante’s fifteen *canzoni* in Boccaccio’s order, and then, other rhymes in the middle of the anthology. This latter short series of poems is peculiar to Pucci’s book and symptomatic of his practices as anthologist. On f. 60r Pucci copied four poems, three by Dante and one sent to him by Cino: *Perché ti vedi giovinetta e bella; Novellamente Amor mi giura e dice* (Cino); *I’ ho veduto già senza radice, Sonar bracchetti e cacciatori aizzare*.

The first poem by Dante is a ballad, which is usually included in the so-called cycle for the *pargoletta*, closely related to those poems for the *donna pietra*. Then, the *tenzone* with Cino da Pistoia follows: there, Cino asks Dante whether he should love a young woman, or if it is better that he lowers his gaze in order to avoid Love darts. Dante’s answer is hardly decipherable to us in its details: in general terms, he reminds his friend that young women’s love is often just superficial, and he thus shall not pursue such a love hunt. In the last sonnet copied by Pucci on c. 60r, *Sonar bracchetti*, the poet is lost in the pleasures of hunting, when he suddenly recalls his love duties and is ashamed of having forgotten to love. These four texts form a logical and cohesive sequence contained in one page: the first ballad and the *tenzone* share the same representation of the beloved woman, who is young and cruel, just as the *donna pietra*, while the tone remains gentle, almost elegiac, and not harsh as in the *petrose*. The last sonnet evokes the last verse of the

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510 Pucci also included in his anthology the apocryphal *canzone I’ fu ferma [la] chiesa e ferma fede* (f. 69r, in reality by Giannozzo Sacchetti).

511 The two sonnets are also connected through the use of the word *verde* (green): it is the last word of Cino’s sonnet, where it must be used for referring to a young woman; Dante, as is usual in *tenzioni*, also uses this word for designating the woman as young, while in the last tercet he also implies that the woman is dressed in green. These correspondences also recall Dante’s *sestina Al poco giorno*, where the woman is indeed dressed in green, an image that is recalled by Petrarch in his own *sestina Verdi panni, sanguigni, oscuri o persi* (RVF 29). Both *sestine* are copied by Pucci in his anthology: Dante’s *Al poco giorno* is in the sixth place in the series of fifteen *distese*, while Pucci copies only the first stanza of Petrarch’s *Verdi panni* without interruption after *O aspettata in ciel beata et bella* (RVF 28).
previous one, in a series that resembles the *coblas capfinidas*’s scheme, where the stanzas are linked to one another through the repetition of the final word(s) of one stanza at the beginning of the following:

*I’ ho veduto già senza radice* l. 11-14  
Periglio è grande in donna si vestita:  
però l’afronto de la gente verde  
parmi che la tua caccia non seguir de’.\(^{512}\)  

Sonar bracchetti e cacciatori aizzare l. 1-4  
Sonar bracchetti e cacciatori aizzare,  
lepri levare ed isgridar le genti,  
e di guinzagli uscir veltri correnti,  
per belle piagge volger e ’mboccare\(^{513}\)

The Riccardiano is the only manuscript where this sequence appears. Moreover, it is the only one where we can read the ballad *Perché ti vedi*,\(^{514}\) and where the two sonnets of the *tenzone* are complete.\(^{515}\) Consequently, *Sonar bracchetti* follows the sonnet *I’ ho veduto* uniquely in the Riccardiano. There is no clue for us to ascertain whether Pucci compiled the series of four poems, or if he found it and then included it in his anthology. Nevertheless, this remarkable cluster of poems, intertextually connected, shows that he was interested in meaningful series of lyrics. This circumstance brings us to Dante’s fifteen *canzoni distese*.

As we have already mentioned, Pucci’s manuscript is at the center of the discussion of whether the order and the selection of Dante’s fifteen *canzoni distese*, that we find in his manuscripts, has been ideated by Boccaccio, or not. Indeed, in the Riccardiano 1050 a part of the poems textually derives from Boccaccio’s copies, while another part is independent. Building on these findings, the theory of an order preceding Boccaccio arised. But, as regards

\(^{512}\) “There’s great danger in a woman clothed in this colour: so my opinion is, you would do better to call off your hunt of the gentle green one.”  
\(^{513}\) “The belling of hounds, the cries of hunters urging them on, hares running from cover, the shouting of onlookers, swift greyhounds slipping from the leash, their veering through fair meadows, their snatching the prey...”.  
\(^{515}\) This *tenzone* appears also in MS Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, 445. Here, there are only l. 1-4 of the first sonnet by Cino, and ll. 1-6 of Dante’s answer. The scribe left some blank space, thus knowing that the texts were incomplete (Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, vol. 3 470-72).
Pucci, it must be remembered that he was a follower of Boccaccio’s editorial work, in which he was deeply invested. Thus, there is the concrete possibility that he reconstructed the order the *canzoni* had in Boccaccio’s manuscripts using diverse materials. As Marco Cursi emphasizes, Pucci also copied the *Commedia* under the influence of Boccaccio’s editorial choices. His copy of the poem is a medium-size paper manuscript, written in merchant script into one column: these characteristics are not common in the mid-fourteenth century, and while Pucci must have worked alone on his own copy of the *Commedia*, it seems probable that such physical choices follow from the desire of reproducing the main features of Boccaccio’s copies of the poem, which Antonio could have seen in person.

Thus, Pucci’s editorial work is neither independent, nor pushes forward the boundaries of vernacular literature. Nevertheless, it is of interest not only for understanding the influence that Boccaccio had on his contemporaries, but also for discovering the most diffused cultural trends at the middle of the fourteenth century. Pucci’s manuscripts give a valuable picture of textual and reading practices in the Florentine context of his time: indeed, they portray Dante as the main cultural authority, while in the lyric field Petrarch is gaining momentum, and Boccaccio emerges as the leading Florentine intellectual. Before confronting Pucci’s declarations as regards literature and poetics, it must be remembered that we also have a manuscript written in his own hand of Brunetto Latini’s *Tesoretto* and *Favolello* (MS BNCF, Magl. VII 1052). This manuscript is different from the others: while Pucci writes it by himself using his own mercantesca, it is smaller and it is a more elegant parchment codex. The three

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516 Textual evidence is not definitive, and given Pucci’s tendency to imitate Boccaccio’s editions, it seems possible that he reproduced the order Dante’s *canzoni* have in his manuscripts using different textual sources. Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, vol. 2: 246-59; Grimaldi, “Boccaccio editore,” 149-52. Cf. §1.2.2 and Banella, *La ‘Vita nuova’*, 162-63.

517 Cursi, “Un codice della *Commedia*,” 65-76.

518 Cursi, “Un nuovo manoscritto.”
autograph manuscripts by Pucci significantly embody his cultural persona. They are: 1. a lyric anthology inspired by Boccaccio, dominated by Dante, where there is also Petrarch; 2. a Commedia structured following Boccaccio; 3. a manuscript containing Brunetto’s erudite vernacular works in verse. By analyzing his works, and in particular his encyclopedic zibaldone in MS Tempi 2, along with his statements concerning Dante, a cohesive picture emerges, where Dante is one of the major authorities, both for knowledge and poetic technique.

Pucci dedicated to Dante one chapter of his Centiloquio, a verse adaptation of Giovanni Villani’s Nuova Cronica (New Chronicles). There, Dante is represented as leading poet and master of knowledge, whose death is grieved by all the Liberal Arts, personified as mourning women, while the Commedia is a sapiential work, hard to understand if the reader is not familiar with the fundamental authorities. Pucci also wrote a sonnet inspired by Dante’s portrait in the Bargello, where he describes Dante’s appearance and praises him as a man and a poet. In the so-called Libro di varie storie Pucci goes further.

Varvaro shed light on the sources from which Pucci compiled his encyclopedic zibaldone. In particular, he draws from: Marco Polo’s travels, Il Milione, which he read in a Tuscan translation; Innocent III’s De contemptu mundi in the volgarizzamento by Bono Giamboni (entitled Della miseria dell’uomo); Guido da Pisa’s Fiore d’Italia. In addition to these works, Pucci quotes other authors, such as Brunetto Latini, whose Tresor he reads in a vernacular translation. But, in particular, he uses the poems, which he manifestly considered repositories of current knowledge: Dante’s Commedia and Cecco D’Ascoli’s L’Acerba. Indeed, in the Libro di varie

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519 For the Centiloquio and Pucci’s copy of the Vita nuova where also an interest for knowledge can be recognized see Banella, “The Fortunes.” Cf. Bartuschat, Les «Vies», 99-100.

520 For Cecco’s work, see Ciociola, “Poesia gnomica,” 430-37. The unfinished poem Acerba is an encyclopedia in verse, and presents, in this order: the properties of the planets and their influence; vices and virtues; a moral bestiary and a lapidary; its last part is comprised of varied questiones between a master and a disciple, on themes concerning cosmology, astrology, chemistry, physics, as well as necromancy and pyromancy.
there are several citations from both works, whose verses are added as a confirmation of general information or as the main and only auctoritas on a determined matter. In his embryonic encyclopedia Pucci gathers together works that, to our eyes, appear as belonging to different genres (travel literature, poetry, ascetic literature etc.), but that had in common the ability to provide valuable wisdom for citizen’s intellectual growth. Cecco d’Ascoli, physician and astrologer, wrote his poem challenging Dante, aiming at giving an example of a true scholastic poem, where knowledge would be exposed by itself, and not embedded and hidden in stories and fables, as in his opinion Dante did. The fact that Pucci puts together the two poems in the context of a speculum is, therefore, not anomalous. Likewise, this potpourri of sources seems rather normal for a Florentine at the middle of the Trecento. It is also necessary to point out that, while Varvaro, in dividing the Libro with rubrics, marks a section with the title “Di alcune figure dantesche” (“About some Dantean figures,” XXVIII), Pucci did not reserve any particular part of his work to Dante: this section is, indeed, a portion of the section dedicated to mythology, a part where Dante is the only source, but where the general scheme of the work remains unchanged. On the other hand, he dedicates a section to Cecco. There, Pucci writes that Cecco was an astrologer who was burnt at the stake for heresy and that he, nevertheless, will write some of his sayings, not meaning to go against the holy Church.

Indeed, Dante was an established authority for his Commedia that, when Pucci is writing his encyclopedia, had already had a noticeable commentary tradition; instead, to use Cecco, who had been burned with his books, might have needed some little precaution. Nevertheless, using both authors as cultural authorities, paired with more traditional knowledgeable works,

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521 Ciociola, “Poesia gnonica,” 437.
522 Pucci, Libro, 226 (XXXIII).
523 Cf. Censimento dei Commenti 1.
such as those by Brunetto and Guido da Pisa, hints at a clear classification of both poems, and in particular of Dante’s *Commedia*. Dante’s poetry is strongly associated with the erudite works, which Pucci read in the vernacular, thus not emphasizing the narrative qualities of the poem, which are mentioned though in the chapter of his *Centiloquio*, where Music and Poetry cry Dante’s death specifically for his abilities in their fields.

While Pucci rather ordinarily mentions Dante as a cultural authority for his poem, and less obviously—when highlighting those passages of the *Vita nuova* concerning philosophy and rhetoric—seems to extend such authority to some of his lyric work, it is noteworthy that in his *Arte del dire in rima* (*Art of writing in verses*), a series of twelve sonnets where Pucci explains how to compose to a son of a podestà, Dante is called out as the principal poetic authority:

Ma d’una cosa t’amaestro avante:
che tu [ti] vegne spesso spermentando
sopr’a’ sonetti che furon di Dante.
Se ti correggi pe’ sonetti suoi
per nulla guisa mai fallire puoi.

(sonnet I, ll. 12-16)

First, this short praise of Dante as a lyric writer informs us that Pucci, to consider him an authority in sonnet-writing, must have known more poems by Dante than the two sonnets he included in his anthology. But, it also suggests that the role of Dante as a model of *ars poetica* is somewhat separated from that of the erudite and divinely inspired poet of the *Commedia*, a separation that is mirrored and further emphasized by the subdivision of Dante’s works into two separate codices. Pucci’s series of sonnets is mainly based on the rhetorical principles exposed by Brunetto in his *Tresor*. Nevertheless, the only other authority explicitly quoted by Pucci is Cicero (sonnet XII, l. 17: “F. Tullio prova si fatta maniera”), Brunetto’s own source,
thus implying that Dante, even as a lyric writer, is at the same level of the classics, while the encyclopedic writer, Brunetto, is not. Yet again we find a similar pool of sources to those of the Libro: Dante, Brunetto, along with the classics--though not read directly.

But Pucci has also proven himself as a sort of commentator of Dante. In the Libro di varie storie Pucci quoted and commented on Dante using a previous commentary, which Abardo identified in those cluster of glosses attributed to a so-called “Anonimo latino” (Latin Anonimous), along with Jacopo Alighieri’s commentary.526 In his own copy of the Commedia, instead, Pucci included a series of Argomenti (summaries) in prose for the Inferno, one for each canto, which Cursi is inclined to attribute to Pucci himself.527 Antonio would have written these short summaries in the 1350s, before the Libro, building on previous sources, such as the Ottimo commento. The Argomenti attempt to interpret the text, but mostly deal with the bare content of the Commedia, which is described, with a particular focus on the main characters appearing in each canto and the geography of Dante’s Hell. While a deeper analysis of these texts and their sources is needed, it is fundamental to point out the fact that Pucci included an hermeneutic apparatus to Dante’s Inferno, which is even vaster than Boccaccio’s Argomenti in terza rima. While it has been hypothesized that Boccaccio himself might have wanted to include a commentary in the margins of his own Commedie, and especially in the Toledo codex,528 the extant manuscripts present the poem by itself, without any commentary. This fact might point

526 Spadotto, “Anonimo latino.” Abardo ascertained that Pucci used this set of glosses, but he maintained that Pucci translated the Latin commentary himself into the vernacular (Abardo, “Il Dante”). Yet, what Varvaro writes about Pucci’s knowledge of Latin, and in particular the fact that he only used works that circulated in the vernacular, along with the gross mistakes he makes in writing even some scattered Latin words (Varvaro, “Il Libro,” 70–71), suggest that he did not know Latin (see also Bettarini Bruni, “Pucci”). It would, thus, be impossible that Pucci translated the glosses by the Anonimo latino, which, by the way, also circulated in a vernacular version (cf. MS London, British Library, Harley 3459, see Spadotto, “Anonimo latino,” 55).


to that different conception of Dante, or better of the Dante-function, between Boccaccio and Pucci (and many others), which we have previously emphasized: while Boccaccio promoted Dante as a classic of vernacular literature, whose main corpus was comprised of his lyric poetry along with the *Commedia*, probably in the footsteps of Virgil, the most common reception of Dante divided his literary persona into a less-authoritative lyric writer and the greater master of the sapiential poem.

### 3.2.2. The Benci Brothers

After his death, Pucci’s autograph manuscript of the *Libro di varie storie*, MS Tempi 2, was inherited by Giovanni di Taddeo Benci, and remained with the Benci family for almost a century.\(^{529}\) Their consecutive interventions over a century have changed the shape of the volume, producing a unique artifact. As of today, it shows the interventions of five different hands, comprised of Pucci’s own hand and of two members of the family, Lorenzo Benci and his son Filippo. The Benci were *linaioli*, linen drapers and flax workers, who had close relationships with the Florentine cultural elites: Lorenzo’s father, Giovanni di Taddeo, was a friend of Coluccio Salutati; while among his four sons—Filippo, Lorenzo, Tommaso, and Giovanni—the latter was a friend of Marsilio Ficino, whose Latin *Pimander* he translated into the vernacular. Filippo was the one in charge of the family library, and his hand has been recognized in several manuscripts.\(^{530}\) As regards Pucci’s book, the Benci used the pages left blank as a repository of familiar memories, and added a coherent series of texts: Dante’s *canzoni*. In 1399 Lorenzo copied thirteen *canzoni* by Dante, along with a piece of Cavalcanti’s *Donna me prega*, and signed and dated his copy: “Expliciunt cantilene Dantis Allegheri de

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\(^{530}\) Tanturli, “I Benci copisti;” cf. Ragni, “Benci, Lorenzo” and “Benci, Tommaso.”
Florenzia. Conpièi di rassemprarle io, Lorenzo di Giovanni di Taddeo Benci de’ Baroni da Signa” (“Expliciunt cantilene Dantis Allegheri de Florenzia. I finished to copy them myself, Lorenzo di Giovanni di Taddeo Benci de’ Baroni da Signa”). Later, his son continued where he ceased, and in another available blank space he integrated some missing portions of his father’s copy, and added another series of Dantean canzoni.

BML, Tempi 2 [Dantean sections]

dante alinghieri Giotto necimabue ma’ non dipinse (f. 83r) – Giotto né Cimabue ma’ non dipinse (apocryphal) [unknown hand]

Canzone di Dante che mancava ch’el resto ch’ominci i(n) q(uesto) 104 158 [Filippo]
19 I fui ferma chiesa e ferma fede (f. 88rv) – Io mi credea del tutto esser partito
Sonetto di Dante che non dipinse (f. 90r) – Aleksandro lasciò la signoria (apocryphal, by Butto da Firenze)

Sonetto di Dante che manca ch’el resto ch’ominci i(n) q(uesto) 104 158 [Filippo]
20 Ai falsarii poche tradi aues (f. 88v) – Ai fans ris, pour quoi trai aves
21 Inchebrata uirtu dalsommo cielo (ff. 88v-90r) – Incredita virtù del sommo cielo

Finito illibro della nuova vita di Dante alighierj fiorentino (f. 90r)

Sonetti di Dante che manca ch’el resto ch’ominci i(n) q(uesto) 104 158 [Filippo]
21 I falsarii poche tradi aues (f. 88v) – Ai fans ris, pour quoi trai aves
22 Inchebrata uirtu dalsommo cielo (ff. 88v-90r) – Incredita virtù del sommo cielo

Finito illibro della nuova vita di Dante alighierj fiorentino (f. 90r)

Sonetti di Dante che non dipinse (f. 90r) – Dante O uoi che per la via d’Amor passate

Incipiunt cantilene dantis alighierj de florenzia [Lorenzo]
1 Chosi nel mio parìlar vogli’esser aspro (f. 105v) – Così nel mio parlare vogli’esser aspro
2 Donne chauete Intelletto damore (f. 106rv) – Donne ch’avete intelletto d’amore
3 Don(n)a piatosa edinouella etate (f. 106rv) – Donna pietosa e di novella etate
4 Voi chentendendo Ilterzo ciel Mouete (f. 106v-107r) – Voi che ’ntendeendo il terzo ciel movete
5 AMor chenella mente miragiona (f. 107r) – Amor che nella mente mi ragiona
6 Le dolci rime d’amor ch’io solea
7 AMor che movi tu a virtù dal cielo
8 Io sento sì d’Amor la gran possanza
9 Al pocho giorno ed al gran cerchio d’ombra
10 Amor, tu vedi ben che questa donna
11 E’ m’incresce di me sì duramente

Finita la xxij Chanzona dj dante. Chominacia la xxiiij° [Filippo]

Inquesto a 108 e chominciamento diq(ue)sta canzona che comincia Io sento si d’Amor la gran possanza, mancbani q(u)e)sta stanzza Canzon mie bella settu massimigli [Filippo]

Indietro a c. 110 e scritto sino alla 1/13 chanzona didante qui apie chominciero la 1/4 Nel nome didio [Lorenzo]

XVII Adispiteta mente chepur Mira (f. 159r) – La dispiteta mente che pur mira

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It is not unusual to find personal notes in manuscripts, just as that family books were used for annotating domestic memories. Indeed, the Benci not only added other texts, but they also wrote their ownership notes, which inform us that the book remained with them for four generations, along with more lengthy texts, such as a 1413 extended memory, a 1434 inventory, and a memento for Tommaso’s death in 1470. Pucci’s book became, for the Benci, a volume that passed down from generation to generation, with its collection of civic knowledge, poetry, and affective memories.

Although the mere fact of adding texts in left blank pages is, per se, not relevant, it is of particular relevance that the Benci continued to cherish such a protean volume. Other than Pucci’s encyclopedia and the lyrics added by the Benci themselves, the book contains also an astrological treatise, some recipes, poems by authors other than Dante, a fragment of a cantare, and the epitaphs of Boccaccio and Francesco Landini. MS Tempi 2, as we see it today, is the product of a multilayered reception and subsequent transmission of Dante, where Pucci’s own interest in Dante’s Commedia as it is expressed in the encyclopedia, is then paired with his lyric poetry. The Benci owned other books containing Dante’s works, but this one seems to have held a special place in their library.

In MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Can. Ital. 114 (copied by Filippo in the mid-fifteenth century) we find Boccaccio’s Vita di Dante, Dante’s Vita Nuova, and the series of fifteen canzoni
along with other lyrics, in a sequence that becomes canonical in the Quattrocento, where the canzoni are followed by Ai faus ris and I’ mi son pargoletta, along with a series of poems of the Vita Nuova (the so-called “rime scelte,” selected poems), and the Convivo. This codex shows a crystalized Dantean canon that textually derives from Boccaccio’s edition, where the Vita Nuova has recovered the divisioni, which are not placed in the margins, and the collection of Dante’s poems is integrated in a lyric series that must have been ideated in fifteenth-century Florence, since it does not appear before or elsewhere. The Oxford codex expresses the work that has been done on Dante at the middle of the Quattrocento. The additions to Pucci’s zibaldone by the Benci are mostly made of those same lyric poems that also appear in this more recent manuscript written by Filippo (to which they are textually close, but not directly related). But in MS Tempi 2 there are other apocryphal texts and the order of Dante’s poems is slightly different, thus witnessing the primordial soup hosting the making of such a series, its early disordered appearance at the end of the fourteenth century, in a milieu where Boccaccio’s influence was definitely primary. The series of canzoni copied by Lorenzo Benci reproduces Boccaccio’s series, with the three canzoni from the Vita Nuova in second, third, and twelfth position. Interestingly, Filippo adds three other canzoni to this series, two apocryphal and Ai faus ris, which here is independent from the ballad I’ mi son pargoletta (which, instead, is

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531 The “rime scelte” are comprised of the three canzoni of the Vita Nuova, its ballad and a series of sonnet in the order they have in the prosimetrum: Donne ch’avete intelletto d’Amore, Donna pietosa e di novella etate, Li occhi dolenti per pietà del core, O voi che per la via d’Amor passate, Ballata, i’ vo’ che tu ritrovi Amore, Spese fiate veggnomi a la mente, Amore e ’l cor gentil sono una cosa, Quantunque volte, lasso, mi rimembra, Era venuta ne la mente mia, Deb peregrini che penosi andate, Oltre la spera che più larga gira. In-between the Vita nuova and the Convivo, MS Can. Ital. 114 contains the following poems by Dante: 1 + the “rime scelte” + 2-15 + Ai faus ris and I’ mi son pargoletta. On this MS see Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 1.2 556-57; Tanturli, “I Benci copisti,” 243-44, 297-98.

532 Both the Vita Nuova and the canzoni derive from Boccaccio’s MS Chigi L V 176.

533 Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 2.1 238-239.

534 MSS Tempi 2 and Can. Ital. 114 are closely related, and there is contamination between them. Dante’s poems in both codices derive from Boccaccio’s Chigi codes, but while it depends from MS Tempi 2, MS Can. Ital. 144 does not directly derive from it, and instead it must have been copied from an intermediary manuscript, a codex interpositus now lost (Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 2.1 570-85).
included in the Oxford codex), and—comparable to what happens in Stefani’s anthology—is accompanied by peripherical texts, that is, misattributed canzoni, to which a short series of sonnets follows, reproducing the traditional hierarchy of meters. Thus, the trilingual canzone is fully integrated in the canon. The very last sequence, comprised of an apocryphal text, a sonnet to Cino and three from the Vita Nuova, seems to gather random poems. Sonnets and canzoni are divided by a rubric which seems to refer to the end of the Vita Nuova, a text that is not copied in this book. Nevertheless, since in at least another codex the final rubric of the prosimetrum is not placed right after its end, but after the canzoni following it, probably this series was originally found in a volume where the Vita Nuova was complete, suggesting the increasing erosion of Boccaccio’s selection and the consequent creation of a multi-pronged canon.

This series of events, and of books, shows the ways in which Boccaccio’s editorial work deeply influenced the following generations, but also how his ideas have been reshaped to match the new ideas of the time: starting at the middle of the Quattrocento, after having been the banner of the Republicans, Dante’s poetry was going to be appropriated by the Medici. Dante as a lyric philosopher was imitated by Lorenzo de’ Medici himself in his prosimetrum, the Comento: such acquisition passed through the pairing of the Convivio and the Vita Nuova, along with a series of moral love lyrics, a canon matching precisely what we find in Filippo’s Oxford manuscript, which embodies such a Dante, portrayed as a sort of Platonist philosopher and lover.536

535 MS BNCF, Panciatichiano 9, f. 77r; cf. Banella, La ‘Vita nuova,” 132.
536 Dionisotti, “Dante nel Quattrocento;” Grayson, “Dante and the Renaissance;” Gilson, Dante and Renaissance Florence and Reading Dante in Renaissance Italy.
3.3 Andrea Stefani, Musician, and Poet

In 1399 a spiritual stream traversed northern and central Italy: processions of people of any age, sex and social class donned white robes and went from city to city, and from village to village, asking for peace and mercy. Because of their clothing, the movement has been called the Bianchi, the Whites. Their popular devotion spread in that summer, starting most likely from Liguria, and arrived in Rome. It lasted at least until the end of the year, and was strengthened by the bubonic plague that broke out in those same months in northern Italy, and arrived in central Italy in the months to come.\textsuperscript{537} Many accounts of those days have arrived to us, among which there is the story that Andrea Stefani writes in his manuscript, where he also collects a wide-ranging lyric anthology.\textsuperscript{538} There, he introduces three of his own \textit{laudi} (vernacular sacred songs) with a prose narration of the occasion after which they were written, that is precisely the popular devotion that arised after the Bianchi processions held in Florence in August 1399. Andrea tells us that on August 16 three processions went out of the city, in different directions (to Arezzo, the Valdarno, and the Casentino), while processions within Florence were held for nine days, each day touching one of the city’s nine most important churches and monasteries.\textsuperscript{539} Despite some inaccuracies in the dates, his account matches the information collected by historians: Bornstein, for instance, writes that parties of Bianchi arrived in Florence starting August 15, 1399, and that the processions started on August 28 and indeed went where Andrea writes.\textsuperscript{540} Bornstein recalls that Coluccio Salutati states that

\textsuperscript{537} On the Bianchi see Bornstein, \textit{The Bianchi}, and Giraudo, “La devozione,” to which I refer the reader for further bibliography.

\textsuperscript{538} MS Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, C 152. The report is on f. 54r-f. Andrea Stefani’s report can be read in Scoti-Bertinelli, “Andrea Stefani,” 45-53; cf. Volpi,\textit{ Una landa}.

\textsuperscript{539} Volpi,\textit{ Una landa}, 13.

\textsuperscript{540} Bornstein,\textit{ The Bianchi}, 91-94.
“our whole city is in white,” and this exaggeration somehow seems to match the numbers Andrea provides in his notice, where he affirms that more than thirty thousand people participated in the external processions, and forty-six thousand in the internal ones, with fifteen thousand kids under 15 years of age. Andrea probably had an official role in the supervision of the processions held within the city, which were presided over by the bishop, Onofrio Visdomini (whom Andrea calls Nofri), and the Signoria. That the institutions of the Comune took the direction of these popular devotions is a common fact happening all around Italy, as is their initial opposition to the Bianchi’s demands of peace and mercy, which included the liberation of prisoners and the end of rivalries, which Andrea does not mention. He is far more interested in the course of the events, especially of the first internal procession, leading to San Gaggio. He writes that he coordinated the procession and that, with the other school teachers, he divided into groups first the kids and then the adults, so that he could count them.

The report of the Florentine Bianchi processions is preceded by a rubric connected to the first lauda, where Andrea writes that the poem had been composed dovendo seguire la morìa del 1400, since there would have been the 1400 epidemic. The information is confirmed at the end of Andrea’s report, where he narrates that, since he saw the bubonic plague arriving inside and outside the city of Florence, he started writing laudi for the processions and devotions that there would have been in the wake of such mournful events. This rubric gives us two pieces of information about him. First, that he most likely was a professional musician and composer of musical texts, writing poems by request; secondly, that the report was probably written long

541 Ibid., 91.
after the events, perhaps when he copied the manuscript in the 1410s (see below), taking his own laudi from a quaderno di mia mano con tutte le parole, a booklet written by his own hand with all the words, and we may also presume the musical intonation, which was a tre canti, that is to say, a polyphonic song with three voices. Andrea, thus, informs us that he has his own music for his own poems; but in the lyric anthology he introduces only the words, not the neumes. This is another rather precious piece of information: Andrea felt that his poems could be encompassed in a lyric anthology, where he also collects most famous poets such as Dante and Petrarch, along with contemporary poets; but the music is something different, which can accompany the poems, yet it may not be included in a mostly literary anthology. We shall thus analyze more in depth the composition and consistency of Andrea Stefani’s anthology.

3.3.1 The Marucelliano Codex

Andrea’s poetic anthology is today’s MS Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, C 152. It is a paper manuscript, written in a cursive merchant script in two columns, which has been dated to the first decades of the fifteenth century. From a strictly material point of view, it is not a cohesive volume. The copy has not been done seamlessly, and many of the works are contained in separate and not consecutive quires; also, the ink changes, suggesting separate work sessions. It has also lost many leaves, thus we cannot be sure of its original composition. The first part (ff. 1-70) has a continuous original numbering, encompassing

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543 For ‘poetry for music’ in literary manuscripts see Mc Guire Jennings, Senza Vestimenta, and below.

544 Alighieri, Rime, vol. 1.1 194-96; Cursi (“Per la prima circolazione,” 242-43) dates the RVF copy to 1375-1400 ca. Cf. Fazio degli Uberti, Rime, ed. Cristiano Lorenzi (Pisa: ETS, 2013), 47; Piccini, Un amico del Petrarcha, LXXXIV-LXXXV; Boccaccio, Rime, LI-V-LV.

545 At first glance, this codex might seem more similar to a miscellany, than an anthology. Yet, as we will see, significant organizing criteria can be found. On the difference and the uneasy distinction between miscellanies and anthologies see Nichols-Wenzel, The Whole Book; cf. The Dynamics of the Medieval Manuscript, 11-39.

546 From the original and another ancient numbering, the following folios result now lost: ff. 2-3, 35-36, 105-127, 148-149. Alighieri, Rime, vol. 1.1 194.
Petrarch’s RVF, Andrea Stefani’s own poems and report, and the first cluster of lyrics, while catchwords can also be found in other parts of the codex. It contains a lyric anthology spanning from the contemporary late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century famous and less famous Tuscan poets, to the great Trecento authors, among whom Petrarch, with his RVF occupying more than a third of the codex and some chapters of the Trionfi, plays a leading role. The volume encompasses poems by Franco Sacchetti, Andrea Stefani, Iacopo Cecchi, Sennuccio del Bene, Sinibaldo da Perugia, Ciano da Borgo S. Sepolcro, Antonio da Ferrara, maestro Apollonio da Imola, Brusaccio da Rovezzano, Fazio degli Uberti, Bartolomeo da Castel della Pieve, Paolo dell’Abaco, Manetto Ciaccheri, Giannozzo Sacchetti, Giovanni Fulgure, Sandro Bencini, Simone Serdini, Dante, Zanobi da Strada, Cino da Pistoia, Domenico da Montecchiello, Francesco di Vannozzo, Antonio Pucci, along with other texts without any attribution. It also contains popular and devotional verses, such as the capitoli of the holy days of obligation and the Lent Gospels put in verses by Sandro Bencini.\(^{547}\)

It has been attributed to Andrea Stefani following the identity of hand with MS Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, 1562, which is signed as follows (f. 93r): “Scripto per me Andrea Stephani cantore fiorentino a’laude di Dio. Amen” (“Written by me, Andrea Stephani, Florentine cantor, in praise of God. Amen”). Also, as we have already seen, in the Marucelliano manuscript he writes the report of the Bianchi processions in the first person, and attributes the laudi composed for the 1400 plague to himself, thus corroborating the idea that the codex was indeed written by Stefani himself.\(^{548}\)

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\(^{547}\) Ibid., 194-95.

\(^{548}\) f.54r: “Lauda fatta d’Andrea Stefani cantore al tempo de’ bianchi” (“Lauda written by Andrea Stefani cantor in the days of the Whites”); f. 55r: “Priegoti lettor che mi perdoni che’mmi comporti et abbi pazienza
We do not know much about Andrea Stefani. He was most likely Florentine and lived at the turn of the fifteenth century. Since he calls himself cantor, both in the Riccardiano and in the Marucelliano codices, he was probably a member of the clergy and, as Volpi writes, such insistence in defining himself as cantor indicates that this was a prominent occupation for him.\footnote{Volpi, who published the report and the first landa from the Marucelliano codex, made some archival research and could not find any information to surely identify Andrea Stefani; he puts forward two possibilities: a ritagliatore, a cloth seller, who died in 1424, and a guoligaio, a shoemaker, still alive in 1433. But none of these individuals completely convinced him, so Volpi is inclined to not identify Andrea with any of them, and instead he suggests that he was a member of the clergy. Later, Li Gotti got back to what Scoti-Bertinelli had already suggested, that Andrea was probably a school teacher, as his telling of the procession might suggest, underlining the fact that he was not a professional musician and poet. Given these multiple attempts, it seems rather difficult to find any relevant information on Andrea's life. Scoti-Bertinelli lists all the branches of the Stefani family, and proposes possible identifications, too. Yet he concludes that it is not possible, nor even important, to ascertain if he might be identified with any of them (Volpi, Una landa; Li Gotti, “Per la biografia;” Scoti-Bertinelli, “Andrea Stefani”).} Thus, although we cannot be sure of his exact profession, he must not have been only familiar with music, instead he must have worked daily with it, being also, if not a professional, an expert composer. Other than the landi, Andrea copied three other poems of his in the Marucelliano codex, to which three other poems by him, preserved in a famous musical manuscript containing major works of the Ars Nova, the so-called ‘Lucca codex’, must be added.\footnote{See The Lucca Codex. Cf. Bonaccorsi, “Andrea Stefani;” Von Fischer, “Stefani, Andrea.”} These circumstances suggest that his relationship with music was not episodic, and that he was not only a cantor, but also a composer. We will analyze these texts in more depth in the next paragraph; for the moment it is important to emphasize that the anthology we find in the Marucelliano has been compiled by someone who was not a professional writer and thinker; yet Andrea’s culture was considerable. He frequented the middle social milieu of literate professionals and artisans; but the structure of his anthology, where there are refined and uncommon texts, also suggests that his relationships might have included members of the
intellectual vernacular elite of Florence. Moreover, the Riccardiano codex contains a *volgarizzamento*, that is, the vernacular version of Paulus Orosius’s *History Against the Pagans* by Bono Giamboni. The afore-mentioned rubric seems to imply that he copied the book for himself,\(^{551}\) thus, he must have been rather cultured, as it is also demonstrated by his own poems. Orosius was one of the most popular authors of the epoch, and the *volgarizzamento* of his histories was one of the most diffused works among the Florentine bourgeoisie, made of those who were literate but who could hardly or not at all read Latin.\(^{552}\)

The Marucelliano codex is a rather spartan and rough book, compiled by someone who was not a professional copyist. Also, it has not been written all at once, and it probably gathers materials Andrea copied and collected throughout the years. Yet, although it is an ‘homemade’ book with decisive inaccuracies, it nonetheless shows significant ordering criteria. It is, indeed, divided rather clearly into sections, mostly identified by author and/or meter. Its codicological features help to understand its structure. Globally, the level of execution is low both as regards the layout of the pages and the script. Cursi, who analyzes the manuscript in the perspective of the diffusion of Petrarch’s *RIF*, writes that

> Il codice Marucelliano rappresenta il primo esempio di un certo numero di canzonieri di ambito mercantesco, che, nel corso di tutto il sec. XV, in ambienti di cultura grafica “monolingue e perciò stesso monografica,” tentarono di applicare alle *Rime* il modello del *libro-zibaldone*; la scelta di una tale tipologia libraria … nel caso dei *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* appare come il risultato di successive, plurime degradazioni: dalla pergamenà alla carta, dalle iniziali miniate a quelle *ad tratto*, dalle testuali alle corsive di base mercantesca.

> The Marucelliano codex represents the first example of a certain number of merchant milieu canzonieri, which, throughout the whole fifteenth century, in “monolingual, and thus monographic” writing culture environments, tried to apply to the *Rime* the model of the *libro-zibaldone*; the choice of such a type of book … in the case of the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* appears

\(^{551}\) He could have been payed for writing the book, but in that case probably he would not have signed it. Cf. Cursi, “Ghinozzo di Tommaso,” 216.

\(^{552}\) Cf. Porta, “Volgarizzamenti dal latino;” Cornish, *Vernacular Translation*.  

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as the result of successive, multiple corruptions: from parchment to paper, from illuminated to pen initials, from *textualis* to cursive merchant scripts.\textsuperscript{553}

In a manuscript written by a middle culture man, not a professional but just a decent amateur copyist, some hesitation in the ordering of the texts, in the organization of the sections, and in the succession of authors and poems may be considered normal, also given that similar inaccuracies may be found in codices copied by professional scribes. Since consistent groups of lyrics, such as Dante’s texts, or parts of larger works, as the chapters from Fazio degli Uberti’s *Dittamondo*, are preceded and followed by blank pages, and are mostly copied on independent quires or groups of quires, it is likely that they were originally independent notebooks, which were then gathered together. The script is not uniform, the *ductus* and the pen change, suggesting different moments of writing over a long period of time. At a given moment Andrea Stefani himself probably bound the book, and may have left these blank pages, which sometimes serve as a protection for scattered quires, in order to have space for adding new texts. The decoration hints at a project that has never been accomplished: after the first section, where there are red initials, it has not been completed, while the layout envisages it. Although nowadays it is impossible to reconstruct its size and extent, Andrea left the space for decorating what he intended to transform into a proper book, enclosing his own poetry into an anthology.

The report of the Bianchi processions is paramount evidence for dating the codex at the turn of the Quattrocento. But there are other poems connected to Florentine events that took place in the 1400s and 1410s that suggest that at least those parts of the book date back to those years, also giving stimulating insights on Andrea’s intellectual interests and the cultural

\textsuperscript{553} Cursi, “Prima circolazione,” 243.
environment that he frequented. For instance, a *canzone* by Manetto Ciaccheri, *Perché l'affanno mio crudele e aspro* (ff. 82v–83r), whose rubric says “Canzon del detto Manetto Ciaccheri fatta per Messere Jacopo da Carrara et a'llui la mandò essendo in Firenze” (“Canzone of the aforementioned Manetto Ciaccheri made for Messere Jacopo da Carrara and he send it to him when he was in Florence”), is related to a bizarre story that happened in Florence around 1410. Medin, referring to the narration of Giovanni Morelli, reports the anecdote as follows.\(^{554}\) On March 19, 1410 a man arrives in Florence, saying that he is Jacopo da Carrara—who, in reality, had already died in prison in Venice with his father, Francesco Novello, as early as 1406. The Florentines believe him, and he is able to remain in the city for some months. Later, Marsilio da Carrara (his brother, theoretically) is consulted: he says that the man who presents himself as Jacopo da Carrara is not his brother. But, rather surprisingly for the reader, Morelli writes that the Florentines continue to host the alleged Jacopo, not paying attention to Marsilio’s assertion. Then they recognize the man as an impostor and force him to flee to Siena. But subsequently, the alleged Jacopo asks to come back to Florence, and (surprisingly, again) the Florentines believe him another time and in May 1411 grant him permission. Eventually, Morelli writes that they ascertain that he is lying. Manetto Ciaccheri’s *canzone* takes the side of the alleged son of Francesco Novello when his identity is doubted. This *canzone* gives us concrete evidence that Andrea’s codex must have been copied after 1411, and also suggests an interest in civic and civil poetry. Both pieces of information find a confirmation in another series of poems, that is, the cluster of texts by Bruscaccio da Rovezzano. As Medin and Ruggiero emphasize, Bruscaccio’s oeuvre is mostly made of political poetry, to which seven out of his thirteen poems, all encompassed in the Marucelliano, may be ascribed. Editors agree

on the fact that Bruscaccio’s little songbook must have been written between 1393 and 1409, not so far from the 1410-11 interval of Ciaccheri’s canzone.\(^{555}\)

Manetto Ciaccheri and Bruscaccio da Rovezzano introduce us to the criteria guiding Andrea in putting together his anthology. Indeed, since the material features of the book situate it in the same years in which both authors wrote, Andrea must have had a deep interest in the poetry of his own contemporary time, in the work of Florentine municipal poets like Manetto and Bruscaccio, and in particular in those poems concerning the life of the city and other current events.\(^{556}\) Andrea collected the report of the Bianchi processions, in which he actively participated, and his own poetry, along with the work of poets whom he probably knew in person. Indeed, the Marucelliano is the only manuscript containing the complete songbook by Bruscaccio, thus suggesting a personal connection between the two men: given that Bruscaccio’s poetry was not particularly diffused, the simplest explanation for Andrea having the whole of it, is that he had direct access to it.\(^{557}\) Andrea’s Marucelliano codex may be compared to those “municipal collections” that Nocita has individuated in the fourteenth century. As she points out, such volumes distinguish themselves for the internal cohesion provided by the culturally, politically, and socially homogeneous group of poets, while texts and authors are bound to the same milieu and place.\(^{558}\) Not all sections of the Marucelliano codex share these characteristics, but some significant parts do, such as the clusters of poems by Manetto Ciaccheri and Bruscaccio, or the works by Sandro Bencini and Simone Serdini.


\(^{558}\) Cf. BLIMT, 20-30; Nocita, “Per uno studio tipologico.”
Encompassing poems by Pucci and Sacchetti, Stefani also points to the previous generation of municipal poets. Indeed, in the Marucelliano codex such municipal production is put together with some of the most important poets of the Trecento ‘golden age’, building a bridge between the two worlds. In particular, Andrea, by writing his own poems and those by his fellow poets along with Petrarch and Dante, authorizes his own cultural circle as their followers and heirs. At the beginning of the fifteenth century this is not a given: Petrarch has not already reached the status of poetic authority, and indeed, we will see that in the practice of writing rhymes, Dante is a more present model than him, both from a civic and a poetic point of view. But placing Petrarch’s songbook as the first text of the anthology is rather significant, as it gives a strong orientation to the whole collection, defining it as a lyric collection in the wake of the great Trecento poetry in a Petrarchist key, which is progressively gaining momentum.

Andrea mostly selects moral along with civic poems, some of which are connected with Florence’s contemporary events, and its internal and ‘international’ politics, while many of the rubrics focus the attention on these same themes. These factors make this manuscript a sort of ‘bourgeois diary’. Andrea’s selection shows that he was interested in three major genres: there is a group of municipal and/or contemporary authors; a second group of historical authors (first Petrarch, but also Dante and Cino, or Ciano da Borgo S. Sepolcro); and a third group encompassing authors and works related to music, such as Francesco di Vannozzo. He also collects religious poems, such as the Gospels in verses, pointing to a popular devotion to which Andrea contributed with his own laudi, and probably the

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559 Cf. what Gorni writes about Sacchetti’s manuscript in Gorni, “Le forme primarie,” 512.
moral(istic) canzone O gente sciocca (see below). Among the authors, we find names that have never risen to fame, along with rubrics that seem to suggest that the author was known to Andrea, who gives details, such as: “maestro Apollonio Ischermidore e pulito scriptore di messali da Imola o di que’ paesi fu,” (“master Apollonio fencer and tidy writer of missals was from Imola or from those lands”). Giovanni Fulgur(e) is another interesting author. I maintain that Andrea Stefani made a mistake here, resolving an attribution that he might have found in abbreviated form: this author, who is unknown, should instead be identified with Johannes Fulginatis, Giovanni of Foligno, a musician whose work is preserved in the Lucca Codex, but whom Andrea probably did not know in person. Indeed, the abbreviation for Fulginatis -- Fulg -- might have mislead Andrea (or another scribe from whom he copied).

fig. 6 Lucca Codex, LXXXr (45, 13a)

Andrea’s manuscript is not among the literary sources of Trecento musical poetry. It does not contain any music nor any text for which the music is extant. But it preserves some poems that were probably set to music and performed, like Andrea’s own canzonette, along with other poems coming from the musical milieu, such as the musician Francesco di Vannozzo’s frottola or gliommero, Dè, buona gente (ff. 125r-126r). McGuire Jenkins challenges the separation between music and poetry, emphasizing the close ties between the so-called poetry for music and the Trecento literary production. Her material approach “redefines song as ... a fundamentally interdisciplinary genre, and reveals its involvement in a wide variety of literary
environments, ranging from the refined world of Dante and Petrarch to the playful, satirical realm of un-courty love.” As much as she emphasizes “the literariness of these poems, it must also be borne in mind that they were not necessarily wholly divorced from music when copied without notation.” Thus, the 50 manuscripts explored by McGuire Jenkins show that this genre of poetry was often included into literary anthologies, without any particular differentiation. Yet, as we have already mentioned, Andrea excludes those among his poems for which we have music, a fact that is probably not a coincidence. In the next paragraph we will analyze Andrea’s lyric poetry, and we may hypothesize a reason for this distinction.

The book opens in the name of Petrarch: the RVF occupy its first quires (those with the original numbering) and are divided by meter. The sonnets and the other meters come first, while the canzoni follow in a second section. This subdivision of the RVF is orderly, made through clear rubrics. On f. 1r Stefani writes: “Qui cominciano i sonetti di Messere Francesco Petrarca [sic] et di rieto fiano le canzone et alcuno madrigale” (“Here the sonnets by Messere Francesco Petrarca begin and after there will be the canzoni and some madrigals”); then, on f. 34v he adds: “Dopo ii carte sono le sue canzoni,” (“After two folios are his canzoni”) and in the original numbering ff. 35-36 are actually missing. The canzoni section regularly begins on f. 37 of the original numbering (f. 33r), under the following rubric: “qui comincian le canzone di Messer Francesco Petracca poeta fiorentino” (“Here the canzoni by Messer Francesco Petracca Florentine poet begin”). The division by meter of the RVF is not a unique feature of this manuscript, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it recurs in several manuscripts and editions. Wilkins explored this peculiar way of transmission of Petrarch’s songbook. Just as

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560 McGuire Jenkins, Senza Vestimenta; quotes from p. 7. A complete list of the manuscript on pp. 24-29.
those editions, like the famous one by Alessandro Vellutello (1525), where the order radically differs from that given by the author to his own texts, these manuscripts containing Petrarch’s poems cannot be considered part of the diffusion of the work intended as a macrotext, but only of its disiecta membra.\footnote{\textsuperscript{561} See the chapter “The Separation of Canzoni and Sonnets in Petrarchan Manuscripts and Editions,” in Wilkins, \textit{The Making}, 265-273. In the next chapter we will confront other manuscripts where the \textit{RVF} are completely disjointed and it is not possible to find any organizing criterion.} The edition of the \textit{RVF} by Sebastiano Fausto da Longiano, published in Venice in 1525 at Bindoni and Pasini, is the first one in which sonnets are separated from the \textit{canzoni}.\footnote{\textsuperscript{562} Wilkins, \textit{The Making}, 273.} As for manuscripts, Wilkins provides a partial picture; but even the small number of codices’ descriptions he had, allowed him to put into relief the three main forms in which the disjointed \textit{RVF} appear. Petrarch’s songbook has been reduced to: 1. a corpus made of only sonnets, or 2. of only \textit{canzoni} (such as Pucci’s codex, the Riccardiano 1050); or 3. just as in the Marucelliano, there can be \textit{canzoni} and sonnets estranged in different sections. As for the other meters, there are varied configurations, and they can be grouped either with one or the other category. In the Marucelliano, ballads are gathered with sonnets, while the \textit{sestine} are considered \textit{canzoni}. It is noteworthy that there is none of Petrarch’s madrigals, even though they were announced in the opening rubric. This circumstance might suggest that Andrea originally planned to have the \textit{RVF} divided into three parts, or found them in this form in the manuscript he was copying from. Nevertheless, the fact that there is no madrigal leaves us with two possibilities: that the quire preserving them has been lost; or more probably, since the original numbering is coherent, that he never copied them.

The separation between \textit{canzoni} and sonnets recalls the traditional structure of the early Italian \textit{canzonieri} dating back to the thirteenth or the early fourteenth century, where the poems
were usually divided first by meter, and then by author. For the Italian area, the most relevant example is MS BML, Redi 9, the canzoniere L. As it is well-known, after Guittone d’Arezzo letters, the manuscript preserves a lyric collection divided into two main sections, the first enclosing canzoni, while the second contains sonnets. Both are opened by Guittone’s poems, to which other authors then follow. The manuscript appears more as a collection of Guittone’s oeuvre to which other authors have been added, rather than a sheer anthology. Leaving aside the details, just as the possibility that it witnesses an authorial songbook, what interests us here is that, as Leonardi writes, in this codex the traditional organization criterion by genre of the anthology, seeing the canzoni separated from sonnets, prevails over the authorial unity of the corpus, and thus Guittone’s oeuvre finds itself divided into two separate sections.\textsuperscript{563} The canzoniere L witnesses a conflict between the cohesion of an authorial corpus and the structuring exigences of an anthology, one where the latter instance prevails, where poetic form is more important than the author.

In the Marucelliano, a comparable tension is evident for Petrarch, but it is also perceivable as regards Dante. Stefani probably did not derive his copy of the RVF from a complete copy of their last form. Yet, although he might have collected the poems from different sources, as the scrambled order of canzoni and sestine might suggest, the sharp division by genre into two sections has certainly been done on purpose. Andrea, or someone before him, decided to apply a collecting method that is utterly alien to what Petrarch envisages for his poetry, which constitutes a structured macrotext. We are, thus, confronting the voluntary dismemberment of the original macrotext, its deconstruction in favor of the overarching

\textsuperscript{563} I canzonieri della lirica italiana, 196 et seq.
structure of the anthology. As we have seen, in Andrea’s copy the division is explicitly stated, and the reader is guided by the rubrics through the different sections in which the RVF are disjointed. The precedence given to sonnets falls outside the traditional ordering of the canzonieri. Such significant inversion in the ordering of the genres appears multiple times in Petrarchan manuscripts, up until the aforementioned edition by Sebastiano Fausto da Longiano.  

This arrangement has to be put into relation with the status of the sonnets, which through the Quattrocento becomes the primary poetic genre. Yet, at the very beginning of the century, it still appears rather peculiar.

Andrea’s copy lacks only 27 poems out of the 366 forming the RVF. The manuscript also contains two scattered poems, the frottola *Di ridere ho gran voglia* and the canzone *L’ora ch’ogni animal perde disdegno*, for a total of 341 poems by Petrarch. The following RVF poems are missing: 11-21 (a gap due to the loss of original ff. 2-3); 24-27; 31-36; 52, 54, 106, 121, 246-247. From the metrical point of view, two ballads (11 and 14) are lost only for a mechanical factor; it is significant that all the madrigals (52, 54, 106, and 121) are missing, while instead there are all of the canzoni and the sestine. Presences and absences give us insights on the arrangement of Petrarch’s poems in this codex: the ballads are all placed in the first section, and the lack of two of them is not relevant; instead, there is no doubt that the absence of all

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564 Wilkins mentions as an example a fifteenth-century codex of the University of Chicago Library, MS PQ4477.A2A13, to be identified with today’s MS 706, dated 1450.  
567 Andrea copied some poems multiple times: RVF 70 and 80 are repeated three times, while the last part of RVF 128 is copied again as if it were a different and new poem. See below.
of the madrigals is noteworthy because Andrea was a musician, and madrigals were indeed usually put into music, as ballads were. Thus, after having emphasized their presence in the opening rubric, it looks rather peculiar that a cantor and musician would then not copy the complete, albeit not extensive corpus of Petrarch’s madrigals. There is no codicological proof that the madrigals have been subsequently lost. The miscellaneous section of Andrea’s anthology begins directly on the verso of the last folio containing Petrarch’s canzoni. Also, it does not seem that the madrigals should have been put in the two missing folios in-between the sonnets and the canzoni sections: writing that Petrarch’s canzoni will begin after two folios only makes sense if poems by others are in-between, or if those folios are left blank. If Petrarch’s own madrigals were there, there would have been no need for pointing out the continuity of the corpus. In conclusion, if Andrea ever copied the madrigals, they would have been in an independent gathering, now lost. This fits the nature of the codex, which has been composed through several additions. Yet it is more probable that the madrigals were never part of this anthology, at least of its first numbered section.

Andrea also included in his collection the frottola allegedly by Petrarch, Di ridere ho gran voglia, pointing to his deep interest in this genre, characterized by an irregular sequence of verses, short ones in rhyming couplets (or more), or hendecasyllables with internal rhyme, often combining maxims and proverbs, with a certain taste for nonsense. In the Quattrocento and then in the Cinquecento it is also a popular musical meter. Indeed, in his codex there are other two frottole by Bruscaccio da Rovezzano, Che fai, che penzi, o alma negligente, which the rubric says was sent to the King of Naples, Ladislaus the Magnanimous (like the following poem Io ti consiglio che tu stia al segno), and the so-called ‘frottola Pisanella’, Deus inn aitorium meo

568 Beltrami, La metrica italiana, 351.
m’intende; one by Giannozzo Sacchetti, *Mentre che d’amor pensava* (ff. 87r-88r); and an anonymous one, *Molto al re prepossente* (ff. 126v-127r). Also, the *bisticcio or gliommero* on the game of hazard called *zara*, by Francesco di Vannozzo da Padova, *De buona gente* (ff. 125r-126r) may be added to this group.

The RV/F are ordered using different criteria for *canzoni* and sonnets. The latter follow the order they have in the autograph by Petrarch, MS BAV, Vat. Lat. 3195, also in the arrangement of the last 31 poems, not considering the numbering Petrarch put in the margins to reorganize them as we usually read them in current editions, which has passed unnoticed for centuries. In the section containing *canzoni* and *sestine*, instead, the order is completely different, with some curious repetitions. It also seems rather significant that the *canzone* to the Virgin Mary (RV/F 366) has kept its final position. All things considered, in Andrea’s codex, Petrarch’s poetic corpus is almost complete and, for the most part, it follows the order given by the author, especially in the sonnets section; yet it has been arbitrarily divided by meter, breaking one of the most innovative features of Petrarch’s collection.

In Andrea’s manuscript Petrarch plays a decisive role: his corpus opens the book and it is, by far, the largest. It is significant that Andrea places his own production in a material continuity with Petrarch’s songbook that theoretically would also imply an ideological one.

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571 Petrarch, *Canzoniere*, ed. Santagata, CCXII.

572 The *canzoni* are ordered as follows: 23, 142, 119, 50, 22, 70, 53, 206, 66, 129, 237, 28, 128, 135, 105, 125, 360, 73, 239, 80, 29, 207, *Di rider ho gran voglia*, *L’ora ch’ogni animal per disdegno*, 323, 70 (ll. 20-49), 80, 72, 71, 30, 128 (ll. 49-122), 214, 332, 268, 325, 37, 127, 264, 270, 359, 366. RV/F 331 is added at f. 133r, and signaled through a rubric at the end of the *canzoni* corpus.
Yet, as we will see in the next paragraph, Andrea’s own production is far from being Petrarchist. This manuscript materializes what Pasquini has defined as the perpetual oscillation between the Dante-function and the Petrarch-function in the fifteenth century. Yet, although Petrarch has a preeminent position in the anthology, his poetry appears removed from Andrea’s interests, just as his influence does not seem the focal one for Andrea and his circle. As we have already discussed while exploring Antonio Pucci’s codex, the Marucelliano introduces us to the role Petrarch is gaining as a model at the expense of Dante, an issue that will be at the core of the following paragraphs. But it also mostly presents Petrarch as a sonnet writer, something that will become fairly common only some decades later. Before confronting Andrea’s poetry as the touchstone for evaluating his own anthology, we shall analyze the Dantean section of his manuscript.

Dante’s rime are placed in the less cohesive part of the Marucelliano codex, and appear at first glance as ancillary to Petrarch’s RVF. It is a selection of canzoni, along with the tenzone between Dante and Cino, that occupies the final part of a varied separate gathering, where Dante’s lyric poetry cohabits with diverse works, Simone Serdini’s and others’ canzoni and a piece of Fazio degli Uberti’s Dittamondo, from which it is separated by two folios left blank (110-111). Dante’s rime begin in the verso of f. 112, whose recto has been left blank, suggesting that something else was expected to be copied there, probably not other canzoni by Dante, since the first one is indeed numbered as prima, first one, in its rubric.574

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, C 152 (ff. 112v-121v)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p)Atria dengna ditriumphal fama (f. 112v) - O patria degna di trionfal fama [apocryphal]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cançon didante Nella quale tratta della crudelta della donna sua intre lingue. ij.</td>
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573 Pasquini, Le botteghe della poesia, 337.
574 Dante’s rime are preceded by a portion of Fazio degli Uberti’s Dittamondo, Solino’s description of the world, which is interrupted (ff. 108v-109r; ff. 110-112 are blank).
1. Canzon del dante nella quale tratta damore della donna sua:

a) Morchemoui tua uritu dalcielo (ff. 113r-v) - Amor che movi tua vertù dal cielo

4. Canzon del dante

i) O sento sidamor lagran possanza (ff. 113r, 115v) - Io sento si d’Amor la gran possanza

5. Canzon del dante

a) Mor tuedi ben chequesta donna (ff. 115r-v) - Amor, tu vedi ben che questa donna

6. Canzon del dante

b) Lpoco giorno 7 algrancerchio dombra (f. 115v) - Al poco giorno ed al gran cerchio d'ombra

7. Canzon del dante

c) Osinelmio parlar uogliesseraspro (ff. 115r, 114v) - Così nel mio parlar vogli' esser aspro

8. Canzon del dante

d) Min cresciesimealamente (f. 114v) - E’ m’incresce di me si duramente

9. Canzon del dante

e) Liocchi dolentiper pia[...] delcore (ff. 114v, 116r) - Li occhi dolenti per pietà del core [Vita Nuova]

11. Canzon del dante

a) Mor che nella mente miragiona (f. 116r-v) - Amor che nella mente mi ragiona

12. Canzon del dante

b) Mor dacheconuien pur chio midoglia (ff. 116v-117r) - Amor, da che convien pur ch’io mi doglia

13. Canzon del dante

14. Canzon del dante

[120vb and 121ra blank]

15. Canzon del dante

a) Alta prole del superno gioue (f. 121r-v) - O alta prole del superno Giove [apocryphal]

20. Sonetto di Messer Çanobi Strata

a) Chacciato diciel damon chio midoglia (f. 121v) - Zanobi da Strada [Coluccio Salutati] O scacciato dal ciel da Micael

21. Sonettti dante mandato Amesser Cino da pistoia

b) Ochio nontruo chi conmecoragioni (f. 121v) - Dante to Cino da Pistoia Perch’io non truovo chi meco ragioni

22. Risposta di Messer Cino Adante

d) Ante innonso in quale alberghosoni (f. 121v) - Answer by Cino to Dante Dante, i’ non odo in quale albergo soni

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575 Ff. 114-115 have been inverted.
The series is opened by the apocryphal canzone *O patria degna di trionfal fama*, to which *Ai faus ris* follows, forming an uncommon pair. The opening canzone has probably been written by a white guelf exile, and it is constructed piling so many obvious references to Dante that, to the eyes of the modern reader, it is too Dantean to actually be by Dante.[^576] Yet, for a middle culture man like Andrea, it must have appeared as the perfect example of the exiled poet who wrote the Commedia, also dovetailing with his own interests in municipal poetry. As for the trilingual canzone, instead, we should recall both his interest in peculiar metrical forms, such as the frottola, and above all that he was a musician and multilingual poems were closely tied to music, before and after Dante, and especially when Andrea is copying his anthology, in the first decades of the fifteenth century.[^577] Then, the Dantean sequence encompasses thirteen of the fifteen canzoni of Boccaccio’s canon, in a different order, interspersed with the three canzoni from the Vita Nuova. After a space left blank most likely for the missing lines of Donna pietosa, we have another apocryphal canzone, *O alta prole del superno Giove*, dedicated to Hercules, and then a sonnet attributed to Zanobi da Strada (but instead by Coluccio Salutati), and the exchange between Dante and Cino, whose presence is particularly interesting in view of the fact that, in the Quattrocento, Cino’s poetry is not particularly diffused, and when it is enclosed in lyric anthologies, it is usually dependent from other corpora, just as it happens here.[^578] These, along with the one by Zanobi/Coluccio, are the only sonnets included in the miscellaneous part of Andrea’s anthology, thus deserving some attention as regards both Dante and, more generally, the whole collection. Albeit Dante, with *Perch’io non truovo chi meco ragioni*, solicits Cino with a


[^577]: See §2.1.3.

[^578]: Pasquini, Le botteghe della poesia, 353-408, on the most important codices, among which there is the Marucelliano, pp. 357-58.
love question recalling Amor, da che convien, the canzona montanina, this tenzone is characterized by moral themes usually exploited by moralist poets, developed especially in Cino’s answer, Dante, i’ non odo in quale albergo soni. As all the commentators write, the autobiographical turn, with Dante referring to his unfortunate condition in a place where there is no noble and gentle heart, sounds less obvious. Yet, as a whole, the two sonnets may be described as a complaint on the degeneration of current times, an expectable theme of moral(ist) poetry. These peculiarities of the tenzone point toward Andrea’s preference for civil poetry, making it perfectly fit for his anthology.

The selection of Dante’s rime emphasizes some of the main features that guided Andrea in composing his lyric collection. The moral canzoni, among which the civil ones stand out, play a major role, and are significantly associated with a poem relatable to music such as Ai faus ris and a moralistic tenzone between two friends. Indeed, along with love poems (mostly represented by Petrarch’s texts), these are the main genres to which a substantial part of the texts collected by Andrea may be ascribed. Given that, as we will see in the next paragraph, Andrea probably knew other poems by Dante, especially ballads, it is significant that we find only canzoni and a sonnet in the Dantean section. This may be connected to the division of Petrarch’s RVF into two sections, drawing attention to Andrea’s tendency toward a classification by author and genre, with a preference for the more elevated canzoni. Indeed, Petrarch’s and Dante’s sonnets, and Cino’s answer, along with the one by Coluccio Salutati attributed to Zanobi da Strada, are the only sonnets included in the collection: the renowned names of Petrarch, Dante, Cino, and Zanobi authorize the inclusion of a minor genre in a

579 Alighieri, Rime 1939 119-120; Dante’s Lyric Poetry, vol. 2 311-13, 318-20; Alighieri, Rime 2005, 492-495; Alighieri, Opere I, 446-52: 447. It is not possible to know for sure whether Dante is referring to the factions in Florence, or if he is occasionally outside of Florence, or he is already in exile.
collection mostly made by canzoni. This is relevant when connected with the presence, in this same manuscript, of Andrea’s canzonette along with other poems relatable to the poesia per musica, such as other canzonette by Sennuccio del Bene (f. 61v) or Andrea da Ferrara (f. 63v), or the experimental meters correlated to music, such as Aï faus ris or the frottole. The poesia per musica has, for a long time, been considered a different, and mostly lower, style poetry, while scholars strove to “liberate poetry from music.”580 As we will see, Andrea does not seem to enforce a division between those poems that were set to music and those that were not, but there seems to be a hierarchy among the meters, where the position of sonnets, ballads, and madrigal is at stake if not supported by a strong authoriality, which might even not be sufficient, since Petrarch’s madrigals appear to have been excluded from the collection. Again, manuscripts suggest a different partition of genres and styles from what is intended today, mostly in the wake of sixteenth-century theorizations.

Andrea’s selection of Dante’s rime, giving preference to Dante’s texts in a more elevated style, is a prime example of a fairly diffused tendency. Between the fourteenth and the fifteenth century the canzoni had a lot of momentum, being the works by Dante included in the shared literary canon, second only to the Commedia for diffusion and authority.581 The Marucelliano shows the Dante-function as identified with the Dante writer of moral and also civil (especially considering the apocryphal ones) canzoni, in a seamless continuity with the Commedia. Andrea did not include the Vita Nuova in his anthology, but accepted its three canzoni in the series, again showing a clear preference for elevated style poetry. Also, as we have already seen in the 1491 princeps edition by Piatti, and in Filippo Benci’s addition to MS Tempi 2, here

580 McGuire Jenkins, Senza Vestimenta, 6.
581 De Robertis writes that the tradition shows the predominance and the prestige of the canzoni, while Dante’s other poems have suffered a true diaspora (Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 2.1 13-18).
Aï faus ris is already included with full rights in the canon of Dante’s canzoni. In particular, in Andrea’s anthology, although dating back to the fifteenth century, the trilingual canzone is not at the end of the series of the other Dantean canzoni, but instead at its beginning. Here, Dante’s poems are ordered by genre in a traditional way, first come the canzoni and then the sonnets, contrary to Petrarch’s songbook. This arrangement might be connected to the fact that Andrea probably copied from an antique codex, or in any case that his sources were particularly conservative. De Robertis has established that Dante’s canzoni in the Marucelliano are textually close to Niccolò de’ Rossi’s MS Barb. Lat. 3953, and independent from the family of codices derived from Boccaccio’s anthologies. The fact that Aï faus ris is attributed to Dante, when it is included in a series of his rime that probably descends from ancient sources, is strong evidence for its authenticity. As we will see in the following paragraph, Andrea operated a selection among the rime by Dante he knew, including only the canzoni and the tenzone with Cino in the anthology. Interestingly, O alta prole is only preserved in one other codex other than the Marucelliano. It is impossible for us to ascertain without any doubt which choices were guided by Andrea’s own taste, and what he inherited from his sources. Nevertheless, encompassing Aï faus ris in the anthology remains particularly significant. Here, there is nothing that emphasizes its multiple languages, and it is incorporated in the series with a regular rubric, while the materiality of the page in which the three-language canzone is copied does not suggest anything in particular, as usually happens with multilingual poems. Yet, although the anthology does not show a completely definite planning, Andrea tends to include

582 Alighieri, Rime, ed. De Robertis, vol. 2.1 78-96, cf. vol. 2.2 1156. The Marucelliano, Mr, derives from g, a Florentine manuscript whose descendant g’ would have crossed the Appenines and have arrived in northeastern Italy. From g’, collateral to Mr, would have derived B1, Niccolò’s anthology, and G (MS Ginori Conti, Florence, Società Dantesca Italiana, 4).
583 MS Ds Another codex was copied from the Marucelliano itself. Ibid., vol. 2.2 1054-55.
584 Cf. The Medieval Manuscript Book, 169.
in the book those texts that personally interest him, as the themes previously identified show. So, it is possible to hypothesize that he picked *Ai faus ris* for its musical quality, along with *O alta prole* for its civil and moral qualities.

### 3.3.2 Andrea Stefani’s poetry

Right after the *RVF*, Andrea begins his anthology of lyric poetry with his own production. The first poem he copies is a *canzone*, *O gente sciocca, ch’al mondo portate,* which is anonymous, however. Then, he copies the most famous among his pieces of writing, the narration of the 1399 procession of the Bianchi, to which three of his own *laudi* (vernacular sacred songs) written for that occasion follow. As we have already mentioned, Stefani includes in the collection three of his own *canzonette*, that is *canzoni* written to be performed with music. *Allo specchio pulita, Chi·mmi terrà amor ched’i’ non canti, and Lassa dolente amè marito mio.* Each of these poems is introduced by a rubric establishing their genre, *canzonetta*, and their author, Andrea Stefani, cantor from Florence. This precision cast doubts on the attribution to Andrea of the first anonymous *canzone*, which is, however, included in his corpus by Scoti-Bertinelli. Another manuscript containing the same *canzone* also does not attribute it to anyone. The question remains unsolved, but it is probable that this moral *canzone* actually belongs to Andrea, who has placed it right before his own production, thus implying a connection. Andrea’s poetic corpus also encompasses three other poems, which he did not include in the Marucelliano:

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585 All the poems are quoted from the edition by Ugo Scoti-Bertinelli (Scoti-Bertinelli, “Andrea Stefani,” 37-55).
586 Stefani has left two lines blank for the rubric, which has never been added. Since he also put a guide letter, which can be seen inside the red colored *O* that has been subsequently drawn, it is suspicious that the *canzone* has remained anonymous. This circumstance raises doubts on attributing the *canzone* to Andrea (see below).
587 *Su tutti’ peccatori, Padre pien di clemenza, Madre del Salvatore.*
588 Beltrami, *La metrica italiana*, 118-19; cf. above, §2.1.3.
two ballads (*I' senti' matutino* and *Con tua gentilezza*) and a madrigal (*Morte m'a sciolt', Amor, d'ogni tuo legge*), belonging to the famous musical collection known as the Lucca Codex.590 This codex, dating back to 1420-1430 ca., contains texts and music of the latest *Ars Nova*, by northern Italian and Florentine composers active between the fourteenth and the fifteenth century. The codex, which was written by three hands and travelled from Padua to Florence with its scribe, encompasses 83 neumed texts by Bartolino da Padova, Antonio da Cividale, Francesco Landini, Antonio Zacara da Teramo, Antonello Marot da Caserta, Johannes Vailant, Johannes Ciconia, and in a second section, written in Florence after 1410, by Andrea Stefani and Paolo Tenorista.591

As it is well-known, and as Pasquini has particularly emphasized,592 at the beginning of the Quattrocento, poetry distinguishes itself through a strong tendency toward variation, but a limited inclination for innovation. This peculiarity is even more evident in those texts belonging to the so-called *poesia per musica*, where entire lines, often from Petrarch’s *RVF*, are incorporated for making new texts. Andrea’s own production is paradigmatic in both senses, and compared to his poetic collection, it reveals the ways in which his literary interests are closely intertwined with his writing. We shall thus first analyze the poems Andrea included in his anthology and then his *poesia per musica*. Indeed, the fact that he did not copy the other three poems in his lyric anthology suggests that, although those he included are *canzonette* that could be set to music, he probably considered some *poesia per musica*, possibly madrigals and also ballads, a different kind of writing, which should not be included in a literary anthology.

591 *The Lucca Codex*, 13-49.
Nevertheless, there he included his popular *laudi*, which he declares were also sung and put into music. Although there seems to be some resistance toward some lower metrical forms, it is not possible to recognize a clear-cut stylistic and/or metrical organization in the Marucelliano. Yet, Andrea’s attitude is rather surprising, since other poets, as for instance Franco Sacchetti, did not enforce such divisions in their codices.  

*Chi'mmi terrà amor* is a rather traditional love poem, where there are predominant key-words pointing to Andrea’s interest in Dante, but also to Petrarch and more generally to fourteenth-century lyric topoi. *Allo specchio pulita* and *Lassa dolente* share this same inspiration, but are both written in a woman’s voice. The first two texts, while not having been copied consecutively, seem to answer each other. Indeed, *Chi'mmi terrà amor* looks like a rewriting of Dante’s poems of the *pargoletta*, the young lady, while in *Allo specchio pulita* it is her who is speaking to herself and to other young ladies. Stefani retraces Dante, at the same time drawing on more traditional themes. Andrea’s style is not particularly elevated, complying with the middle-style genre of poetry that he is writing; it is not refined, nor outstanding from an aesthetic point of view. Nevertheless, these poems and those of the Lucca Codex are significant examples of the production of a follower of both Dante and Petrarch at the beginning of the Quattrocento.

In *Allo specchio pulita* and in *Chi'mmi terrà amor* Andrea uses two words that have a clear Dantean origin: *angioletta* (young angelic woman) and *pargoletta* (young woman). A search in the

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593 For this particular perspective on Sacchetti’s songbook, see McGuire Jenkins, *Senza Vestimenta*, 69-72, 217, to which I also refer the reader for further bibliography.

594 Dante’s poems of the *pargoletta* are *I’ mi son pargoletta bella e nova, Perché ti vedi giovinetta e bella*, and *Chi guarderà giammai sanza paura* (Alighieri, *Opere I*, 368-83), to which *Deh, Vïoletta, che ’n ombra d’Amore* can be added (Ibid., 188-93). The word *pargoletta* appears in *Io son venuto*, in its last verse: “Saranne quello ch’è d’un uom di marmo, / se ’n pargoletta fia per cuore un marmo.” “It will be with me as a man of marble, if a girl keeps a heart of marble” (*Dante’s Lyric Poetry*, vol. 1 163).
TLIO database and in the LIZ clearly shows that pargoletta as a noun, indicating a young woman, first emerges in Dante’s lyric poems. Then, it appears in Purgatorio’s Earthly Paradise and consequently in Dante’s commentators. But in poetry, it is used only once by Boccaccio and Petrarch, respectively, to which we can add single occurrences in the poesia per musica, in a poem by Francesco Landini, and also in Franco Sacchetti, Antonio da Ferrara, Niccolò Cieco, and Domenico da Prato. Angioletta shows a comparable use trend: first seen in Lapo Gianni and Dante, it is then used by Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Niccolò del Proposto; but, except for some isolated occurrences, such as in Simone Serdini, it re-emerges later, as for instance in Leon Battista Alberti or Tebaldeo. So, at the turn of the Quattrocento, the mere use of these two words puts Andrea in the context of those poets who hold Dante as a model, and are in contact with Petrarch and Boccaccio, personally like Sacchetti, or ideally like Serdini.

But there is more to say. In the first poem, the young woman is looking at herself in the mirror, and she describes her juvenile beauty with traditional words. In the ripresa and in the first two stanzas we find, for instance, bel viso (beautiful visage), dolci occhi belli (sweet beautiful eyes) and humili (humble), angelico core (angelic heart); more interesting are the references to her being lieta (merry) and her eyes having allegrezza ardita (bold joyfulness), as are the words associated with light and fire (lucente splendore, shining splendor) that may be connected to the concurrent poesia tardogotica. The fact that she is speaking in first person makes this poem close to Dante’s ballad I’mi son pargoletta, where the young woman talks about herself. The other stanzas are even more remarkably related to Dante’s poetry. Indeed, after

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595 *Purg.* 31.59 “Non ti dovea gravar le penne in giuso, / ad aspettar più colpo, o pargoletta / o altra vanità con si breve uso.” “your wings should not have been weighted / down, to await more blows, by either a young girl / or some other new thing of such short duration.”

having described herself as a young, beautiful, and gentle woman, she talks about her behavior in love: here, she not only describes herself as a cruel stony woman, but invites the other pargolette, young women, to act in this same way. In particular, she uses those images that can be found in Dante’s canzone *Così nel mio parlar*, and she really portrays herself as Dante’s woman. In the third stanza she defines herself selvaggia (savage), dura (hard), and cruda (cruel): these words appear in Dante’s *canzoni petrose*, but are fairly diffused in the poetic language, and in particular Laura is also described as such multiple times. The really significant part of the text is instead the fifth stanza:

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I’ ò spezzato l’arco
le saette e ’l faretra [sic]
d’amore nè curo il varco
di lui che più m’arretra
in farmi cuor di pietra
ò di ghiacciato marmo
et contr’àllui più m’armo
in farme forte ardita.
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Here, she not only openly declares her stony and icy heart, conflating what Dante writes in the *petrose*, but her actions trace what Dante says of his woman in the first two stanzas of *Così nel mio parlar*: she is armed, she is impenetrable, and she breaks the weapons with which Love tries to hit her. In the following stanza she even invites the other pargolette to break Love arrows in order to remain honest. Stefani, here, draws from Dante’s *canzone* the verbs spezzare (to break) and arretrare (to move back), creating a rewriting of Dante’s poetry noteworthy both from the thematic and the formal point of view.

*Chi’mmi terrà amor* shows a comparable Dantean inspiration, clearly demonstrated by the use of both the words pargoletta and angioletta. Indeed, we must add to what we have said above about their diffusion, that these words can be found together only in Dante’s ballad *I’ mi son pargoletta*. Except for this remarkable choice, however, Andrea’s *canzonetta* develops as a
traditional middle-style poem, where various Petrarchan references can be found, along with many words connected to the *poesia tardogotica* or *flamboyant*, where the representation of the woman as light and flames is common: she emanates *splendore* (splendor/brightness), her eyes are *vive stelle* (lively stars), enriched by a *fiammetta* (little flame), throwing *raggi d’oro* (golden rays). Although she is a *pargoletta* and the poet traditionally talks about his tormented love, she is not cruel at all, nor his sufference here seems particularly unbearable.

The third poem Andrea includes in his anthology, *Lassa dolente*, is again written in a woman’s voice, who complains that her husband has left her for a younger woman, as she states at the very end of the poem, while in the second stanza she looks at herself in the mirror and recognizes that her beauty is fading. Although it is not possible to draw a strict parallel, this *canzonetta* seems an *Heroid* written in vernacular verses. Its style is, indeed, definitely elegiac, as it is emphasized by the use of words and syntagms such as *dogliosa lamentare* (lament with anguish), *piangendo* and *lagrimando* (crying and weeping), *manca ogni speranza* (no hope is left), *lassa dolente isventurata* (miserable grieving unfortunate), *piangendo con sospiri* (crying with sighs). It really complies with the definition of elegy as the *stilum miserorum*, the style of the unhappy.597

Its *incipit*, however, may be considered a citation from the famous *lamento* by Rinaldo d’Aquino, *Giamaï non mi conforto*, where in like manner a woman complains of the departure of her lover for the Crusade.598 Although *lassa dolente* is quite a general remark, the connection is strengthened by Andrea’s use of the words *dolente tapinella*, which are close to Rinaldo’s *lassa tapina*; but more generally, *tapino/tapinello* is not a common adjective in Trecento poetry, and it

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597 Alighieri, *DVE* 2.4.5, ed. Fenzi, 166-69.
598 *I Poeti della Scuola Siciliana*, vol. 2 189-96.
seems to go back to earlier models. It is impossible to know whether Andrea directly read Rinaldo’s poem, or if he drew on later, ensuing models. But, for what particularly interests us here, his rhymes clearly show that Andrea must have known more poems by Dante than those he copied in his book. It is indeed rather surprising that *I’ mi’ son pargoletta* does not appear in the anthology, also given the fact that it had been set to music in those same years.

Andrea Stefani’s poems preserved in the Lucca Codex share some characteristics with the three *canzonette*. Because of the divergence between its metrical scheme and its music, the ballad *I’ senti’ matutino* looks anomalous: it is a *ballata minima*, which means that each of its parts (*ripresa, piedi, volta*) counts only one verse; so, the three stanzas following the first should only have three verses; but they have four, thus being asymmetrical. Yet, the musician ignores the difficulty arising from having one more verse, and sets music not to the first two verses, but to the first two stanzas. According to Li Gotti, this fact is noteworthy because it shows the abatement of the formal value of the ballad metrical scheme, but also because it implies that the author of the text was probably also the author of the music, thus substantiating the idea that Andrea would also be a skilled musician. The other two poems, the ballad *Con tucta gentilezza* and the madrigal *Morte m’a sciolt’, Amor, d’ogni tuo legge*, were set to music respectively by Antoine Busnois and (possibly) Bonaiuto Corsini. Andrea Stefani, therefore, entered the network of the most famous musicians and writers for music, both as a poet and as a musician. Yet, from the strictly literary point of view, as Li Gotti writes, “non ... sembrano gran cosa dal punto di vista letterario, conteste come sono di implorazioni erotiche scolicasticissime” (“they

599 The word *tapino* and its derivatives is fairly common in thirteenth-century poetry, but in the Trecento is less common, and for instance it does not appear in Petrarch’s RVF. See Tlio text database.

600 Ms. Riccardiano 2871 suggests that the ballad in fifteenth-century Florence would have been sung as a *cantasi come*. Alighieri, *Opere I*, 368-69.

are nothing special from the literary point of view, weaved as they are with pedantic erotic pleas”). Con tucta gentilezza is a quite traditional love poem, in which the praising of the woman is very close to what Andrea writes in the canzonetta Chi·mmi terrà amor. The madrigal Morte m’à sciolto, Amor is composed by using three verses from Petrarch’s RVF 270, the canzone Amore, se vuo’ ch’i’ torni al gioco antico, ll. 106-108 (its last three verses, the congedo). The five lines added by Andrea amplify the theme of the canzone, though significantly dumbing it down. Andrea’s style here is not particularly elevated, rather popular. Petrarch presses Love by maintaining that, unless Love is able to win death and ‘reconstruct’ Laura in each and every limb, he will be free from its yoke, since he cannot, and will not, fall in love with any other woman. The verses Andrea uses are, indeed, where the general theme of the canzone is condensed and made explicit: “Death has freed me, Love, from all your laws; she who was my lady has gone to Heaven, leaving my life sorrowful and free.” Andrea simplifies the theme at the core of Petrarch’s canzone, and focuses on a slightly different part of the question: while Petrarch writes that he is not willing to love any other woman on earth and that Love is powerless toward him, Andrea says that he will still serve the dead woman who is now living in peace in Heaven, thus being in a certain sense closer to the Vita Nuova than to Petrarch’s canzone. Love, whom Andrea calls “dolce signor” (sweet lord), is not portrayed as an enemy and the lover represents himself as ascetic as the woman should be in Paradise.

This same popular register characterizes Andrea’s other poesie per musica included in the Lucca Codex, and also his three laude, which he copied in the Marucelliano codex. Among the three, the first one, Su tutti peccatori, is of some interest, especially because of its representation

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603 Petrarch’s Lyric Poems, 448.
of Hell. Indeed, it is centered on the theme of death that will come for us all, and on the consequent necessity of repentance. After recapitulating the seven deadly sins, in order to convince the audience it proposes a rather vivid and expressive representation of Hell, where fierce demons torture the damned souls with forks and hooks, saws and gimlets, while the *memento mori* takes the form of a Dance of Death.

This *landa*, written in ca. 1400, represents the hidden face of Florentine culture at the turn of the Quattrocento. Compared to his other poems, it shows the possible various genres a poet like Andrea Stefani was familiar with, and the diverse poetry that could emerge as the outcome of his mixed cultural interests and relationships. The common representation of Florentine culture in this period centers on figures such as Coluccio Salutati or Leonardo Bruni, who, in the wake of Petrarch and Boccaccio, revived classical culture in what is known as Civic
Humanism. Yet, as much as a sheer division between the Middle Ages and the Age of Humanism is questionable, it is remarkable by what means a poet, who is indeed close to the poetic avant-garde of his time by having a quasi-complete copy of Petrarch’s RVF, which was a rather uncommon body of poetry during the fourteenth century, is capable of writing such dissimilar kinds of verses. The representation of sin and punishment in this lauda is not only popular, but definitely medieval, in the common sense of this word as, barbaric, outmoded, or antiquated. None of Andrea Stefani’s poems reaches the highest level of poetic refinement, and he definitely is not among the laureate poets of his time. Nevertheless, what he writes as literature or even as musical poetry differentiates itself from what he composes for popular devotion. These discrete registers show that Humanism, with its elitist return to the classics, was an exclusive movement removed from the masses, while also vernacular culture had to be simplified for a general public that might also enjoy it in musical performances.

Andrea and his fellow municipal poets, such as Manetto Ciaccheri and Bruscaccio da Rovezzano or Simone Serdini, represent an interesting kind of intellectual, caught in-between the wake of vernacular poetry and the rise of Humanism. Not belonging to the newest literary trends, but at the same time writing poetry that draws on the major works of the previous century, by simplifying language and themes, by setting it to music, in a certain sense Andrea makes popular what is not intended to be popular at all, even if written in the intelligible vernacular language. In his versions, the sophisticated canzoni petrose become the umpteenth rewriting of unreciprocated love, the donna pietra only a woman that wants to remain honest, while Petrarch’s grief is just a moralistic declaration of fidelity to the dead woman. His literary

604 See below, §3.4.
poetry, while aiming at Parnassus, finds itself materially close to his own popular *laudi*, with which seems to share the very same public. Who knows if Andrea’s rewriting might have made Dante (and Petrarch, too) feel as he is represented by Sacchetti, when he hears the smith or the man with the donkey distorting his verses. As Petrarch writes, “if this happens with Demosthenes and Cicero, Homer and Virgil, among learned men and in the schools, how will it fare with our poet among the rude fellows who frequent the taverns and public squares?"606

3.4 *Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and the Secolo Senza Poesia.*

3.4.1 “Vulgari Eloquentie Palmam:” Dante vs. Petrarch?

The polar positions Dante and Petrarch occupy in the history of Italian literature and culture, in the common scholarly narration, often constitute a tenet. Such a contraposition originates from the dawn of Italian literate tradition, coming to light in Dante's and Petrarch’s own cultural engagement, and can be traced back to the writings of Petrarch himself. Reducing the matter to the bare minimum, Dante places himself at the apex of the new vernacular literature, refusing, until his last days, to entrust his fame to Latin writings; while Petrarch builds his literary persona as the intellectual capable of restoring classical literature, reacting to the looming fame of Alighieri by belittling his own vernacular production as just a juvenile distraction. This contraposition is enlightened by a third pole, Boccaccio, who is the recipient of some of Petrarch’s most significant statements,607 and who attempts a conciliation by heralding both Dante’s and Petrarch’s vernacular writing as archetype and model for the


607 See for instance the famous Ep. Fam. 21.15. A recent exploration of this question in the essays collected in *Petrarch and Dante.*
newborn Italian literature. In the sixteenth century Bembo crystalizes the situation, excluding Dante from the picture, while taking Petrarch’s vernacular poetry and Boccaccio’s prose works as the unique models for writing, giving a decisive twist to Italian literary (but also linguistic) history. In the twentieth century, Contini saw the contraposition of a “Petrarchan monolinguism” vs. a “Dantean plurilinguism” as immanent in the entire history of Italian literature, and extended the paradigm, while deeming it as constitutive until the present times. As specifically for the poetic field, according to the most common scholarly narration, after the eclecticism of the fourteenth century, and the lack of any valuable poetry in the fifteenth century (as in the unfortunately famous judgment by Croce), in the sixteenth century Petrarch becomes the unique model for writing poetry, whose predominance Bembo acknowledges and further promotes, resulting in the overwhelming Renaissance Petrarchism.

This simplified overview of the literary scenario emphasizes issues that have already emerged in the previous chapters. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the received literary historiographical paradigm wants Dante, whose fame endured an apparent weakening during the fifteenth century, still a model but mostly a topic of study, especially in Florence; while Petrarch’s efforts for entrusting his glory to his Latin writing, as it is well-known, went mostly unheeded, and his sensational success is already due to his vernacular works, the RVF and the Trionfi. Yet, the interplay of the two models, Dante and Petrarch, was anything but rare, and most lyric writers tended to draw their inspiration from a multifaceted array of sources. This is definitely true for the Trecento and the first half of the Quattrocento, but it occurs even later. In particular, as the volumes preserving lyric anthologies –especially those

608 See above, §3.1.1.
609 Cf. Introduction and §§1.1.3-5.
owned and/or copied by poets—show, the two major predecessors were accompanied by their fellow poets, and also by their followers. Indeed, before the Cinquecento, the canon was definitely flexible, and an eclecticism comprehending the whole vernacular lyric tradition, embracing the core Tuscan canon and beyond it, outlived and evolved until and well into the sixteenth century, as especially northern books and the 1527 Giunti edition show, among others.610 Besides the bias of the Humanists and the changes in modern perspective, in the concrete practice of writing rhymes, Dante is seen not only as an erudite and moral example, as for instance Landino portrays him, but also as a literary model, and does not seem to have suffered from a complete diminishment. There is an additional factor that has to be taken into account: Boccaccio. He was, indeed, the most important living intellectual in Florence in the third quarter of the Trecento, a renowned civic cultural eminence, to whom crucial tasks were entrusted.611 Although, as we will see, he was mainly perceived as a magister, master in Latin writings and in Greek, his vernacular literary practice too was deeply influential. Building on the analysis of Andrea Stefani’s anthology, the exploration of several other books roughly dating to the same period, will demonstrate the evolution of the relationship with the lyric past and its glories, along with the evolution of the Dante-function, in Florence first, and second in the Veneto. First it seems, however, critical to review some explicit accounts on the Three Crowns at the turn of the Quattrocento, in order to put into context those editorial enterprises which will be the object of the subsequent paragraphs.

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610 For an overview on the circulation and influence of early poetry in the Cinquecento see Bologna, “Tradizione testuale e fortuna,” 507, 509 et seq., cf. below.
611 Boccaccio autore e copista, 61-66.
3.4.1.1 The Three Crowns: from Franco Sacchetti to Giannozzo Manetti (1375-1450)

The Florentine Three Crowns –Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio– is a trite pattern through which Italian medieval literature is too often confronted. Their masterpieces –Commedia, Canzoniere [RVF], Decameron– are considered the most influential works in Italian medieval literature, and certainly they deserve such a place of honor. Nevertheless, too often what happens at their margins goes unobserved. I shall not discuss what is true and useful in this paradigm; instead I will go back to its origin, since it casts light on the dialectics governing the reception of the three authors as literary models and/or cultural points of reference before the shared acceptance into the canon of the three of them.\(^\text{612}\) The first formation of this canonical trio dates back to the last life-years of Petrarch and Boccaccio, and by 1450 it is firmly established. The frescoes of the series of Famous Men and Women by Andrea del Castagno in the Villa Carducci at Legnaia (1448-50, today at the Uffizi) brightly demonstrate their institutionalization. There, in a reworking of the topos of the Nine Worthies (a theme that will return in the next paragraphs), Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio are portrayed along with three warriors –Farinata degli Uberti, Pippo Spano, and Andrea Acciaiuoli–, and three illustrious women –the Cumean Sibyl, Queen Esther, and Queen Tomiri. While displaying the elevated status poetry had reached in the Florentine culture of the mid-fifteenth century, when intellectuals were on equal terms with war heroes, these paintings visualize the heroes of the Florentine golden age of literature.\(^\text{613}\) As Bartuschat has shown, the triplet had already been consecrated by several biographers, such as Filippo Villani, but above all by Leonardo Bruni


\(^{613}\) Bartuschat, La “Vies”, 132-33.
and Giannozzo Manetti, who wrote the ‘parallel lives’ of these authors respectively in 1436 and 1440. We shall, however, start to retrace the formation of the canon from what Franco Sacchetti tells us on this topic, since he represents the voice of the vernacular civic culture of the last decades of the fourteenth century.

On the occasion of both Petrarch’s and Boccaccio’s deaths, which occurred in a period of just over a year, Franco Sacchetti wrote a commemorative canzone.614 The one written for Boccaccio’s death gives, in particular, the idea of the end of the age of Florence’s cultural splendor:615

> Or è mancata ogni poesia
> e vòte son le case di Parnaso,
> po’ che morte n’ha tolto ogni valore.
> S’io piango o grido, che miracol fia,
> pensando che un sol c’era rimaso,
> Giovan Boccacci, or è di vita fore?
> (1-6)

In this poem Sacchetti lists many personalities that had recently died, emphasizing that the city lost eminent figures in many fields—medicine, philosophy, law, and art of war. As for literature, he laments the passing of Boccaccio, after those of Petrarch and Zanobi da Strada, the two Florentine poets who received the laurel crown:

> ... e, come tutti sanno,
> tre poeti di nome,
> che se m’è detto: - Come? -,
> Zanobi e ’l Petracca, in quel tesauro
> ch'ebbon col verde lauro;
> l’ultimo e ’l terzo è quel che sopra scrivo.
> E ciaschedun fu vivo
> insieme, e tutti gli vidi a un tempo;
> or non si vede alcun tardi o per tempo!
> (ll. 37-45)

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Following the topical theme of the decline of current times, he also denounces that there will never be “a new Dante:” “Come deggio sperar che surga Dante, | che già chi 'l sappia legger non si trova? | E Giovanni, ch’è morto, ne fe' scola.” (91-3) Referring to Boccaccio’s public lectures on the *Commedia*, which he had held in the year before his death (1373-1374), Sacchetti complains of the lack of anyone that, after Boccaccio’s death, might be able to read Dante. Bartuschat emphasizes Sacchetti’s attention to vernacular culture here, which is relevant especially because following biographers of Boccaccio will not refer to his Dantean lectures.

Then Sacchetti lists Boccaccio’s five major works:

Chi sonerà parola  
in letture propinque,  
là dove libri cinque  
di questo diretan composti stimo?  
“De’ viri illustri” il primo  
conta, e ’l secondo “De le donne chiare”,  
terzo si fa nomare  
“Buccolica”, il quarto “Monti e fiumi”,  
il quinto “Delli dii e lor costumi”.
(ll. 97-105)

Along with his mastery as *dantista*, Sacchetti only mentions Boccaccio’s erudite Latin works, the same as Salutati’s canon: *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium; De Mulieribus Claris; Buccolica Carmen; De Montibus, Silvis, Fontibus, Lacibus, Fluminibus, Stagnis seu Paludibus, et de Diversis Nominibus Maris; Genealogia Deorum Gentilium.* Sacchetti’s silence as regards the *Decameron*, from which he drew primary inspiration for his own *Trecentonovelle*, is noteworthy. Indeed, it is a blatant example of the primary importance Boccaccio had in the Florentine cultural milieu, while not being raised as a poetic model; or at least, he was not publicly acknowledged as such.

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617 Sacchetti’s titles of Boccaccio’s Latin works are rather inaccurate: the *Genealogia* is defined as “The Gods and Their Habits;” also, Boccaccio never wrote a *De Viris illustribus*, thus Sacchetti must be referring to the *De Casibus*, in which, however, there are also stories of women. Cf. Bartuschat, *Les “Vies”*, 195.
From our point of view, Boccaccio is a key figure of Trecento poetry, not only for the *Decameron*, but also for his other vernacular works, which—as it is well known—will enjoy great success in the Quattrocento. Yet, as Sacchetti exemplifies, for his contemporaries he was mainly a *magister*, both as for Dante and as for the classics.  

Sacchetti in his rhymes mentions his literary models. In sonnet IV, *Se fosson vivi mille e mille Danti*, he lists Dante, Guido—who must be Cavalcanti—Guittone, and Pane—Panuccio del Bagno,—who could not express the beauty of his beloved. This hyperbole gives an inclusive canon of past poetry, while in other poems the only two poets to whom Sacchetti refers remain only Dante and Petrarch: in madrigal CXLVII he uses Beatrice and Laura to refer to the poets who celebrated them, who appear unrivaled; in sonnet CCIX Petrarch and Laura appear, while in the sixth sonnet against war (CCLXXIII), he parallels Petrarch to Livy. Responding to Giovanni di Gherardo da Prato (sonnet CCXXXVII), Sacchetti refers to both Petrarch and Boccaccio, again lamenting their death. This concise overview of Sacchetti’s attitude toward the two looming intellectuals of the second half of the fourteenth century, along with the references to Dante and his legacy, should be enough to pinpoint two main issues. First, as a Florentine poet, Sacchetti does not distance himself from the majority, and links his own work to the local, Tuscan poetic tradition, remounting to Guittone, but whose main star was undoubtedly Dante. Yet, he does acknowledge Petrarch’s importance as a lyric model, a fact that is not common in this period, when Petrarch’s collection mostly

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618 A comparable perspective is, indeed, shared by Villani (see below), and also by Domenico Bandini, who draws inspiration from Boccaccio’s vernacular works, but only recognizes the Latin ones.
620 Ibid., 179-80.
621 Ibid., 325-26.
622 Ibid., 429-30.
623 Ibid., 366-67.
remains inactive. Indeed, as Balduino pointed out, Petrarch’s status as a poetic model is still not settled, and it will not be for almost a century. Boccaccio, if not the first, is certainly among the most influential intellectuals who gave value to his vernacular poetry, recognizing him as the herald of a new way of writing.\footnote{Balduino, \textit{Boccaccio, Petrarca}, 21-24.} Sachetti knew Boccaccio, to whom he must have owed his avant-garde cultural position on this matter, foreshadowing the future main cultural streaks. Indeed, during the Quattrocento, Petrarch becomes a more and more compelling model, as his way of writing poetry gains salience; yet, as Pasquini pointed out, in the entire century poets hang in the balance between the Dante-function and the Petrarch-function.\footnote{Pasquini, \textit{Le botteghe della poesia}, 333-352: 337.} But, before focusing on the relationship between these two main poetic functions, I shall go back to the canon of the Three Crowns. What can be inferred from Sacchetti’s \textit{Libro delle Rime}, is in fact a recurring paradigm.

In those same years, Benvenuto da Imola’s commentaries also referred to the three Florentine poets as major inspiration, being among the first to recognize all three of them. As Luca Carlo Rossi has emphasized, Benvenuto assesses their roles in a way peculiar to him, according to an intellectual judgment, but also to his own liking. Dante is the \textit{poeta perfectissimus}, to whom Boccaccio follows, as Benvenuto’s \textit{venerabilis praeceptor}. Rossi highlights that Boccaccio is an intellectual point of reference for Benvenuto, just like Petrarch had been for Boccaccio; or even what Virgil is for Dante in the \textit{Commedia}. Indeed, in Benvenuto’s \textit{Comentum} on Dante, Rossi has found many references to Boccaccio’s oeuvre, among which those to the vernacular works, and especially to the \textit{Decameron}, outnumber those to the Latin works.\footnote{L.C. Rossi, “Il Boccaccio di Benvenuto da Imola,” in Rossi, \textit{Studi}, 203-70: 212-13 and \textit{passim}.} On the other hand, Petrarch, the \textit{novissimo poeta}, is deeply admired, but does not completely match
Benvenuto’s taste, and may be put in the third place. Benvenuto’s early appraisal of the Three Crowns is noteworthy for the premier role Boccaccio plays also as a writer in the vernacular, but particularly because it permeates his commentary on the Commedia, which will be quite famous in the centuries to come, thus spreading such literary canon among the many readers of the poem.

Filippo Villani wrote his De Origine Civitatis Florentie et De Eiusdem Famosis Civibus between 1382 (1st red.) and 1395 (2nd red.). There, biographies create a history of the city, exalting the past in comparison with the present. Villani’s perspective is municipal, mostly focused on contemporary culture: Florence’s virtue lays in the rebirth of ancient Roman virtus. Villani shows appreciation for every branch of knowledge, and in his biographic collection includes (in this order) poets, jurists, physicians, rhetoricians, “semi-poets,” masters of the seven liberal arts, musicians, painters and other artists, actors and jesters, and eventually military leaders. As Bartuschat points out, this hierarchy, where cultured people (even those practicing less noble disciplines, such as painting) come before war-men, is revolutionary.

Poetry is the noblest discipline, and its representatives are: Claudian, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Zanobi da Strada, and Coluccio Salutati. In particular, Dante, who directly follows the Latin poet Claudian, is believed to have resuscitated poetry after the dark age subsequent to the decadence of the Roman Empire: Dante is the Christian poet, portrayed as

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627 Ibid., 203-07.
628 It also parallels and then surpasses Coluccio Salutati’s canon, expressed in his letter to Francescuolo da Brossano on Petrarch’s and Boccaccio’s deaths, which Benvenuto most probably knew. Ibid., 208.
629 Two main redactions are known, to which a third lost one, written around 1405, might be added. Villani, De Origine, XXXI-LXXXI.
631 Ibid.
632 Villani, De Origine, 68-108. Other poets, such as Guido Cavalcanti and Fazio degli Uberti, whose works were also intended to instruct the citizens, are among the “semi-poets;” while Brunetto Latini is considered a rhetorician.
the true hero of the Florentine renaissance. Villani’s biographies of the Three Crowns are largely influential. Interestingly, Petrarch, who was Florentine by blood but never resided in the city, here is unquestionably assimilated to the municipal culture of Florence.633

Leonardo Bruni, in his vernacular Lives of Dante and Petrarch (1436) is the first biographer to isolate Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, albeit not writing a biography for the latter.634 After the complete biographies of Dante and Petrarch, he also mentions Boccaccio, of whom—he says—he would have written a proper biography, if provided with sufficient information. Indeed, Bruni at the end of Petrarch’s life lists the three of them sequentially, and while writing Plutarchan “parallel lives” of Dante and Petrarch, he also gives some biographic remarks on Boccaccio. Bruni in the end divides the eloquentiae palmam between the two “main crowns,” following the principle that each language is valuable in its own terms. So, Petrarch and Dante are equal in writing canzoni, but the latter is better in writing sonnets, while the Commedia remains the masterpiece par excellence. Petrarch, however, is presented as the innovator of Latin letters and, unlike in Villani’s work, he is considered the true father of Humanism.635

Shortly after, Giannozzo Manetti in his 1440 Vitae Trium Illustrium Poetarum Florentinorum firmly adds Boccaccio to the canon:636 the Florentine Three Crowns appear institutionalized as the Florentine glories of the past, whom should also be appreciated by that public having a proclivity for humanistic culture and literature. Globally, the Three Crowns are considered superior in the vernacular, but second to current Humanist writers in Latin.

635 Ibid. Cf. also Bruni’s Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrium, where the vernacular tradition is harshly debated by the characters participating in the dialogues (Bruni, Dialogi).
636 Manetti, Vite.
Manetti tries to harmonize Villani’s and Bruni’s different perspectives, thus resulting in some inaccuracies in his opinion on Dante’s and Petrarch’s respective roles in the re-birth of culture, which sometimes appears contradictory. Boccaccio, who decisively rejoins what has now become a triplet, is portrayed as the father of Florentine Humanism.  

Given the large body of existing scholarship, it would be redundant to rehearse here the entire scenario of the positions concerning Latin and vernacular, the new humanistic trends, and the discussions against vernacular tradition and vice versa, which by no means are limited to the works just mentioned. Yet, these explicit accounts regarding Florentine cultural history, and in particular the functions associated to the Three Crowns, and especially the very creation of such a canon, put into context the material accounts of their fortunes, which will be the subject of the following paragraphs. Nevertheless, it seems of some interest to lastly focus on Sicco Polenton. His biographies of the Three Crowns are remarkable because they reflect a canon that is rooted mainly in Florentine culture, which he absorbs while writing in Padua, well outside and far from Florence. Indeed, in the second redaction of his *Scriptorum Illustrium Latinae Linguae Libri* (1435), a history of Latin language from Livius Andronicus to Petrarch, as for the contemporaries, we find Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, along with

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639 Sicco Polenton, *Scriptorum.*
Albertino Mussato and Benvenuto da Imola. Boccaccio is, however, placed among the historians, and thus his biography is separated from those of the other poets. Yet, his mere presence in the second redaction of the work is noteworthy, as is the importance given to Dante, who is the poet with whom the dark ages have ended, instead of Mussato—as it was in the first redaction. Sicco, while giving preeminent importance to Petrarch, whose life is the longest one, complies with the Tuscan canon of the Three Crowns, which is something of particular interest, especially in the light of what we will see happening in coeval books.

Sacchetti’s account of his own models in his rhymes is by no means exclusive to him, and there are many other instances of poets legitimizing their own writing through the direct citation of their models. One of the most interesting cases is Simone Serdini from Siena, called “il Saviozzo.” In his sonnet La gloria, la facundia e melodia, he praises Dante as the best poet the world has ever seen, whom has been made famous by the likewise worthy author who wrote his biography, Boccaccio. Indeed, in the sonnet’s coda Boccaccio and Dante are referenced as the two chief models, the tutelary deities for writing respectively in prose and in verses.

La gloria, la facundia e melodia
dell’italica lingua, il bel vulgare,
l’ordine delle rime e del parlare
uscir d’un corpo, e Dante in compagna.
Nacquer le ninfe, Apollo e l’ermonia
del fonte d’Elicona e del sonare
della citra d’Orfeo, e ’l contemplare
le Muse, il cielo e la filosofia.
Giovane innamorato e virtuoso,
visse in la patria sua fin che la invidia
credette concularlo, e fe’gli onore.
Del suo essilio e dell’altrui perfidia,
e come visse al mondo glorioso,
qui legger puoi per merito aüttere;
ché simile oratore
non ebbe al mondo mai si dolce lima,

Serdini’s canon, elaborated at the beginning of the Quattrocento (he dies in 1419-20, but the sonnet is supposed to have been written around 1404), not only evidences that Dante was, instead of Petrarch, the preferred model for writing verses among Tuscan poets at the turn of the century, but also that Boccaccio’s mastery as a dantista and as a vernacular writer alike was being recognized. Indeed, although his vernacular writings’ fortunes are remarkable during the fifteenth century, and especially in the Laurentian era, his status as a vernacular writer, as we have seen with Sacchetti, struggles to be established for a long time. Serdini is, thus, an early witness to Boccaccio’s later and greater fortunes, those that will grant him a preeminent role in Bembo’s theories. On the other hand, as for verse writing, Serdini takes the side of Dante, which is not uncommon at the time. Yet, such a neat and bipartite canon is still peculiar, especially in the light of future lyric trends, seeing Petrarch as the dominant function.

Balduino explored the puzzling question posed by the peculiar “isolation” of Boccaccio and Petrarch in their own times. From the point of view of our present, they definitely are the two great intellectuals of the fourteenth century. But, as I have already mentioned, his contemporaries mainly recognized Boccaccio as the great Florentine humanist, who restored the knowledge of classical literature; while Petrarch was certainly acclaimed as one of the most important, if not the most important intellectual of the time, and also his

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641 The sonnet appears in a codex that derives from Serdini’s edition of Dante’s works, ideated drawing inspirations from Boccaccio’s editorial work (on Serdini as a dantista and his relationship with Boccaccio’s copies of Dante’s works, see Banella, “The Fortunes,” and La Vita Nuova, 138-40 and passim, to which I refer the reader for further bibliography). There, the poem is placed between Boccaccio’s Trattatello in laude di Dante and Dante’ Vita Nuova, and is preceded by this rubric: “Lo infrascritto sonetto feci io, Simone de’ Serdini da Siena, a laude del poeta Dante e di messer Giovan Boccacci, che nella sopradetta prosa dice di lui appieno.” Serdini, Rome, 235-36.

642 This is the supposed dating of the now-lost Dantean anthology copied by Serdini.

643 Balduino, Boccaccio, Petrarca, 13-55 (“Premesse ad una storia della poesia trecentesca”), 301-30 (“Occasioni mancate”).
vernacular production was read and appreciated, though by a minority. Yet, the main innovation his RVF introduced in the literary scenario, that is, the construction of a cohesive songbook, made of a significant and expressive number of poems (366), where only one woman appears and where the story of a soul is narrated, seems unfertile. Boccaccio, as his biography of Petrarch and his Chigi manuscript (BAV, Chig. I. V 176) witness, recognizes the pivotal role Petrarch has, along with Dante, in the new-born Italian poetic canon. Boccaccio’s mastery in this matter is, however, followed only by a few, and his own example both as a writer in vernacular prose and narrative verses, along with the so-called Petrarchism, will be acknowledged from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards, and mainly in the sixteenth century. In particular, Balduino, following Santagata, points out that Trecento poetry collections lack the intimate and private dimension of Petrarch’s RVF, and especially its significant, “moral,” ordering; while a detailed analysis of the metrical schemes used by Trecento poets shows that Petrarch’s example is not the leading one, and that his concrete influence in contemporary lyric writing is quite negligible. Trecento and early Quattrocento poets read Petrarch; his friends, such as Sennuccio del Bene, Boccaccio, and Alberto da Ferrara, wrote imitating his style; yet his poetry was far from being a model, especially for its innermost nature, and the first collections modelled on the RVF begin appearing only in the 1440s: one of the earliest instances -if not the earliest- is Giusto de’ Conti’s La Bella Mano, where nevertheless Dante is also a major influence. This cultural scenario is mirrored by the treatment of the RVF in the manuscripts of this period. Since in late fourteenth- and early

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644 Balduino, Boccaccio, Petrarch, 311-18 and passim. The same could also be said for other poets, such as Cino Rinuccini and Buonaccorso da Montemagno il Vecchio. On Giusto and his poetry see Italo Pantani, L’amoroso messer Giusto da Valmontone. Un protagonista della lírica italiana del XV secolo (Rome: Salerno, 2006); Giusto de’ Conti di Valmontone. Un protagonista della poesia italiana del ‘400, ed. Italo Pantani (Rome: Bulzoni, 2008).
fifteenth-century anthologies, Petrarch is often Dante’s sparring partner (or vice versa, especially later on), the emergence of his rhymes in lyric collections during the fourteenth century is one of the most important phenomena to which the Dante-function has to be related, just as we have already seen in chapter 1, in the group of early manuscripts where Dante’s trilingual canzone *Aï faus ris* is paired with Petrarch’s poems.

3.4.1.2 Collection Trends and Anthologies

In the the history of the transmission of Dante’s *rime*, absence is the first fact that comes into light. Indeed, it is possible to infer that Dante began writing well before the *Vita Nuova* (1292-94), first because he tells us so in the prosimetrum, but also because the *Memoriali Bolognesi* witness earlier copies of his poems: *Donne ch’avete intelletto d’amore* appears in a 1292 *Memoriale*, while sonnet *Non mi poriano già mai fare ammenda* is copied in another one from 1287. Yet, in the three most ancient Italian *canzonieri*, preserving the earliest Italian lyric poetry, Dante appears only cursorily, as the alleged author of Cavalcanti’s *Fresca rosa novella* in the *canzoniere* Palatino (P), while in the Vat. Lat. 3793 (V) *Donne ch’avete* is added anonymously and attributed to him by a later hand. Despite these single appearances, collections encompassing substantial series of Dante’s poems can be found only later. Codex Martelli 12, the earliest complete copy of the *Vita Nuova*, dates to the first quarter of the Trecento, while Niccolò de’ Rossi’s MS Barb. Lat. 3953 is just a few years more recent (1325-1329 ca). The Florentine *canzoniere* MS Chig. L VIII 305 is almost coeval. There is only one exception to this prevailing tendency, that is one of the most interesting witnesses to the earliest poems by Dante: MS

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*Vita Nuova* III.9: “con ciò fosse cosa che io avesse già veduto per me medesimo l’arte del dire parole per rima” (“Since just recently I had taught myself the art of writing poetry”, transl. from Dante’s *Vita Nuova*, 6), while sonnet *A ciscun’alma presa* would have been written when Dante was eighteen, in 1283.

*645* For an overview on the early tradition of Dante’s poetry see Giociola, “Dante.”
Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, lat. e III 23. It contains the first redaction of some of the *Vita Nuova* poems, and seems to have been copied in Padua in the last years of the thirteenth or in the very first years of the fourteenth century, thus being almost coeval to the three earliest Italian *canzonieri* -L, P, and in particular V. Thus, from its inception, the tradition and consequent reception of Dante as a lyric writer appears divided into two main branches: the Venetian one and the Florentine one.\(^647\) This divergence should be remembered as we go further into our analysis of the growth and spread of the Dante-function from the early Trecento to the Quattrocento.

Brugnolo has explored in depth Trecento book culture, with a particular attention to lyric anthologies.\(^648\) He delineates a scenario in which the earliest *canzonieri*, such as L, P, and especially V, just as the Chigi L VIII 305, witness a certain individual taste along with a definite idea of poetry: their construction through selection and ordering is intentional, it presents a cultural project, where the making of the anthology becomes the focal point in order to provide an historiographical direction to current literary production. These early anthologies even apply intertextual connections among the pieces they collect, employing techniques that can be compared to those used by authors in early songbooks.\(^649\) The refined organization criteria presiding to these anthologies progressively loosen during the fourteenth century, and from the middle of the century we are confronted mostly with messy and unorganized collections, where there does not seem to be any categorizing criteria and the poems are often anonymous.\(^650\) In the Venetian area, manuscripts, as we have already seen in analyzing MS

\(^{647}\) Ibid., 149-50.
\(^{650}\) Ibid., 19-20; Brugnolo, “La poesia nel Trecento,” 224-5.
Barb. Lat. 3953 (which Brugnolo calls a “museum of modern poetry,” that is, a gallery of textual paradigms to be admired and imitated), show much more variety in the selection of texts, along with a more pronounced taste for plurilingualism and pluristylism. But, the crucial change in the evolution of the libro di poesia during the Trecento is the emergence of Petrarch: the Dantean perspective dominating anthologies from the first half of the century progressively weakens, being ultimately replaced by a Petrarchist point of view. At the end of the fourteenth century the roles of the two authors are inverted, and the organization of lyric anthologies tends to no longer be chronological. MS Plut. 41.15, which we have analyzed in the previous chapter, is an example of such a change: it is a “Petrarchan book,” probably collecting an early diffusion of Petrarch’s poetry, where what will become the RVF appears unorganized and poems by others are interspersed to Petrarch’s poems, while Dante only appears in the last page with Aï faus ris. I fully agree with Brugnolo when he writes that, with this book, we are at the antipodes of the great Duecento and early Trecento canzonieri.

Given this context, in the next paragraphs I will analyze two groups of manuscripts, that is several anonymous Florentine anthologies, written ca. 1375-1470, and a selection of famous manuscripts from the Veneto. In chapter 2 the different reception Dante had in the Veneto has already emerged with Niccolò de’ Rossi’s MS Barb. Lat. 3953, a peculiar pluristylistic and plurilingual anthology. Nevertheless, the interplay between the two regions, Tuscany and the Veneto, in the institutionalization of Dante as a lyric writer first, and as a cultural authority later, is fundamental for understanding his canonization in the Late Middle Ages, as it is the root of any further branch of his fortunes. Thus, albeit small, this selection

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652 Ibid., 14.
653 Ibid., 20-21; Pulsoni-Cursi, “Intorno alla precoce fortuna.”
of significant manuscripts is more than enough to point out the main dynamics governing this process.

### 3.5 Tuscan Quattrocento Anthologies

At the center of this paragraph is a selection of fifteenth-century Florentine anthologies, whose compilers or scribes are completely unknown, or whose only bare name is known. These volumes constitute an homogeneous group: they have a set of material peculiarities in common, originated by their copyists, who must have belonged to the same social milieu; also, many works they share are related from the textual point of view. Yet, their connections seem to derive not just from textual transmission, that is, from the minimal act of copying from a common source. Instead, they share and circulate a particular lyric canon, which they actively contribute to elaborate and re-elaborate, in a transition period when—contemporary to the progressive canonization of Petrarch’s poetry as exclusive model—the concrete production of lyric poetry is varied, blending different models and styles. Dated to the fifteenth century, these manuscripts are close in time and space to Andrea Stefani’s book and cultural experience, with which they share crucial characteristics. Yet, they portray the Dante-function under quite a different light, in a relationship with the Petrarch-function that is far more dialectical.

#### 3.5.1 Scattered Rhymes in Middle-Class Quattrocento Florence

The first codex we are going to analyze is MS BRF 1100. Written in a merchant cursive script, it is not a particularly sophisticated medium-large paper manuscript. Yet, it is rather accurately crafted and, as we will see, its contents are not ordinary. Such physical characteristics point toward the middle-low class of Florentine citizens, and an ownership note attributes it

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to Stefano di Cione delle Dote o delle Grandote. According to Cursi, the codex was copied between the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century, not by Stefano, who was only its owner, but by Giovanni Campiobbesi, a semi-professional scribe who worked for literate but not wealthy people. Cursi identifies Stefano as a farsettaio, a tailor specialized in doublets, but this is all that is known about him. Thus, although the manuscript is not technically anonymous, the little information we have does not allow for any further speculation on its owner’s culture than what the manuscript itself can tell us.

Codex Riccardiano 1100 is interesting in many ways, but it is particularly remarkable for its contents. In particular, it opens with Petrarch’s RVF in a form that might be textually related to the Chigi-form preserved in Boccaccio’s anthology, but whose order is completely disjointed. This configuration might have been generated from the progressive accumulation of poems; yet, it is difficult to imagine that such a disorder may just be fortuitous, that is, just the result of gradual additions deriving from diverse sources, although it cannot be connected without any doubt to any form of the text. After the RVF, whose peculiar form will be discussed further, there are poems by poetic correspondents of Petrarch (Lancillotto...
Anguissola and Bruzio Visconti, to which Dante’s *canzoni*, a cluster of poems by Sennuccio del Bene, and a substantial number of Boccaccio’s rhymes follow. Boccaccio’s twenty-two sonnets preserved here are the vastest corpus of his lyric poetry that can be found in early copies. Then, there is a series of various authors, orderly identified, that is comprised of: Riccardo degli Albizi, Franceschino degli Albizzi, Matteo degli Albizi, Iacopo Cecchi, Niccolò Soldanieri, Fazio degli Uberti, Antonio da Ferrara, Tommaso de’ Bardi, Ricciardo da Battifolle, Guido Cavalcanti, Menghino Mezzani, Pietro Alighieri, Paolo dell'Abaco, Federigo di messere Geri, Franco Sacchetti, Lapo da Colle, Niccolò da Ferrara, Pandolfo Malatesta, Gregorio d'Arezzo, Bindo Bonichi, Matteo Corregiaio, along with other anonymous and unattributed poems. The last text of the codex is Boccaccio’s *epistola napoletana*, Neapolitan letter, here in its earliest copy addressed to Jacopo Villani, instead of Francesco de’ Bardi. Some of the authors listed above appear with a single poem, or a little more, while others are represented by their entire or almost entire corpus: this is the case with Gregorio d’Arezzo and the series of Bindo Bonichi’s *canzoni*. Nonetheless, the most complete lyric series are those by Petrarch, Dante, and Boccaccio, which open the anthology not by chance, and on which it is thus necessary to focus.

As it has already been mentioned, Petrarch’s *RVF* are not recognizable here as they do not have the fundamental quality of authorial songbook in which the meaning of the macrotext is as essential as the meaning of the microtext, that is, that the order and selection of the poems is as meaningful as the significance of each single rhyme. Such a rearrangement

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658 Some of these poems are attributed to Petrarch himself in other parts of the tradition.
659 The vast majority of Boccaccio’s lyric corpus is witnessed in a sixteenth-century codex, MS Florence, Accademia della Crusca, 53, the so-called Raccolta Bartoliniana. Cf. Boccaccio autore e copista, 159-167 and below.
of the RVF does not seem to have emerged from an accretive copy process, through a gradual collection of Petrarch’s materials. But, although the dismemberment of the original series is so radical that it looks programmatic, it seems impossible to find any meaning in the lyric sequence proposed by the Riccardiano 1100. Nevertheless, it is important to analyze this sequence, where some original microsequences are preserved. There is no codicological or paratextual sign that divides Petrarch’s corpus: there are some plain rubrics indicating some poems, or groups of poems, such as for instance those in correspondence; however, nothing subdivides this lyric cluster in any meaningful section. In order to fully verify whether there is any organizational criterion, and for understanding our anthologist/compiler’s intentions, it is necessary to analyze some of the poems themselves. In particular, since in a lyric sequence _incipit_ and _explicit_ are key points for the construction of the macrotext, we shall start from the edges. Also, it must be remembered that the RVF in their final form (but already in the Chigi-form) are bipartite into the so-called poems ‘in life’ of Laura (1-263) and those ‘in death’ (264-366). It is, thus, necessary to pay attention to the place given to those poems that both in the Chigi-form and in the final form delimit the bipartition of Petrarch’s songbook. The first poem in codex Riccardiano 1100 is the _canzone_ 264, _I’ vo pensando, et nel penser m’assale_, which from the Chigi-form onwards introduces the second part of the RVF. Then, there are sonnets 3, _Era il giorno ch’al sol si scoloraro_, and 97, _Ahi bella libertà, come tu m’ài_. The last poem of the RVF in this manuscript is sonnet 165, _Come ’l candido pie’ per l’erba fresca_. In the Riccardiano 1100 there is a table of contents compiled by the copyist himself (ff. 2r-5r); there, the last poem of the RVF is the _canzone_ to the Virgin Mary (_Vergin bella, che di sol vestita_, 366), referred to as

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661 Cf. Petrarca, _Canzoniere_.
“Lauda di messer Francesco | Vergine bella che di sol vestita.” In fact, after sonnet 165, there is some space that seems to have been left blank on purpose, most likely for copying this last canzone, which is not comprised in the Chigi-form, but ends the final form of Petrarch’s songbook. The RVF proemial sonnet, Voi ch’ascoltate in rime sparse il suono, here is the fourth from last poem, to which 199, O bella man, che mi destringi ’l core, and 152, Questa humil fera, un cor di tigre o d’orsa follow. In MS Riccardiano 1100, the first text of the RVF is the canzone opening the section ‘in death’ of Laura, and –although it is not followed in a consistent way by any of the RVF’s initial poems either of the first or of the second part—its presence as incipit poem suggests two facts: 1. the choice of this canzone as the first text does not seem completely fortuitous, because in any case it is a proemial text, with all the characteristics of an incipit, although originally of a sub-section; 2. this text may have been chosen because it is a canzone, a more elevated genre of poetry; yet, in the initial table of contents, the copyist signals each stanza of 264 as a separate poem, suggesting a certain confusion about its genre. But what happens in Riccardiano 1100 to the other incipit and explicit poems of the RVF? As we have seen, the canzone 366 should have been in its original place, thus in Riccardiano 1100 the macrotext would have been closed by a canzone (though called lauda), in a parallel with its opening. Sonnet 1 is, instead, in an odd position that appears not to be meaningful. This codex is close to the textual tradition of the so-called Chigi-form of Petrarch’s RVF, of which it preserves the distinctive madrigal Donna mi vene, but it does not have the poem ending the first part of this form, sonnet 189, Passa la nave mia colma d’oblio, nor does it have the sonnet ending the first part in the final form of the RVF, sonnet 263, Arbor victoriosa triumphale.
Interestingly, this codex contains many rhymes that Petrarch excluded from his songbook, and among these scattered poems the presence of the *fruttola*, *Di ridere ho gran voglia*, is noteworthy, a poem which is not indisputably attributed to him, and which we have already mentioned since it also appears in Stefani’s codex. It is one of those peculiar poems, belonging to marginal and experimental genres, that, as seen in discussing *Aì faus ris*, critics tend to find difficult to relate to Petrarch. On the other hand, the Riccardiano 1100 preserves a certain number of Petrarch’s authorial micro-series, some of which are particularly significant, such as the three *canzoni degli occhi* (eyes *canzoni*, RVF 71-73), whose rubric explicitly defines them as the three *canzoni* Petrarch wrote about Laura’s eyes. Likewise, there is the sequence against the Avignon curia (138-138), whose first sonnet is introduced by an explicit rubric: “Sonetto domini Francesco P. contra mali pastori” (“Domini Francesco P.’s sonnet against the bad pastors”, f. 17v). Notwithstanding these relevant isolated sequences, Petrarch’s authorial micro-series, although separated and highlighted through rubrics, are not inserted in any macrotext. They find themselves plunged in the unordered crowd of Petrarch’s poems that

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663 Cf. Petrarca, *Trionfi, rime estravaganti*.
664 See above, and cf. §2.3.2
are not organized following any criterion: they do not follow the order of any form of the RVF; they are not divided by meter (as we have seen in Pucci’s and Stefani’s codices); they include scattered rhymes and poems sent to Petrarch by other authors. Although at the edges of the lyric series there is some sense in the choices that the compiler made, in the core of the Petrarchan anthology there seems to be no sequencing criterion that creates a macrotext. Instead, we are confronted with a peculiar heterogeneous collection.

MS Riccardiano 1100 is an exceptional anthology not so much for the arrangement of the RVF, but because it is an early and unique witness of the Three Crowns of Florence as the peak of the poetic, lyric tradition. Here, Petrarch, Dante, and Boccaccio come in succession, evidently from the most to the least important. Their corpora are the most substantial and, all things considered, coherently selected. Petrarch, other than being the first, also outnumbers the other authors, with 183 poems copied under his name; then, Dante and Sennuccio del Bene follow. Sennuccio was, indeed, a friend of both Petrarch and Dante, and the position he occupies is historically grounded and thus, rather significant for the evaluation of the collection. Boccaccio is the last poet of this first sequence. The major part of Boccaccio’s poetry is preserved in the so-called Raccolta Bartoliniana, a lyric manuscript anthology that Lorenzo Bartolini compiled between 1527 and 1533. Other than the Raccolta Bartoliniana, MS Riccardiano 1100, containing twenty-two sonnets, is the codex containing the greatest number of Boccaccio’s poems. Thus, its canon based on the lyric poetry of the Three Crowns –Petrarch, Dante, and Boccaccio—is unique, at least among extant manuscripts. Riccardiano 1100 as an anthology not only pairs Dante and Petrarch, as it often happens –

665 Boccaccio autore e copista, 166-67.
666 Boccaccio, Rime, LXXXII-LXXXV; cf. the Nota al testo, Ibid., CLXI-CCXX and passim.
although sometimes with very different outcomes, but it also adds the poets that have known and worked with them, such as Sennuccio and Boccaccio. In particular, since Boccaccio's lyric poetry is much rarer, its inclusion along with Petrarch's and Dante's corpora is especially significant. There are many codices containing single poems or small series of Boccaccio's poetry, but the collection in a substantial series, as happens here, is pretty much an isolated incident.

The series of Dante's canzoni, contrary to Petrarch's selection, is rather solid and displays a neat sequence: it presents the series of nineteen authentic canzoni (the canonical fifteen, independent of Boccaccio's codices as for text and order, to which the three from the Vita Nuova and Lo doloroso amor follow), and two apocryphal poems (a sonnet probably by Folgore da San Gimignano and a canzone by Ciano del Borgo Sansepolcro). Along with MS Ashburnham 478, which we will discuss in the following paragraph, it is the only manuscript that contains all nineteen canzoni by Dante.  

1. Qui cominciano eseguono tutte le canzoni e sonetti di dante alighieri
   Tredon(n)e intorno alcor mi son uenute (ff. 38v-39r) - Tre donne intorno al cor mi son venute
2. Canzone didante alighieri difirenze
   Così nel mio parlar vogliess(er)e aspro (f. 39r) - Così nel mio parlar vogli' esser aspro
3. Canzone didante alighieri difirenze
   Amor dacche conuien purchio midoglia (f. 39v) - Amor, da che convien pur ch'io mi doglia
4. Canzone didante alighieri deflorentia
   Emicrescie dime si duramente (f. 40r) - E' m'incresce di me si duramente
5. Canzone didante alighieri
   Al poco giorno ed al gran cerchio d'ombra (f. 40v) - Al poco giorno ed al gran cerchio d'ombra
6. <Sonett> Canzone didante alighieri
   Amor chemoui tuo uirtu delcielo (f. 40v) - Amor che movi tua vertù dal cielo

668 For instance, Niccolò de Rossi's anthology (MS Barb. Lat 3953) also begins the series of Dante's canzoni with Tre donne, Così nel mio parlar, and Amor, da che convien. Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 2.1 20.
7. Canzone didante aldighieri difirenze
Ison uenuto al punto della rota (f. 41r) - Io son venuto al punto della rota
8. Canzone didante aldighieri difirenze
to chentendo Ilterzo cielmouete (f. 41r) - Voi che 'ntendendo il terzo ciel movete
9. Canzone didante aldighieri
Amor chenella mente mi ragion (ff. 41v-42r) - Amor che nella mente mi ragiona
10. Canzone didante aldighieri
ISento sidamor lagran possanza (f. 42v) - Io sento si d'Amor la gran possanza
11. Canzone didante aldighieri
Ladispietata mente cheppur mira (ff. 42v-43r) - La dispietata mente che pur mira
12. Canzone didante aldighieri
Doglia mireca nello core ard (f. 43v-r) - Doglia mi reca nello core ard
13. Canzone didante aldighieri
Ledolci rime damor chio solea (ff. 43v-44r) - Le dolci rime d'amor ch'io solea
14. Canzone didante aldighieri detto
Poscia chamor delutto malasciato (ff. 44v-45r) - Poscia ch'Amor del tutto m'ha lasciato
15. Canzone didante aldighieri
Amor tu uedi ben che questa donna (f. 45r) - Amor, tu vedi ben che questa donna
16. Canzone didante aldighieri
Donne cauete Intelletto damore (f. 45v) - Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore [Vita Nuova]
17. Canzone didante aldighieri
donna piotosa edinouella etade (ff. 45v-46r) - Donna pietosa e di novella etate [Vita Nuova]
18. Canzone didante aldighieri
Gliochi dolenti per pieta delchore (f. 46v-r) - Li occhi dolenti per pietà del core [Vita Nuova]
19. Canzone didante aldighieri
Lo doloroso amor che mj conducie (f. 46v) - Lo doloroso amor che mi conduce
20. Sonetto didante aldighieri
Fior diuirtu sie gientil coraggio (f. 47r) - Fior di virtù sì è gentil coraggio [apocryphal, Folgòre da San Gimignano?]
21. Canzone didante aldighieri
La uera sperienza uuolchi parli (f. 47r) - L'aurea sperienza vuol ch'io parli [apocryphal, Ciano
del Borgo Sansepolcro]

As for the general criteria governing the whole anthology, the individual (or group) who collected the poems, contrary to many other Quattrocento anthologists, does not show any particular interest for dividing the poems according to their meter, although their form is usually clearly identified. Instead, a classification by author is decisively preferred. Also, chronology seems to play a relevant role: all the authors collected in the Riccardiano died by the fourteenth century. This circumstance may be connected to the age of the codex, which may have been copied at the end of the fourteenth century. Yet, we are not referring to these
authors’ period of activity, but to their deaths, thus pointing to a slightly belated canon. Also, differently for instance than Andrea Stefani’s anthology, the Riccardiano collects many authors that are not Florentine, who instead lived and travelled all around Italy, such as Matteo Correggiaio or Pandolfo Malatesta. Also, the authors encompassed in the Riccardiano 1100’s collection did not live in the same period, the eldest (such as Guido Cavalcanti) were contemporaries of Dante, to arrive to the poets of Boccaccio’s and Petrarch’s generation, like for instance Franco Sacchetti. They also belonged to different social classes and wrote different genres of poetry: in the Riccardiano we find a popular poet like Antonio Pucci, along with a noble, more aulic and earlier poet, like Guido Cavalcanti. Like Sennuccio, who was a correspondent of Petrarch and probably also of Dante, many of the other authors were connected to the Three Crowns. MS Riccardiano 1100 also contains the poetry of the members of the Albizzi family, that is, by Riccardo, Franceschino, and Matteo. This circumstance hints to the function of poetry as a recreational activity of the more elevated social classes, which was then received and read by middle-class literate people. It is, thus, noteworthy that their poems are collected all together, also given that Franceschino degli Albizi was a friend of Petrarch, while Riccardo was Franceschino’s own son.

MS Riccardiano 1100 is a fundamental, unique witness of the Three Crowns as the three tutelary deities of vernacular lyric poetry. The fact that Petrarch comes first is not only a symptom of his emergence as the main authority in the field, a fact that at the beginning of the Quattrocento is worthy of note, but it also suggests a deep knowledge of the poetic tradition, that appears here as classified in a hierarchical way. Contrary to the general caos

governing many lyric anthologies from this same period, the Riccardiano 1100 portrays Petrarch as an established authority, looming over predecessors and contemporaries. At the same time, Dante’s role here is not ancillary at all. Instead, his consistent and elevated series of *canzoni* sustains Petrarch authority: the Dante-function, along with the other authors from the early Trecento, seems to be representing the fundamental root from which the new plant of Petrarch’s lyric has grown, in an equally important position. Petrarch and Dante, along with Sennuccio and Boccaccio, appear as the fundamental authors from which the bulk of contemporary poetry necessarily descends.

### 3.5.2 The Same Canon, 50 Years Later

Before coming to more general conclusions, codex Riccardiano 1100 shall be compared to other two manuscript anthologies, with which it shares some of its texts, and which have probably been compiled using the same sources. We shall start from MS BML, Ashburnham 478. De Robertis has analyzed the textual relationships between these two codices, especially as regards the Dantean corpus, but has also payed attention to the other texts and, more generally, to the construction of the whole anthology. MS Ashburnham also opens with Petrarch’s *RVF*, while it also shares with MS Riccardiano 1100: thirteen *canzoni* by Gregorio d’Arezzo; five by Fazio degli Uberti; one by Franco Sacchetti, two by Antonio da Ferrara; one respectively by Bruzio Visconti, Sennuccio del Bene, Paolo dell’Abaco, Pietro Alighieri, Iacopo Cecchi, a ballad by Tommaso di Piero de’ Bardi and the anonymous *canzone Vertù che ’l ciel movesti a si bel punto*, which in Niccolò de’ Rossi’s MS Barb. Lat. 3953 is attributed to Dante. As for Dante’s *canzoni*, the Ashburnham presents the same canon of MS Riccardiano 1100; it only slightly changes their order, that is, that the first two poems of the *Vita Nuova* are inverted
(17-16), and does not have the sonnet Fior di virtù. Other than the poems that it shares with the Riccardiano 1100, MS Ash. 478, in its last folios, adds two ballads by Antonio da Ferrara and some anonymous poems to the shared canon.

This manuscript has been copied by Bonaccorso di Filippo Adimari from Vicchio, a village in the Mugello. This attribution allows it to be dated back to the mid-fifteenth century, between 1440 and 1470, the period in which this copyist was active. Although it has been written by a Tuscan, the codex instead seems to come from northern Italy, as it is suggested by the coat of arms of the Capodivacca (f. 8r), a noble family from Padua. Indeed, Bonaccorso wrote many codices in different parts of Italy (Veneto, Abruzzo, Puglia). Other than being more recent, compared to the Riccardiano 1100, MS Ash. 478 is a much more elegant and refined object, as it is shown by the painted coat of arms, relating it to a noble family. It is a medium-size paper codex, orderly written in a humanistic cursive script, and has an incipit letter painted in gold and colours, along with illuminated margins a bianchi girari in its first page; the other initials are in color with filigree.

The material characteristics of codex Ash. 478 make it close to the humanistic books of the second half of the fifteenth century, a genre of book that was mostly used for the Classics. As we have seen starting with the Marucelliano codex, manuscript lyric anthologies are usually what Petrucci defines as a libro registro, that is, paper manuscripts of medium-large

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670 Alighieri, Rime 2002, 2.1 19. All of these poems (i.e., Dante and the other authors of the list) are connected from the textual point of view (Ibid., 25-25).

671 The MS lost eight folios after f. 218, Alighieri, Rime 2002, vol. 1.1 144-45.

672 Ibid.

673 A member of the family, Rambaldo Capodivacca, was podestà of Florence in 1409-1410 (Ibid., 145).

674 Some of the codices he wrote are: BML, Ash. 486 and 490; Pl. 76.75; Biscioni 16 and 32; BRF 1139, 1601, and 1603. The language of the Ashburnham codex reveals some non-Tuscan traits, probably due to his long stays outside his motherland. Ibid., 144-45.

size, written in cursive scripts, not particularly refined, nor elegant, usually produced in a
domestic setting. While this genre of book remains peculiar to vernacular texts during the
Quattrocento, especially after the 1460s, there is only one text that is copied in refined and
luxurious books, that is, Petrarch’s vernacular poetry, his RVF and Trionfi. These volumes,
which Petrucci calls petrarchini, are the necessary premise for Aldo Manuzio’s print revolution
and his petrarchini “in formam enchiridii,” that is books that can stay in a hand. Nevertheless,
when Petrarch’s poems where copied along with other lyric texts, they lost such privileges, and
the manuscripts we have seen, and many others in which Dante and other vernacular authors
appear, are not refined codices comparable to Quattrocento humanistic books. MS Ash. 478
seems to be in-between these two trends, or better to interlace them: it is, indeed, a humanistic
book, but it is also a lyric anthology, where Petrarch coexists with other authors, and in
particular with Dante. Its material characteristics, therefore, embody that oscillation between
the Petrarch- and the Dante-function, which here sees Dante, as authorized by Petrarch,
entering a material context in which his poetry does not usually find itself.

From the point of view of the selection of the texts and thus of the canon it represents,
this manuscript remains extremely close to the Riccardiano 1100: it is one of those collections
dominated by Petrarch, where Dante associates himself with the progressively dominant new
model, along with other minor poets. Nonetheless, just as in the Riccardiano, in MS Ash.
478 Dante is not dispersed in the crowd of poets, but his corpus, following right after the
RVF, is in a dialectical relationship with Petrarch’s poems. As happens in most extant

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676 Petrucci, “Il libro manoscritto,” 509-13; Cursi, “Prima circolazione,” 243. See above, §3.3.1.
677 Ibid., 518-524; on the petrarchini, 523-24 and cf. Patota, La Quarta Corona, 139-63.
678 Cf. Brugnolo, “Il libro di poesia,” 20; Zinelli, “Tra ecdotica e stratigrafia,” 296 e n. 75, 299; Decaria,
“Stratigrafia ecdotica,” 327 e n. 39.
manuscripts, Boccaccio does not appear here. MSS Ashburnham and Riccardiano share a similar collection of Trecento poetry, and according to De Robertis, the individual who compiled MS Ash. 478 selected the texts from the wider collection witnessed in the Riccardiano, with the significant exclusion of all the sonnets.679

The glaring difference between these two books resides in Petrarch’s corpus: MS Ashb. 478, indeed, contains the RVF in the so-called ‘Malatesta form’, which is clearly recognizable, although it is augmented with other Petrarchan poems.

Table of the RVF in MS Ashburnham 478 (in bold the poems that do not belong to the Malatesta-form)

| 1, 3, 2, 4-78 [but 55, 59, 56-58,60; 79 is missing], 81-82, 80, 83-120, 122, Donna mi viene spesso ne la mente, 123-242 [238, 239 are missing], 121, 243, 244-263, [no sign of bipartition] 264-339 [268 is missing], 342, 340, 351-354, 350, 355, 366, 359, 341, 343, 356, 357, 349, 360-364, 351, 365, Poi ch’al Fattor de l’universo piacque, Stato foss’io quando la vidi prima. |

Given that these two books are close as regards many texts, among which Dante’s *canzoni* stand out, it is noteworthy that Petrarch’s corpus is, instead, almost unrelated, the codices witnessing completely different forms. Moreover, where the Riccardiano re-elaborates the macrotext, the Ashburham—just adding other texts to it at the end—preserves the Malatesta-form, which is recognizable not only through textual analysis but also through its macrotextual structure.680 MS Ash. 478, thus, independently aggregates Dante and Petrarch, not passively inheriting this arrangement from its sources. Also, this anthology has a clear structure, where Petrarch is accompanied by Dante and a few other authors, all from the Trecento: after Dante, there are Gregorio d’Arezzo, Fazio degli Uberti, Franco Sacchetti, Antonio da Ferrara, Bruzio Visconti, Paolo Dagomari (Paolo dell’Abaco), Pietro Alighieri,

679 There is also the theoretical possibility that was the compiler of Riccardiano 1100 who added texts copying from a common source, but this is a strongly weaker hypothesis since the Ashburnham shows a clear selection and ordering criterion that does not find any parallel in the Riccardiano.

680 The contents of the Malatesta-form are represented by what its first scribe copied in MS BML, 41.17. Wilkins, *The Making*, 176-80, and see above.
Jacopo Cecchi, and Tommaso de’ Bardi. It is also decisive that the Ashburnham enforces a metrical selection among the poems. As we have already mentioned, Petrarch’s *RVF* are preserved in their integrity, as for their order and the alternation of meters, probably because the compiler felt Petrarch’s authority as an author, understanding the importance of maintaining such a macrotext, although adding some pieces to the sequence. The other lyric series, instead, are only made of *canzoni*, to which three ballads follow (one by Tommaso de’ Bardi and two by Antonio da Ferrara), while at the very end of the manuscript we find a sonnet and a *canzone*, both anonymous, probably later additions by another hand, for which there is no decoration, nor do they appear in the initial table of contents, suggesting their irrelevance to the original project. That the organization of this anthology is strictly by meter is conclusively confirmed by Antonio da Ferrara’s texts, which are separated, that is, that his ballads do not follow his own *canzoni*, but are placed at the end of all of the *canzoni*. This circumstance is rather interesting, first because, although in Italy the division by meter, characterizing thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century *canzonieri*, persisted as the preferred organizational criterion of poems for a long time, it is not common in the second half of the Quattrocento. Secondly, because Petrarch’s corpus is exempted from this rule, which was, instead, applied earlier to the *RVF*, as we have seen for instance in both Pucci’s and Stefani’s anthologies. Especially Pucci, in the second half of the Trecento, had selected only *canzoni*, as it also happens in many other codices.\footnote{See above.} Moreover, during the fifteenth century, the sonnet reached a more elevated status, precisely thanks to Petrarch and to the prevailing number of sonnets in his songbook, a configuration that becomes a model as the *RVF* gain salience.\footnote{Petrarch’s *RVF* are comprised of: 317 sonnets; 29 *canzoni*; 9 *sestine*; 7 ballads; 4 madrigals.}
Thus, the preference given to the *canzoni* suggests a more traditional cultural milieu, not in close-contact with the avant-garde. Yet, in this specific case, preserving Petrarch’s authorial authority, that is, the authoriality of the ordering of his songbook, hints to a halfway situation. Lastly, it is worth noting that MS Ash. 478 was written ca. fifty years, if not seventy years later than the Riccardiano 1100. Thus, the anthology witnessed in the Ashburham codex is somewhat separated from strict contemporaneity, a collection of Florentine texts from the previous century, under the aegis of the dominant Petrarchan model, but also of Dante. Yet, as we have seen, the Riccardiano is a mixed anthology mainly organized by author, thus the choices of the compiler(s) of codex Ash. 478 are independent, emphasizing a peculiar evolution in the evaluation and management of the Petrarch- and Dante-functions, but also more generally of lyric poetry: only Petrarch’s sonnets are preserved, emphasizing the strength of his authorial will, which authorizes their presence in a collection of *canzoni*; at the same time, it seems that in northern Italy, where the codex resided and probably had also been copied, Petrarch’s production as compared to the rest of Trecento Tuscan poetry was deemed worthy of reading only as regards its most elevated genre, the *canzone*. This fact shall be remembered in order to better understand the volumes that we are going to analyze in the following paragraphs.

MS II IV 114 from the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence is worth comparing with the Riccardiano 1100-Ash. 478 pair. This codex is not textually close as the other two are, but it shows significant similarities with them, and in particular it shares some distinctive texts, like,
for instance, Dante’s *canzone Lo doloroso amor*.\(^{683}\) MS II IV 114 contains a vast series of poems attributed to Dante, among which are poems of the *Vita Nuova* and other distinctive texts that we have discussed in the previous chapters, such as the sonnet *Quando ’l consiglio degli ucc’ si tenne*. It is crucial to notice that this manuscript proposes a canon that is somewhat similar to what we have already seen in MS Riccardiano 1100, that is, a certain prominence given to the Florentine Three Crowns. MS II IV 114 lost some folios and its pages have been reshuffled, so it is rather difficult to tell without any doubt what the original order of its texts was.\(^{684}\) Yet, it is clear that its scribe compiled the anthology by authorial sections, collecting texts from the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. Again, all the authors died by the end of the Trecento.

This medium-large manuscript is written in a merchant cursive script, its scribe is unknown, and it has been generically dated to the fifteenth century. Its material characteristics suggest that the copyist did not write it in a single long session, instead starting different authorial sections that in the end were never completed.\(^{685}\) As of today, it contains: poems by Bindo Bonichi (ff. 6r-16r, ff. 9-12 are blank), Gano da Colle, and other anonymous rhymes, among which are the “Versi di Narciso”; sonnets by Petrarch\(^{686}\) (ff. 17r-18r, RVF 120, 133, 136, 132, 272, 103, Boccaccio’s *Chi nel suo pianger dice che ventura* [LXV in Leporatti ed.],\(^{687}\) 74); Petrarch’s *canzoni* (RVF 129, 135, 50); poems by Gano da Colle and anonymous (ff. 19r-20v, f. 21 is blank); sonnets attributed to Dante, a cycle of prosopopoeia sonnets by Ser Giovanni; sonnets by Dante, Cino da Pistoia, Guido Cavalcanti (ff. 23r-24v, f. 25 is blank); poems by Antonio

\(^{683}\) *Lo doloroso amor* is contained only in these three codices, to which only MS Riccardiano 1091 may be added, along with two other *descripti*. Alighieri, *Rime* 2002, vol. 3 236-240.


\(^{685}\) Ibid., 211. Cf. Boccaccio, *Rime*, LVIII.

\(^{686}\) Cf. Salvatore, “Sondaggi sulla tradizione,” 92 et seq.

Beccari and Giovanni Boccaccio\textsuperscript{688} (ff. 26r-27r); Petrarch’s RVF 50 (last verses), 128, 80, 22 (ff. 28r-29r); poems by: Fazio degli Uberti, Franco Sacchetti, Giannozzo Sacchetti, Petrarch (RVF 120, f. 30r; RVF 264, f. 33r-v), Pannocchia da Volterra, Niccolò del Gallina, Picchio di Messer Vieri de’ Bardi, Cortese da Siena, Paolo dell’Abaco, Alessandro di Bernardino Baldi, Cecco d’Ascoli, Tommaso de’ Bardi, Benuccio Tolomei, and anonymous (ff. 29r-38v); canzoni by Dante (ff. 39r-46v); sonnets by Petrarch and two poems by Antonio Beccari (ff. 53r-61r); poems by Cino da Pistoia, Cecco d’Ascoli, Benuccio Salimbeni, Bindo Bonichi (ff. 63r-68v).

Among the several fundamental criteria for assessing the peculiarities of a manuscript anthology,\textsuperscript{689} it is a matter of fact that the relevance of a collection of texts and of its arrangement strongly depends on its dating: there is, indeed, a substantial difference whether the selection of poets and poems is determined by the strict contemporaneity, thus facing a compiler who excludes what is recentior; or, in the case the codex is much more recent, we are confronted with a manuscript proposing a belated canon, going back a century before or even more. Since it is hard to anchor MS II IV 114 to one end of the fifteenth century or the other, it is also difficult to ascertain in which category it falls, if it is closer to the Riccardiano 1100 and its almost-contemporary selection, or with MS Ash. 478 and its belated canon. In any case, it presents the reader with the Three Crowns accompanied by famous and less famous poets of their contemporaneity, building a canon that does not strictly match our historiographical paradigms. Again, Petrarch seems to be the dominant model, but he is accompanied by authors whose production is much closer to Dante and Boccaccio as for genre and style, while his poetry seems to prevail only as for the number of poems, not for their being literary models.

\textsuperscript{688} Cf. Ibid., LVIII-LIX.
\textsuperscript{689} Cf. Nichols-Wenzel, The Whole Book; The Dynamics of the Medieval Manuscript, 11-39; Borriero, “Sull’antologia lirica.”
Indeed, there is almost no Petrarchist, or better pre-Petrarchist poet. As often happens, given that the maximum is the series of 22 sonnets in MS Riccardiano 1100—Boccaccio’s poems here are just a handful; yet, his presence is significant, also because the blank page after his sonnet *Drieto al pastor d’Ameto alle fraterne* (f. 27r) seems to imply that the compiler left space to add more of his poems. So, the compiler planned a section specifically dedicated to Boccaccio, thus—at least theoretically—considering him on equal terms with the other poets of the collection, and especially with Dante and Petrarch, again envisaging the canon of the Florentine Three Crowns, even if immersed in a wider collection.

This manuscript contains a substantial series of Dante’s *rime*. De Robertis emphasizes that the *canzoni* here come after the sonnets, an arrangement intended by the copyist as the original numbering confirms. While De Robertis considers it a consequence of the manuscript’s improvised composition, I maintain that, although it is impossible to ascertain the volume’s original structure, the preeminence given to sonnets by copying them first has to be interpreted as a sign of a new poetic canon, where the sonnet was progressively and steadily gaining importance in the classification of poetic styles. The fact that Dante’s *canzoni* are outclassed by sonnets in a codex where Petrarch is the other most important author, supports such interpretation.

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690 Boccaccio, *Rime*, LVIII-LIX.
691 Dante’s sonnets contained in MS II IV 114 are: 23r: «Sonetti di dante allegheieri difirenze» [under, cancelled «Mess(er) franciescho petrarcha poeta»]: *Cavalcando l’altr’ ier per un cammino*, «Sonnetto chemando dante aggiudo chaualcanti», *Guido, i’ vorrei che tu e Lippo ed ir; Risposta diguido a dante*, S’io fosse quelli che d’Amor fu’ degno; L’ amoro lagrimar che voi faceste. 23v: «Sonetti didante allegheieri», *Gentil pensiero che parla di voi, Lasso, per forza di molti sospiri*. Oltre la spina che più larga gira, Venite a ’ntender li sospiri miei. 24r: «Sonetti didante allegheieri difirenze», Quando ’l consiglio degli ucce’ si tenne, A ciascun’ alma presa e gentil core, Questa donna ch’andar mi fa pensoso, Io mi credea del tutto esser partito ‘dante mandò amess(er) cino’; «Mess(er) cino risponde adante», Poi ch’i’ fu’, Dante, dal mio natal sito. 24v: «Sonetti didante allegheieri difirenza», *No me poriano zamai far emenda* [in toscano], *Com più ve fere Amor o’ suoi vincastri, Infìn che gli occhi miei non chiude Morte [di Cino?]*, Voleste gli occhi a veder chi mi tira, Parole mie che per lo mondo siete, Negli occhi porta la mia dona Amore.
As for Dante’s *canzoni*, the numbering shows that it must have originally contained 21 poems, of which only nineteen are extant today. While there are misattributions and some texts are lost, this manuscript presents the almost complete series of Dante’s *canzoni*. Here, they are preceded by rubrics briefly summarizing their contents, while their order seems to be peculiar to this codex.

Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II IV 114 (ff. 39r-46v)

1. Chanzon didante distese. 1
   La disperata mente che pur mira (f. 39r) - *La dispietata mente che pur mira*
2. Chanzon didante. 2
   I sento sì d’Amor la gran possanza (f. 39r-v) - *Io sento sì d’Amor la gran possanza*
3. Chanzon didante della leggiadria. 3
   Poscia ch’Amor del tutto m’ha lasciato (ff. 39v-40r) - *Poscia ch’Amor del tutto m’ha lasciato*
4. Chanzon didante contra lia uari. 4
   Doglia mi reca nello core ardire (f. 40r-v) - *Doglia mi reca nello core ardire*
5. Chanzo didante quando liappari pargholetta. 5
   Amor chemou<e>j tua uertu dalcielo (f. 40v-41r) - *Amor che movi tua vertù dal cielo*
6. Chanzo(n) didante p(er) pargholetta. 6
   Ison venuto alpu(n)to della Rota (f. 41r-v) - *Io son venuto al punto della rota*
7. Chanzon didante. 7
   Tre donne tornalcor mison venute (ff. 41v-42r) - *Tre donne intorno al cor mi son venute*
8. Chanzone didante. 8
   Nel tempo della mia nouella etade (f. 42r-v) - *Nel tempo de la mia novella etade* [apocryphal, Cino da Pistoia]
9. Chanzon didante p(er) parcholetta. 9
   Emincrece dime siduramente (f. 42v, ll. 1-45, the other verses are missing, just as the poems numbered 10 and 11) - *E’ m’incresce di me si duramente*
10. Chanzon(n) didante p(er) parcholetta 12
   Chosi nel mio parlar uogliessere aspro (f. 43r) - *Così nel mio parlar vogli’ esser aspro*
11. Chanzon didante. 13
   Al poco giorno ed al gran cerchio d’ombra (ff. 43r-v) - *Al poco giorno ed al gran cerchio d’ombra*
12. Chanzon didante p(er) Beatrice i(n)looda dilei. 14
   Donne chauete intelletto damore (f. 43r) - *Donne ch’avete intelletto d’amore* [Vita Nuova]
13. Chanzo didante p(er) Beatricie. 15
   Donna pietosa e di novella etate (f. 44r) - *Donna pietosa e di novella etate* [Vita Nuova]
14. Chanzon didante quando mon(n)a Beatrice fumorta. 16
   Gliocchi dolenti p(er) pieta del core (f. 44v-r) - *Li occhi dolenti per pietà del core* [Vita Nuova]
15. Chanzon didante. 17
   Sisottilmente chinonso dir como (ff. 44v-45r) - *Si sottilmente ch’ io non so dir como* [apocryphal, author unknown]
16. Chanzon didante. 18
   Lodoloroso amor chemi conducie (f. 45r) - *Lo doloroso amor che mi conduce*
17. Chanzon di dante. 19
   Voi chentendendo ilterzo ciel mouete (f. 45v-r) - *Voi che ’ntendendo il terzo ciel mouete*
18. Chanzon didante. 20
The canzoni’s rubrics are not particularly extensive, giving just basic information. Yet, they identify a group of poems for the pargoletta, the young woman, that does not correspond to what is nowadays considered to belong to that cycle, which is usually comprised of: I’ mi son pargoletta bella e nova, Perché ti vedi giovinetta e bellà, and Chi guarderà giammai sanza paura, to which Deb, Violetta, che ’n ombra d’Amore may be added. The rubrics also indicate all three poems from the Vita Nuova as written for Beatrice. MS II IV 114’s rubrics refer to the pargoletta. Amor che movi tua vertù dal cielo; Io son venuto al punto della rota; E’ m’incresce di me sì duramente; and Così nel mio parlàr vogli’ esser aspro. While for a long time isolating the women to which Dante writes his poetry was one of the main issues for critics, nowadays a strict and defined identification of the women is no longer on the table as an important question. Connected to the matter of Dante’s women, which is in turn related to the allegorical or historical meaning to be given to his poems, is the definition of different moments in Dante’s inspiration. This manuscript, while granting the pargoletta a key role as an inspiration for Dante, also proposes a slightly different interpretation of her figure, and consequently of her relationship with Beatrice. First, the pargoletta here seems to correspond to the donna pietra: although Al poco giorno is only generally indicated as a canzone by Dante, the other two petrose contained in this codex, Così nel mio parlàr and Io son venuto, are connected with the young woman. In the last line of Io son venuto the woman is, indeed, called pargoletta, while all four poems known as the petrose and those

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693 The parallels have been emphasized starting from Contini’s 1939 editions and Barbi’s notes, then merged in the commentaries of the editions of the rime Barbi-Maggini and Barbi-Pernicone. Cf. the more recent commented edd. Rime giovanili, Alighieri, Rime 2005; Alighieri, Opere I, Alighieri, Vita Nuova – Rime, Dante’s Lyric Poetry ed. Foster-Boyde and Barolini.
constituting the so-called cycle for the pargoletta are close for inspiration and themes. More generally, the young woman who acts carelessly, not recognizing how much pain she is causing to her lover, is a literary topos, just as more generally is the idea that youth comes with carelessness and irresponsibility, seen under a negative light in the Middle Ages. While these two clusters of Dantean poems differ in style, they do share prime themes and motifs. Thus, the rubrics of the two canzoni petrose naming their woman pargoletta are not particularly dazzling. Far more interesting is the association of the other two canzoni, Amor che movi and E’ m’incresce di me, to this group. Barbi considered Amor che movi close to the poems of the pargoletta, Dante’s return to love poetry after the more philosphical canzoni, and thus its woman could not be the donna gentile. Contini remained, instead, uncertain. Outside of the dialectics of the different women, it is undeniable that the young and beautiful woman, who inspires love in Dante and who brings him “to death by her youth” (ll. 56-57), is represented in such a way here that a lay reader, not deeply familiar with Dante’s corpus, could easily identify her with the pargoletta. Instead, the woman of E’ m’incresce di me has always been identified with Beatrice. There are multiple pieces of evidence to sustain such identification and to connect the canzone to the same period of the Vita Nuova; in particular, the almost supernatural connection between Dante and the woman, represented by his sudden illness (probably in reality a seizure or an apoplectic fit) in the very moment of her birth, and the subsequent reference to the book of memory (ll. 57-70). Yet, the tone of this canzone is closer to Cavalcanti’s tragic depiction of love than to the Vita Nuova, and this might have induced its assimilation with the other three poems related in this codex with the pargoletta.

694 Alighieri, Vita Nuova 2015, 5-6.
This manuscript’s rubrics emphasize the connection between the *canzoni* from the *Vita Nuova* and Beatrice as their recipient. But there are other *canzoni* that should be connected with Beatrice, like *Lo doloroso amor*, that is just identified here as a poem by Dante. There is no completely satisfying explanation for the *rubricator*’s choices, who precisely overlooks what the author writes in *Lo doloroso amor*, the very same words he or she copies: “Per quella moro c’ha nome Beatrice” (l. 14, “Through her I die, whose name is Beatrice.”). The person who compiled these rubrics simplified the picture, identifying two main groups of texts in Dante’s lyric poetry, leaving outside those *canzoni* that did not seem to point to any particular woman. Interestingly, Beatrice is the protagonist of the poems from the *Vita Nuova*, and apparently she could not be the object of any other cycle, notwithstanding the explicit mention of her very name. Thus, in conclusion, these rubrics point to two important facts. First, compared to other sets of rubrics that provide information about the texts, they establish a difference between the women loved by Dante, a distinction which is not usually present: more often the rubrics just talk about a generic woman. Consequently, the identification of at least two women loved by Dante points toward a biographic and not-allegorical interpretation of his poetry. These rubrics, though minimal, distance this selection of Dante’s poems from what was done in the Quattrocento by the intellectual group close to Antonio Manetti who, in the footsteps of Boccaccio, interpreted the *canzoni* as those that should have been commented in the *Convivio*. Boccaccio’s own rubrics for the *canzoni* (in Latin in the Toledo, in the vernacular in his Riccardiano 1035) are extensive, but they do not make any difference between women,

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695 Nevertheless, *Donna pietosa* is only indirectly connected to Beatrice, as a prefiguration of her death.  
696 See at least Gilson, *Dante in Renaissance Florence* and Reading Dante in Renaissance Italy; Arduini, “Un episodio della tradizione;” Arduini, “Assigning the pieces;” Arduini, “Il ruolo di Boccaccio.”
always just generally mentioning his woman,\textsuperscript{697} probably because he understood the canzoni as allegorical, or at least to be interpreted as such in the Convivio. So the woman (real or allegorical, or both, in the end it is not of the utmost importance here) would have been only one, in a coherent sequence of poems, some of which were dedicated to her. To better understand the issues at stake, it is useful to refer to the Commedia and to what one of its most relevant early commentators wrote on the matter of Dante’s women.

When Beatrice meets Dante at the summit of Mount Purgatory, her welcome is not particularly warm. She scolds Dante for having left behind his love for her and for what she represented, being instead caught in earthly diversions. In Purg. 31, reprimanding Dante, she mentions the other women he loved (ll. 55-60):

\begin{quote}
Ben ti dovevi, per lo primo strale
de le cose fallaci, levar suso
di retro a me, che non era più tale.
Non ti dovea gravar le penne in giuso,
ad aspettar più colpo, o pargoletta
o altra novita con si breve uso.
\end{quote}

After the first arrow from deceptive things, you should have risen up after me, for I was no longer such. Your wings should not have been weighted down, to await more blows, by either a young girl or some other new thing of such short duration.

After having experienced the fleeting nature of material things through Beatrice’s own death, Dante should have elevated himself to spiritual matters, which do not suffer caducity. But Dante remained anchored to earthly things. Among the new things blocking Dante, Beatrice mentions the pargoletta, the young girl of Dante’s poems. Indeed, although her exact identification is impossible, she has been recognized as the same character of the rhymes, as

\textsuperscript{697} The Italian rubric of Amor da che convien in R35 (f. 186r) might seem to be referring to another woman: “Canzone XV\textsuperscript{a} di Dante nella quale si duole della rigidità d’una crudel donna;” but the Latin rubric in To (f. 266r) specifies that it must be the same woman: “Idem Dantes conqueritur de crudelitate cuiusdam impie domine.”
early as in the *Ottimo Commento*, compiled in the third decade of the fourteenth century by a Florentine who most likely had known Dante in person: 698

The *Ottimo’s* note, by interpreting “Dante with Dante,” confirms that Dante is actually referring to his lyric poems, in a poetic biography encompassing the *Vita Nuova*, to which that same episode refers multiple times, 699 and the other *rime*. The *Ottimo Commento*, however, does not just mention the *pargoletta*, but gives the clear impression that Dante loved many women, especially by closing the list saying “that one [woman], or that other one.” Other than the *pargoletta*, the *Ottimo* names the *montanina* and Lisetta. The latter is the protagonist of a sonnet by Dante, *Per quella via che la bellezza corre*, and allegedly of a group of poems written in the Veneto, some of which are attributed to Dante. The *canzone Sì sottilmente ch’io non so dir como*, copied and attributed to Dante in MS II IV 114, is among these poems; it indeed mentions Lise, who is usually identified as the same character as Lisetta: “ond’io si mi son mosso | chieder soccorso a voi, madonna Lise” (“so I decided to ask for your help, lady Lise”). 700 The identification of the woman named as Lisetta and whether Dante actually participated in a discourse conducted in the Veneto by what Barbi called an ‘academia’ of poets who wrote of a Isabetta, whose name among other things presents slight variations, has caused lengthy discussions, and Dante probably had nothing—or almost nothing—to do with this poetic

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698 For an overview on the *Ottimo Commento* see Corrado, “Ottimo Commento.” Text from L’*Ottimo Commento*, ad. l.
699 Cf. *Purg*. 30.115, where the syntagm *vita nova* is in rhyme position.
700 Barbi, “La questione,” 51-54, quote from p. 53 (ll. 55-56).
circle. This *canzone*, whose author must not have been Dante, introduces the reception Dante had in the Veneto, and the relationships he might have established while being there during exile, a topic to which a paragraph will be later dedicated. For what interests us here, it is noteworthy that Lise, mentioned in the *canzone* itself, is not recalled in the rubric, just as it happens with Beatrice in *Lo doloroso amor*.

By identifying different women for whom Dante wrote, the person who compiled the rubrics for the series of MS II IV 114 seems close to what we find in the *Ottimo*. Yet, the *rubricator*, while recognizing the multiplicity of Dante’s dedicatees and portraying the *pargoletta* as the recipient of an uncommon set of poems, rather surprisingly does not mention any of the women that are named in the poems themselves, nor Beatrice, nor Lise/Lisetta. Although these rubrics give interesting insights on the possible interpretation of Dante’s *canzoni* and of the women for whom he wrote, they do not give a consistent narration concerning the sequence. This circumstance casts doubts on the criteria followed by this compiler, and in particular on the genesis of these rubrics, which seem independent from some of the poems: who identified the poems of the *pargoletta* and those for Beatrice as those from the *Vita Nuova*, seems to not have read the other poems. Still, the differentiation between Beatrice and the

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701 In the sonnet *Per quella via* Dante writes that a woman named Lisetta tries to seduce him, but he resists. Aldobrandino de’ Mezzabati, a poet from Padua who was *capitano del popolo* (Captain of the People) in Florence in 1291-1292, answered *per le rime* to this sonnet with *Lisetta voi della vergogna sciorre*. Moreover, a madonna Elise or Isabetta or Lise is the protagonist of a series of texts that might be related to Dante, to whom some of them are erroneously attributed, and that are connected to Giovanni Quirini, with whom Dante allegedly established a poetic correspondence. One of those rhymes is, indeed, the *canzone* *Sì sottilmente*, which Barbi attributed to the same author of a sonnet sent to Quirini, *Con plu suspiri*. While Barbi hypothesized that, in the event that Lisetta had to be identified with Lise/Isabetta, Dante himself participated in this poetic circle with *Per quella via*, most of the critics agree that he wrote this sonnet much earlier, when Aldobrandino was in Florence. As Duso writes, it is likely that Dante did not participate at an old age in this poetic correspondences; but, instead, Quirini and the other poets might have included Dante in the discourse, drawing a parallel between their woman and his Lisetta. See Barbi, “La questione,” *Alighieri, Opere I*, 627-28; Quirini, *Rime*, XIX-XX. More on this topic in §3.4.3.

702 And not even Fazio degli Uberti, to whom its other witness (MS BML, Redi 184) attributes it.
pargoletta suggests an attentive reader, someone who was probably aware of what Beatrice herself tells Dante in the *Commedia*, where every other woman is embodied by the name *pargoletta* that might refer to one woman, but that globally represents Dante’s earthly sentiments. All things considered, this compiler represents Dante as a love poet who writes for –at least—two different women, almost moderating the moral contents of the series of *canzoni*, while not being truly attentive to the contents of the *canzoni* themselves, thus showing both a clever and rather informed portrait of Dante as a lyric writer, along with a not so careful reading of the texts.

As we have already mentioned, MS II IV 114 is among the few witnesses of *Lo doloroso amor*, and also encompasses quite a large series of Alighieri’s sonnets, such as poems from the *Vita Nuova* or *Quando 'l consiglio degli uccel si tenne*. In particular, it contains a certain number of poems attributed to Dante, which modern critics agree in considering apocryphal. Yet, these texts yield interesting insights not only on Dante’s reception and on the shaping of the Dante-function at the turn of the Quattrocento and beyond, but in particular on some parts of Dante’s corpus that may need more attention. We shall thus draw our attention to the series of eight prosopopoeia sonnets.

### 3.5.2.1 Reworking the Nine Worthies and Giotto

In the host of poems attributed to Dante, among those that are certainly apocryphal, MS II IV 114 ascribes to him a crown of sonnets that, although absolutely incompatible with his body of work and style, deserves attention, since it credits Dante with traits that will be common fairly later on in the Trecento, in Petrarch’s and Boccaccio’s generation, while also emphasizing connections with the culture of the first decades of the century. The eight sonnets in question belong to the so-called *Ciclo degli Eroi*, Heroes’ Cycle, a series of prosopopoeia-
sonnets that would have been composed in the mid-Trecento (probably by the 1370s), related to the lost frescoes that Giotto (or his studio) painted in Naples, in the throne room of the Castelnuovo, as it is stated by the rubric of MS BML, Redi 184: “Sonetti composti per [spazio bianco] il quale essendo nella sala del Re Ruberto a Napoli vide dipinti questi famosi huomini; e lui fé a ciascuno il suo sonetto chome qui appresso” (“Sonnets composed by [blank] who, being in the sala of King Robert of Naples, saw these famous men painted, and he made a sonnet for each one, as follows,” f. 124r).

The complete series of sonnets related to the lost frescoes by Giotto in Castelnuovo

| [Salomone] | Io fui l'oltramirabil Salamone |
| [Ettore] | Io fui lo lustro e forte Ettor troiano |
| [Achille] | Io fui l' magnifico d'Acchille |
| [Enea] | Io son per Enea figurato e scorto; |
| [Sansone] | Voi che mirando andatene i greci 'elbrei |
| [Paride] | Io son Parissi del buon re Priamo |
| [Erode] | Erode fui fortissimo gigante |
| [Alessandro] | Alessandro fui e mostro in questa storia |

| [Cesare] | Io fui l'ardito Cesare imperiore |
| [Febusso] | Io fui el forte e buon guerier Febusso |
| [Lancillotto] | Io fui de' cavalieri eranti el fiore |

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705 Trans. by Chreighton Gilbert (Gilbert, Poets Seeing, 177).

706 These last two sonnets, along with quatrains for the four Cardinal Virtues, have been recently recognized in MS BML, 90 sup. 139: Lagomarsini (“Due giunte inedite”) maintains that these two sonnets, which in this codex appear with six sonnets of the crown, are part of the series of heroes connected to the frescoes in Castelnuovo, although the extant data does not allow for ascertaining any biunivocal relationship between texts and images. The essay provides also a study of the text of the whole crown and puts it into the context of the circulation of French literature in Italy.
Although the mediocre quality of these texts would be enough by itself to reject Dante’s authorship, their dependence on Giotto’s frescoes excludes it without any possible doubt, since the paintings were completed after Dante’s death, at least in the 1330s.\textsuperscript{707} They are caudate sonnets, with a coda in perfect rhyme with the fourteenth line (ABBA ABBA CDC DCD+D),\textsuperscript{708} in a popular middle style, which Stoppelli, their last editor, attributes to ser Giovanni Fiorentino, the author of the \textit{Pecorone (The Simpleton)}, whom he in turn identifies with the jester Malizia Barattone.\textsuperscript{709} Stoppelli relates these sonnets to the style of the \textit{cantari}, and he also hypothesizes that they could have been recited in public, and thus, the form they have in codices might derive from orality, even from the memory of their very scribe(s). This hypothesis could explain both the textual oscillations, and the varied forms in which the crown appears. The complete series is formed by nine sonnets, and it can only be found in MS BML, Palatino 119; while MS BML, 90 sup. 139, as Lagomarsini has recently pointed out, adds the sonnets of two chivalric heroes, Febus and Lancelot, to the crown – but it only has in total eight sonnets.\textsuperscript{710} MS II IV 114, having eight sonnets, is among the most complete ones witnessing the most diffused series; even MS Redi 184, while presenting the above-mentioned rubric, has just the same eight. The complete series encompasses sonnets respectively related to: Salomon, Hector, Achilles, Aeneas, Samson, Paris, Alexander the Great, and Hercules, to which the ninth about Julius Caesar, and possibly those related to Febus and Lancelot should


\textsuperscript{708} The sonnets of Febus and Lancelot are different, their schemes are, respectively: ABBA ACCA DCD+C; ABBA ABBA BCB CBC+C. I agree with Lagomarsini in not seeing in this difference an obstacle to add these sonnets to the series, since it might have been created through multiple, progressive additions; also, the series of sonnets for female figures, which should also be related to the frescoes in Naples, in manuscript mostly circulates independently from the male heroes series (Lagomarsini, “Due giunte inedite,” 210-213).

\textsuperscript{709} Stoppelli, “Malizia Barattone.”

\textsuperscript{710} Lagomarsini, “Due giunte inedite.”
be added. Being connected to the lost fresco cycle by Giotto that decorated the Barons’ Hall, these sonnets have attracted much attention from art historians that, through them, try to reconstruct the subject of the paintings. As early as the fifteenth century, Ghiberti discusses Giotto’s frescoes in Naples in his *Commentari*, describing the cycle in the Castelnuovo as of “famous men,” a definition then used by Vasari, who adds that they were destroyed at the middle of the fifteenth century during the renovation of the castle undertaken by King Alfonso.\(^{711}\) Stoppelli is firm in relating this series to the tradition of those group of honors, where three and then nine heroic figures were put together, which circulated since the eleventh century, in Latin and vernacular, in France, but also in Germany and in England, as epigraphic descriptions of paintings or figures on tapestries. In Italy, this genre is not particularly diffused, but it emerges in the fourteenth century in some descriptions of imaginary palaces in allegorical poems. Stoppelli here is referring to what then became the so-called theme of the Nine Worthies, that is, a cycle of nine heroes that first appears in such structured fashion in the romance *Voeux du Paon*, by Jacques de Longuyon (ca. 1312-1313), and which then became a fairly common theme. The figures—three Jewish, three pagan, three Christian—including in this series are: Hector, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus, King Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon.\(^{712}\)

I consider particularly relevant what Craighton Gilbert writes about the subject of this crown of sonnets, and consequently of the frescoes: building on an implicit reference to these paintings he found in Boccaccio’s *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, Gilbert emphasizes that it would not be a cycle of famous men related to the Nine Worthies; instead, the frescoes painted a

\(^{711}\) Stoppelli, “Malizia Barattone,” 7-8.

\(^{712}\) Bologna, “L’Italia settentrionale,” 527-30. Lagomarsini also mentions the group of honors, and in particular the cycle of the “Neuf Malheureux” (“Due giunte inedite,” 196).
series of Slaves of Love, a theme that emerges in thirteenth-century French sculpture and that spreads in the following century. Through convincing artistic parallels, he hypothesizes that Giotto’s paintings, except the portraits of Alexander and Caesar, represented both a man and a woman. If such were the case, this cycle would not be a series of famous men, of which, on the other hand, would be the first and extremely early example. Leaving aside the hypothesis regarding the subject of the lost frescoes, a question that is marginal for the present study, it is noteworthy that the reading of the poems certainly goes in this direction, that is, that the sonnets certainly connect Giotto’s paintings to romances and love theories. Stoppelli himself emphasizes this peculiarity of the crown of sonnets, when he writes that in one of the codices (MS BNCF, II II 40) it is preceded by another sonnet, Non ha ragion di verace intelletto, which serves as a sort of prologue to the series, and whose theme is death caused by love. Yet, these sonnets share some characteristics with the cycles of famous men, while their title rubrics state the name of their protagonist (see table above), who then speaks in the first person, thus creating a series of famous men, almost all of which belong to the pagan classic world (seven out of nine, the only two exceptions being the biblical heroes Salomon and Samson, to which Febus and Lancelot might also be added). In particular, compared to the cycle of the Nine Worthies, this crown of sonnets, at least in the form in which it appears in most of the manuscripts, lacks any figure from Christianity and/or the romances, establishing a sharp

713 “Boccaccio Looking at Actual Frescoes” in Gilbert, Poets Seeing Artists’ Work, 167-96. Gilbert emphasizes that Boccaccio in his Genealogia (book 14, chap. 18: “Non esse exitiale crimen libros legere poetarum”) would be referring only to real, existent works of art (Nardo di Cione in Santa Maria Novella, Giotto in Padua and in Castelnuovo). In particular, with the sentence “in aulis regum et nobilium virorum amores veterem” Boccaccio would be referring to the fresco cycle in Naples. Gilbert’s hypothesis is, indeed, strengthened by the fact that the series (and possibly the frescoes) might have included more than nine heroes, see above.

divide with that tradition. Only one codex, as we have seen, adds sonnets where courteous knights, Febus and Lancelot, speak.

Sandra Carapezza, discussing the tradition of the cycles of famous men, emphasizes that Petrarch changes the canon of this genre, giving a clear humanistic turn to it by excluding the chivalric and courtly dimension, as it is shown by his own De Viris Illustribus: this work is connected to the frescoes of the Sala dei Giganti in Padua (1368-1379), which encompasses 36 figures, all of which belong to Roman classic history, in a completely lay canon. Besides the above-mentioned theme of love, the courteous dimension seems to be minor also in the Heroes’ cycle of Giotto’s frescoes, from which the sonnets drew their inspiration. Therefore, from the point of view of Dante and of the shaping of the Dante-function, I maintain as important the fact that this particular cycle is attributed to Dante. Indeed, this crown of sonnets not only ties him to Giotto (whom, however, in the codices is never mentioned), implying the relationship between Alighieri and the painter, who is cited in the Commedia and who is the protagonist with Dante of some stories told by commentators, such as Benvenuto da Imola;\(^715\) but also because here Dante is connected to an embryonic De Viris Illustribus, a humanistic genre, which is also bound to a fresco, thus recalling the common ekphrasis in allegorical poems, such as Petrarch’s Triumphus fame and Boccaccio’s Amorosa visione, which in turn draw their inspiration

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\(^715\) In commenting on Purg. 11.94-96, Benvenuto writes: “Et hic nota, lector, quod poeta noster merito facit commendationem Giotti, ratione civitatis, ratione virtutis, ratione familiaritatis. De isto namque Giotto faciunt mentionem et laudem alii duo poetae fiorentini, scilicet Petrarcha et Boccatus, qui scribit, quod tanta fuit excellentia ingenii et artis huius nobilis pictoris, quod nullam rem rerum natura produxit, quam iste non repraesentaret tam propriam, ut oculus intuentium saepe falleretur accipiens rem pictam pro vera. Accidit autem semel quod dum Giottus pingeret Paduae, adhuc satis juvenis, unam cappellam in loco ubi fuit olim theatrum, sive harena, Dantes pervenit ad locum: quem Giottus honorifice receptum duxit ad domum suam, ubi Dantes videns plures infantulos eius summe deformes, et, ut cito dicam, simillimos patri, petivit: egregie magister, nimis miror, quod cum in arte pictoria dicamini non habere parem, unde est, quod alienas figuras facitis tam formosas, vestras vero tam turpes! Cui Giotthus subridens, praesto respondit: Quia pingo de die, sed fingo de nocte. Haec responsio omnem placuit Danti, non qua sibi esset nova, cum inventatur in Macrobi libro Saturnalium, sed quia nata videbatur ab ingenio hominis” (Benvenuto da Imola, Comentum, ad f. l.).
from the *Commedia*. In a singular triangulation, Carapezza explores the theme of the famous men as it develops in Dante’s *Commedia* along with the subsequent textual and visual evolution in Petrarch’s works.²⁷⁶ In her analysis, the theme of the Nine Worthies comes to play an important role. It has to be discarded as primary inspiration for the crown of sonnets in MS II IV 114 because, besides the coincidence in a series of possibly nine figures, it proposes a different canon of heroes, among which only three coincide (Hector, Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar), while the chivalric theme is absent. Yet, the theme of the Nine Worthies proves to be valuable for interpreting the attribution to Dante, since he uses it to structure the list of the Warriors of the Faith in the cross of the Sphere of Mars. Hollander’s commentary to *Par. 18.37-51* gives a satisfactory account of the relationship between the selection of Warriors of the Faith and the traditional theme of the Nine Worthies, which Dante could have known by reading Longuyon, or the same French and Latin sources:²⁷⁷

The traditional list of the *Nove prodi* includes five not included in Dante's revised list (the right-hand column in the two lists below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joshua</th>
<th>[1 in Dante also]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Roland [4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judas Maccabeus</td>
<td>[2 in Dante]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hector</td>
<td>William of Orange [5]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander the Great</td>
<td>Renouard [6]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julius Caesar</td>
<td>Robert Guiscard [8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Arthur</td>
<td>Cacciaguida [9]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlemagne</td>
<td>[3 in Dante]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godfrey of Bouillon</td>
<td>[7 in Dante]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It seems clear that Dante is taking a canonical list and recasting it to conform to his special purposes. He includes two of the first three and the last pair of names (Joshua, Judas Maccabeus; Charlemagne, Godfrey), dropping the middle four, and then adding five more recent 'Christian heroes,' three drawn from fictional treatments, sometimes of historical characters (Roland and William of Orange, if not Renouard) and two from history itself (Robert Guiscard, Cacciaguida), and 'updating' the list, which had ended with Duke Godfrey.

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²⁷⁶ Stoppelli, “Malizia Barattone,” 8; Carapezza, “*I pellegrini egregi*.” Cf. Ciccuto, “Trionfi e uomini illustri.”

²⁷⁷ Commentary on the *Princeton Dante Project* (cf. DDP)
http://etweb.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/dante/DispCommentByTitOrId.pl?EDIT=1&INP_ID=254036
leader of the first Crusade (1096), by adding last his own ancestor, who had perished, a martyr, in the second (1147). The lists themselves reveal something of their differing purposes. The 'Neuf preus' include six 'ancients' (three Hebrews, two Greeks, one Roman), and three 'moderns' (one Briton and two Frenchmen); Dante's version of them skips David and the 'ancient gentiles' and leaps from its two Hebrews to Charlemagne, who, as is each one of the rest, is Christian. All six who were active between 800 and 1100 are 'French,' but the ninth and most recent among Dante's worthies is *italianissimo*. One might speculate that David is omitted from Dante's list because the poet preserves him to be his Old Testament alter ego, a lover and a singer and a just king rather than a fighter (he will appear soon enough, in his own right, in the eye of the Eagle, [*Par. 20.38*]); the three pagans do not require any more reason to be excused than their failure to be Christians; King Arthur may be the most surprising omission, until one considers (as Seem does) his guilt by association with the series of destructive love affairs at his court.

So, Dante's Nine Worthies are, in order: Joshua, Judas Maccabeus, Charlemagne, Roland, William of Orange, Renouard, Godfrey of Bouillon, Robert Guiscard, and Cacciaguida. Dante, therefore, excludes all the Roman pagan heroes. Although such a choice at first glance might seem obvious since we are in Paradise, the context cannot be completely accounted for it, because we do know that there are pagans outside Hell and Limbo, such as Cato, who is in the Ante-Purgatory and will be saved, or Trajan, who is already in Heaven. While there is a sharp division between pagan and Christian figures, Dante's Warriors of the Faith and the Castelnuovo men share the mix between historical and fictional characters. Yet, contrary to what happens in the crown of sonnets of MS II IV 114, in Dante's selection we find a proliferation of contemporary heroes, along with figures from the literary tradition of romances. In this sense, Rinoard is illuminating: he is the giant Saracen squire of William of Orange, who converted him and with whom then became inseparable; he is the character that will inspire Pulci's Morgante. In the end, therefore, when Dante reworks the theme of the Nine Worthies in the *Commedia*, he turns out to be distant from the Humanistic perspective, deliberately giving a definite Christian canon of Warriors of the Faith. It is well known that Dante proposes a selection of famous men also in Limbo; but that canon is far more complex.
and does not correspond to the number nine, so it cannot be related in any respect to theme of the Nine Worthies, just as it cannot be compared to Giotto’s Heroes’ cycle.\textsuperscript{718} The tradition, thus, attributes to Dante a series of sonnets that is connected to a canon of famous men revealing cultural perspectives that belong to the following generation of intellectuals, while at the same time recognizing certain traits of the selection that could be connected to Dante, such as his possible knowledge of Giotto or the interest in classical themes and prominent figures. In any case, it would be crucial to ascertain who suggested such subject to Giotto and/or his studio, who ideated a cycle possibly made only of non-contemporary figures, combining classical and romance themes, virtue and love.

There is a final point deserving attention, showing the ways in which this attribution to Dante is culturally and historically relevant. Although unsustainable, it is, indeed, not unsophisticated: Stoppelli emphasizes that in these poems there are multiple references to Dante’s works, and in particular to the \textit{Inferno}, while there is no reference to Petrarch.\textsuperscript{719} Thus, whoever ascribed the crown of sonnets to Dante, other than noticing certain shared themes, was also able to perceive a certain linguistic and stylistic aptitude that made it sound Dantesque.

The three manuscript anthologies analyzed so far have emphasized some of the themes that had already emerged in discussing the books copied by Antonio Pucci and Andrea Stefani, and in particular the un-linear relationship between Dante and Petrarch, and the ways in which the

\footnotesize{
\textsuperscript{718} Carapezza, “\textit{I pellegrini egregi},” 219-20.
\textsuperscript{719} The series of famous women is instead woven with references to Petrarch’s poems. Stoppelli, “I sonetti,” 201-210. Cf. Lagomarsini, “Due giunte inedite.”
}
reception of their poetry looks closer than usually expected—at least according to the shared scholarly narration. Indeed, lyric anthologies emphasize the progressive strengthening of Petrarch’s authority, whose lyric work is quickly gaining momentum in the second half of the fourteenth century, probably faster than it is becoming a real model for writing poetry. Nevertheless, Dante’s poetry, and in particular his *canzoni*, steadily persist as a counterpart of Petrarch’s poetry, mostly with equal importance. Although such a situation might seem predictable, especially in Florence, nevertheless it remains stable until the second half of the fifteenth century, just as MS BNCF, II IV 114 shows, building a steady bridge with the interest in Dante’s poetry, both as for his lyric production and for the *Commedia*, that will characterize the age of Lorenzo de’ Medici and his circle. Discussing the prosopopoeia sonnets has brought us to Naples, while the three anthologies are connected to Florence. It is now time to draw our attention to the other end of the Peninsula, in order to explore manuscripts and texts coming from the Veneto and see what they have to tell us.

### 3.6 The Veneto from the Paduan Pre-Humanists to Giovanni Quirini and Giovanni Dondi

Cecco Angiolieri in the sonnet to Dante *Dante Alleghier, s’i’ son buon begolardo* (*Dante Alleghier, if I am a great swaggerer/braggart*) collects a series of accusations that parallels their behaviors and lifestyles, writing to Dante that he has nothing to reproach him. The triggering critique by Alighieri is impossible for us to retrace: it might have been a now lost sonnet Dante sent to Cecco, or a voice that the latter heard through the grapevine. While the beginning of the above mentioned poem is rather aggressive, suiting Cecco, its second part becomes more empathic, implying that the two poets share a similar hard destiny, which encompasses exile and relying on strangers for sustenance. So, Cecco writes to Dante “s’io so’ fatto romano, e tu lombardo”
(“if I became a Roman, and you a Lombard” l. 8). Although there is no evidence of a stay in Rome for its author, except for the text itself, the sonnet must have been sent to Dante when he had already been exiled from Florence, and in particular when he had already crossed the Apennines. Thus, Cecco would be referring to Dante’s being in Verona, at the service of Bartolomeo della Scala. Although the scarce information we have does not allow to precisely follow Dante’s movements, biographers agree that in late spring 1303 he was sent as ambassador of the Universitas Alborum to Verona, where he stayed for almost a year, most likely until February 1304. Then, he will be back in the North, and particularly in Verona in 1316, where he remained until late 1318 or early 1319, when he moved to Ravenna, ruled by Guido Novello da Polenta. Other than these two confirmed long stays, Dante might have been in the North in other occasions, of which, however, there is no documentary evidence. During the sojourns in Verona, Dante probably traveled in the Veneto: this is rather certain as for the first stay, when he served as ambassador for Bartolomeo, while later, although he was at Cangrande’s court for a long time, Dante seems not to have had any official role, thus not leaving proof of any journey. Puzzlingly, albeit spending a fair amount of time there, Dante did not leave any significant sign of his presence in the city’s cultural milieu, nor the rich holdings of the Library of the Cathedral Chapter of Verona left any particular mark in Dante’s works, where indeed there is no decisive and substantial reference to the most important classics that sheltered there from the dangers of time, such as Catullus and even Livy, whom Dante seems to have never read in depth. In Verona he is supposed to have conducted a

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721 Santagata, Dante, 156-162; cf. Petrocchi, Vita, 93-96.

722 Although Livy is cited both in the Commedia (Inf. 28.12) and in the DVE (2.6.7), Dante’s knowledge does not seem to imply a direct reading of his historiae. Cf. Alighieri, DVE ed. Fenzi, 189 and Opere I, 1453-55,
secluded life, probably completely absorbed by the writing of the *Commedia*, staying aloof from the pre-humanist movement that was flourishing at the very same time in the close, yet rival, Padua. Despite what he has Cacciaguida say in Paradise, Dante’s isolation and disheartening role at Cangrande’s court is emphasized by all contemporary biographers, who suggest this circumstance as one of the reasons (or the only reason) for Dante’s relocation to Ravenna. Indeed, Dante found a lord, Guido Novello, there who was not only interested in him as a literate and thinker, but who was also a poet in the first person; there, he was able to establish his cultural authority over a circle of young writers and intellectuals, thus laying the foundations for the profoundly Dantesque culture that will permeate the city in the decades after his death.  

Yet, also in the Veneto Dante had had his followers.

In the previous chapter we have analyzed MS BAV, Barb. Lat. 3953 that was, indeed, owned and partially written by Niccolò de’ Rossi, who lived in Treviso and can be considered the most influential intellectual figure of the city, if not of the whole vernacular culture of the Veneto. Niccolò de’ Rossi (Treviso, 1290-95 ca. – *post* 1348) studied in Bologna, and then in 1318 went back to Treviso to lecture in law at the local University. He was a judge, a lawyer, a politician, and a prolific poet: his poetry, other than narrating his love affairs, among which the songbook for Floruzza stands out, also portrays Niccolò as a fervent guelf, involved in civic life. After Guecello Tempesta surrendered Treviso to Cangrande in 1329, Niccolò probably left the city. There is no information regarding his life until 1338, when he is located in Avignon; then between 1339 and 1348 he moves to Venice, where he must have later died.

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where Tavoni is, instead, more positive as regards Dante’s possible knowledge of Livy, along with the other authors mentioned there (the rare Frontinus, along with Plinius and Orosius).


724 Sangiovanni, “Rossi, Niccolò de’,” to which I refer the reader for further bibliography.
As we have already mentioned, his manuscript contains a vast collection of lyrics, spanning from the last decades of the Duecento to his own times, encompassing especially Tuscan authors, such as Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia, Cecco Angiolieri, Folgore da San Gimignano and many others, along with his own poems, of which he includes 75. This book is unique, and revealing of the early diffusion and reception of Tuscan vernacular culture in northern Italy, and especially in the Veneto. Indeed, Niccolò is the chief example of the incorporation of the Stilnuovo in the poetic circles outside Florence. In particular, being born when Dante was already writing his *Vita Nuova*, Niccolò writes using a style that is outmoded; yet, he does not seem to want to create a new style for a new culture, but rather, he uses the Tuscan sweet style just as his favorite variation among the possible styles at his disposal.\(^{725}\)

Niccolò’s poetry leads us to another crucial manuscript in the early history of Italian literature and culture, the famous *canzoniere Escorialense*, MS Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, lat. e III 23, compiled in Padua between ca. 1290 and 1315. As we have already briefly touched upon, this volume is crucial for the early diffusion of Dante’s poems, also because it contains earlier redactions of some *Vita Nuova*’s poems. For what interests us here is following the activity of the earlier Dantists, it is noteworthy that this codex, along with Dante and the other Stilnovisti, and also Guittone d’Arezzo and Cecco Angiolieri, encompasses poems by Niccolò—the youngest poet included there—and Guido Novello, among the others. It is, also, remarkable that it only contains sonnets and ballads, both in aulic and in comic style, while its material features do not suggest that a *canzoni* section went missing. It is, indeed, a rather confused artifact, whose original arrangement is pretty hard to ascertain: many hypothesis have

\(^{725}\) Niccolò de’ Rossi’s rhymes can be read in Brugnolo, *Il Canzoniere*, where there is also a vast commentary on his poetry and on the manuscripts preserving it.
been proposed, without any final assessment that can explain the causes, and the trials and tribulations that led to what is extant, that is, a bunch of fifteen truly damaged parchment folios, where texts alternate without any particular organizing criterion. Yet, except for some adespota, most of the attributions of the poems are regular and reliable, while the Stilnovo section shows remarkable sequences created by the compilers following thematic and linguistic connections among the texts. The Escorialense is, therefore, a book that has some similarities with Niccolò’s own book, as for selection and interests that go toward the literature that comes from central Italy, and for a diverse group of authors and styles, which is not as wide-ranging as in the Barberini, however. Both manuscripts portray Dante as a cultural authority, both as regards the position his texts occupy in the anthology, and the influence his poetry had on the texts written in northern Italy and then included in the collections: Niccolò is indeed the chief example of a northern Stilnovo reawakening and Dante’s looming influence on his poetry has been widely recognized and explored, as it can also be emphasized for Guido Novello da Polenta and minor authors, such as Botrico da Reggio.

Such an early and deep affection toward Dante and the other Stilnovisti, in particular Cino da Pistoia and Guido Cavalcanti, soon faded. The arrival of Petrarch in Padua, where in 1349 he was appointed canonicus of the Cathedral, may be taken as the symbolic turning point of the direction that first Venetian and then Italian culture will take. Building on the pre-

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727 See Stefano Carrai, “Fisionomia poetica del canzoniere Escorialense,” in Il Canzoniere Escorialense, 3-10, in particular 5-6.
728 As for Dante’s influence on Niccolò de’ Rossi, see Marrani, Con Dante, 13-94.
humanist experience of Lovato and Mussato, Petrarch and Boccaccio fueled the return to the classics, which will lead to fifteenth-century Humanism and to the consequent vernacular classicism embodied by Pietro Bembo. While Florentine anthologies portray a progressive embracing of the Petrarchan style and the oscillation between the Dante- and the Petrarch-function, in the Veneto there seems to be a more clear-cut turn toward Petrarchist poetry. Although this interpretation of literary history is all but a given, and Dante persists as a model even well into the age of sheer Petrarchism, the Veneto seems to move faster toward Petrarch’s interpretation of what is an intellectual. In order to analyze such evolution, it is necessary to focus on the earliest Venetian dantista and on his later re-appropriation to the Petrarch-function. Indeed, in the first half of the fourteenth century there is a figure that embodies the Venetian relationship with Dante, along with the interplay between the two great Tuscan models in its early development, that is Giovanni Quirini, who does not appear in the Escorialense codex, nor in the Barberini; but whose lyric corpus is contained for the most part in a fascinating volume, today’s MS Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. XIV 223 (=4340).

Giovanni Quirini’s connection to Dante has a long standing tradition, emerging earlier than 1382, when in Giovanni Girolamo Nadal’s Leandreide Dante’s character , listing contemporary poets, starts with him, by saying: “il primo è Ian Querin, che mi fu amico/ in vita” (“the first one is Ian Querin, who was a friend of mine/ in life”). The actual friendship between Dante and Quirini has been denied with good reason, as the authenticity of the exchanges in sonnets between the two. As we have seen in chapter 1, the only text that still

730 Quirini, Rime, XVI (from which also the text is quoted).
731 Ibid., XVIII et seq. Cf. Barbi, “La questione,” and Marrani, Con Dante, 95 et seq.
holds a place in Dante’s corpus of *rime dubbie* is the sonnet *Nulla mi parve mai più crudel cosa*, whose inclusion seems due more to its twentieth-century success, than to the historical possibility that it had actually been sent by Dante to Giovanni. Nevertheless, Quirini had a deep interest in Dante’s poetry. In one of his most famous sonnets, he writes to a noble lord, who is to be identified with Cangrande della Scala, asking him to disclose Dante’s *Paradiso*. The sonnet itself seems to refer in an antithetical perspective to verses of *Par*. 9, thus suggesting that Quirini already knew some parts of the third cantica.\(^{732}\) In another sonnet, which is a sort of accompanying note, he writes to a friend that he is sending delayed his own copy of the *Commedia* because of an illness; there, he also pleads with the recipient to keep the book safe and to return it as soon as possible. This volume could well be the first copy of the *Commedia* circulating in Venice.\(^{733}\) The last three sonnets just mentioned are all included in the Marciano codex, while another famous poetic correspondence concerning Dante is preserved outside of it: Quirini writes to a friend, Matteo Mezzovillani, for having a copy of Cecco d’Ascoli’s *L’Acerba*, while in following poems he rejoices in Cecco’s death, also saying that Florence, as a mother, has finally venged Dante.\(^{734}\)

Not much is known about Giovanni’s life, especially because in Venice there were many men of the same name in that period. He was a Venetian nobleman, born before 1295; he was a merchant, he traveled to the orient, and managed the properties of the members of the Quirini family who were exiled from Venice after Baiamonte Tiepolo’s failed conspiracy (1310). The sonnet concerning Dante’s *Paradiso* tells us that he was in Venice in 1321, where

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\(^{732}\) Quirini, *Rime*, 16-19.
\(^{733}\) Ibid., 56-57.
\(^{734}\) Ibid., 200-210.
he died in 1333. His interest in Dante makes him close to the vernacular poets of the Venetian mainland, such as Niccolò de’ Rossi, with whom he might have also participated in a tri-vernacular tenzone. Yet, his style is different and does not share that experimental streak pervading the poetry written in the Veneto in the first decades of the Trecento, which we have encountered in analyzing Niccolò’s Barberini anthology. Gianfranco Folena and Elena Maria Duso emphasize the influence that reading the Commedia had on his poetic production: he is, indeed, the first poet to have a deep knowledge of the poem, which is interiorized in the inner structures of his writing, and not just used as a repository of poetic tiles. Quirini grasped the inner spirit of Dante’s poetry, translating it in the language of the sonnet. But he was not just interested in the Commedia: he also had a deep knowledge of the rime and of the Vita Nuova, along with the lyric production of the other Stilnovisti poets. Being familiar with such corpus shaped his poetry that, as Brugnolo writes, starting from similar premises, results in a polished and harmonious style, which recalls Petrarch.

Quirini’s lyric corpus is comprised of 120 poems, 106 of which are witnessed in the Marciano codex, where the vast majority of his poetry only appears. While this corpus lacks those poems that the tradition would have sent to Quirini by Dante, it includes those sonnets that mention the Commedia. The corpus, though composed of two main sections, a moral-religious first one and a love second one, shares a comparable Dantesque inspiration. Yet, the Marciano is a peculiar book, where Dante does not appear. Indeed, when Folena explores

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735 Ibid., XIII. Cf. Quintiliani, “Quirini, Giovanni,” and Folena, “Quirini, Giovanni.”
736 Folena, Culture e lingue, 317; Quirini, Rime, XIII-XIV, 213-17, to which I refer the reader for further bibliography. The tenzone is comprised of a sonnet by a poet from Venice (Venetus), who should be Quirini; the response by the Paduanus, a poet from Padua, Guercio da Montesanto; and another one by a poet from Treviso (Tarvisinus), who might be Niccolò de’ Rossi or Liberale da San Pelagio.
737 Brugnolo, “I Toscani nel Veneto,” 396-97. Quirini, Rime, XX-XXV.
Quirini’s poetry and emphasizes his deep, knowledgeable interest in Dante, he is also forced to talk about the Marciano codex, highlighting its main qualities, that is, an anthology centered on Petrarch, on his followers, and on the pre-humanist Paduan culture. Every time the great scholar writes about Dante in the Veneto, he mentions Quirini and consequently the Marciano codex, where his poetry is only preserved; every time, in a sort of Freudian repression, the fact that Dante is not there is alluded to, but never openly stated and acknowledged. For this same reason, the placement of Quirini in the Marciano is deemed as unrelated, a foreign body whose presence might be justified by the fact that Giovanni’s poems arrived in Padua through family relationships. But, as Folena himself writes, in manuscripts you can judge texts by the company they keep, so if in the second half of the Trecento Quirini finds himself with Petrarch and the Paduan pre-humanists, it cannot have happened only by chance.

MS Marciano Lat. XIV 223 is one of those books embodying an era and a place. It is a paper manuscript written in chancery script, copied in Padua in the second half of the fourteenth century. Giovanni Dondi dell’Orologio was believed to be its copyist, an hypothesis that has been proven wrong. Nevertheless, it has probably been compiled using materials from his library, most likely by someone close to him. It encompasses a wide-ranging selection of texts. First come a cluster of vernacular rhymes, without any attribution, nor title: a selection

739 Folena, *Culture e lingue*, 314, 316, 342-43. For instance, Folena writes: “La prima fortuna veneta del Petrarcha appare del resto direttamente collegata con quella di Dante, attraverso il primo imitatore di lui Giovanni Quirini, in un codice di eccezionale significato per la storia della cultura veneta e del primo umanesimo latino e volgare, il Marciano lat. XIV 223” (“The earliest fortunes of Petrarch in the Veneto, after all, appears as directly connected with that of Dante, through the first imitator of him Giovanni Quirini, in an exceptionally significant codex for the history of Venetian culture and of the earliest Latin and vernacular Humanism, the Marciano lat. XIV 223”, Ibid. 342).

740 Ibid., 339. For a theoretical elaboration of the concept, see *The Dynamics of the Medieval Manuscript*, 11-39.

741 Quirini, *Rime*, XXXI-XXXIV; Boccaccio autore e copista, 218-19; the attribution of the *Itinerarium romanum* to Dondi has recently been refuted, see Perucchi, “Appunti antiquari medievali,” to which I refer the reader also for the complete bibliography on the codex as a whole.
from Petrarch’s RVF, Quirini’s *rime* and other poems in comic-style probably by Dondi. Then, there are: Boccaccio’s *Versus ad Affricam*, and poems by Giovanni Dondi dall’Orologio, correctly attributed, to which the so-called *carmina* by the Paduan pre-humanists follow, without any attribution to their authors, among which we find Albertino Mussato and Lovato Lovati.\(^{742}\) The anthology then encompasses: Boccaccio’s Latin *Life of Petrarch, De vita et moribus domini Francisci Petrarcli*; Petrarch’s *Privilegium laureationis*; the *Iter romanum*, anonymous collection of Roman inscriptions, along with descriptions and measures of Roman monuments; Dondi’s letters, anonymous; the last two among Pietro de Crescenzi’s *Ruralium commodorum libri*. There are also recipes, magic formulas and pentacles. This book is comprised of texts of extremely different genres—literary, historical or antiquarian,—in Latin and in vernacular, in verse and in prose, while more than one copyist worked on its pages, and its layout changes accordingly to each kind of work. Yet, this volume can definitely be considered an anthology, and not an arbitrary miscellany. Indeed, the first cluster of lyrics tells the story of Dondi’s own literary apprenticeship, where Petrarch comes first and Quirini, the other great Trecento poet in the Veneto, follows in second place. The other great branch of Paduan culture, that humanism that had Lovato and Mussato as protagonists, to which Petrarch gave new life in the second half of the century, constitutes the other great section of the book. Here, Boccaccio appears only as ancillary to Petrarch, as his biographer and disseminator. There is no neat division between Latin and vernacular, a plurilingual commition that, at this point, should be familiar to the reader: indeed, the sheer division between Latin and vernacular is far to come, and in the second half of the Trecento the free interplay between Latin and

\(^{742}\) The *carmina* were edited by Luigi Padrin, in Lupati de Lupatis, Bovetini de Bovetinis, Albertini Mussati neconen Jamboni Andreae de Favafuschis *Carmina quaedam [...]*, Nozze Giusti-Giustiniani, Padua: Tipografia del Seminario, 1887.
vernacular, as represented by Petrarch’s oeuvre, is still the rule in writing, just as it is mirrored in manuscripts.\textsuperscript{743} The Marciano manuscript is a municipal codex, it represents a pivotal moment in the history of Paduan culture, which nonetheless mirrors the evolution of Italian and European culture as a whole, by representing Petrarch as a cultural authority, both as for Latin and the vernacular, anticipating what will later happen in the fifteenth and in the sixteenth centuries, with Humanism first and Petrarchism later. As mentioned above, the manuscript is located as close to Giovanni Dondi dall’Orologio (1330 ca. - 1388), who was Petrarch’s physician in his last years in Padua, and who is mostly famous as the astronomer who designed the \textit{Astrarium}, an astronomical clock built in Padua between 1348 and 1368, one of the first mechanical clocks, whose detailed project is described in Dondi’s \textit{Tractatus astrarii}. Dondi, thus, was not only a University professor of medicine and a reknown scientist, but also an intellectual who wrote rhymes and was interested in the classics, such as Seneca. Also, although the \textit{Iter romanum} is a more ancient text that cannot be attributed to him, it still demonstrates an interest in antiques that might be ascribed to Dondi himself.

Indeed, as the first follower of Dante, Quirini’s place in this anthology seems rather peculiar. Yet, the Marciano codex encompasses Dondi’s vernacular rhymes, fifty poems placed after Petrarch’s and Quirini’s corpora.\textsuperscript{744} Although the manuscript should derive from his own materials, and in life he was a friend of Petrarch himself, to whom he also dedicates a poems after his death,\textsuperscript{745} Dondi’s poetry, whose main topic is not love, draws inspiration more from previous models --that is Dante and Guinizzelli, along with the other Stilnovisti poets--, than from the closer in space and time, more innovative poetry of Petrarch. Such impression,

\textsuperscript{745} Ibid., 31-32.
determined by an overall reading of his poems, is further strengthened by what Dondi explicitly states in two of his sonnets:

Le toe parole mi par belle tanto et sì ben ordinate tute quante, qual se dite le avesse o Guido o Dante, o vero examinate in ogni canto. (sonnet XVI, ll. 1-4)

Però che sento che tu senti tanto de l'ornato parlar la melodia, o prosa o verso o volgar rima sia, che del poeta o Dante par tuo canto (sonnet XVII, ll. 1-4)\textsuperscript{746}

Writing to two of his friends, respectively Giovanni of Venice and Melchiorre of Verona, he compares the poetry of the first one to two of the most famous poets of the previous generations, Dante and Guido, who might be Guinizzelli or also Cavalcanti; in the second one, Dante is again mentioned, along with another poet, who Daniele suggests to identify with Guinizzelli, but could even be Petrarch.\textsuperscript{747} In any case, Dondi feels that he is composing poetry in the footsteps of the Tuscan tradition bound to the Stilnovisti, more than writing in the wake of his friend, to whom he also writes a sonnet (\textit{Io non so ben s'io volia quel ch'io volia}, IV):\textsuperscript{748} for Dondi, Petrarch is not the prime cultural authority for writing in the vernacular. Nevertheless, since the compiler of the Marciano is not Dondi himself, the position Petrarch has in the manuscript shows that his poetry was progressively gaining authority over the vernacular tradition.

Moreover, given the above-mentioned pre-petrarchan quality of Giovanni’s poetry, it should be clearer why he has been included in such a collection, other than the fact that Dondi’s wife belonged to the Quirini family and, thus, probably inherited Giovanni’s papers and documents. Quirini’s poetry is re-interpreted, its dependence on the Dante-function is

\textsuperscript{746} Dondi, \textit{Rime}, 41-44.
\textsuperscript{747} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{748} Ibid., 12-14. Petrarch answers with a sonnet, \textit{Il mal mi preme et mi spaventa il peggio}, that is then included in his RVF as n° 244.
almost erased, and instead it is included in the emerging Petrarch-function. Dondi’s poetry faces the same fate, although his proximity to Petrarch is a fact. The crucial point, therefore, is not that Giovanni’s poetry has been paired with Petrarch, but that Dante and the other Stilnovisti have been left out of the picture, forgotten not only as the inspiration for Quirini’s poetry, but as the poetic genealogy from which Petrarch’s own poetry derives. In truth, Dante appears here in a roundabout way, with the sonnet hypothetically attributed to him, *Nulla mi parve mai più crudel cosa*, which emblematically is the one quoted by Montale in his *La primavera hitleriana*. In this late-fourteenth-century utterly modern manuscript anthology, this sonnet is preserved only because it is connected to the corpus of another author, just as it seems to happen in contemporary editions of Dante’s *rime*. Yet, such similar situations originate from dissimilar, if not opposed tendencies as regards the Dante-function as a whole: while in the late fourteenth century Dante was being replaced by Petrarch as a cultural authority, and his clear-cut choice for the vernacular was leading to his marginalization; in the twentieth century his work was gaining new momentum, not only as the ethical father of Italian language and culture, but also as the Poet who was able to speak to a broader audience, never losing strength and elegance.

Giovanni Dondi dies in 1388, the very same year of Antonio Pucci. Both of them were friends of the two great intellectuals of the century, Petrarch and Boccaccio respectively. Nevertheless, their manuscripts portray the Dante-function, and consequently Petrarch and Boccaccio, in opposite ways. Pucci, although distancing himself in significant ways, follows Boccaccio’s editorial practices, which crown Dante as the father and looming model for writing in the vernacular, while Petrarch, in his anthology, is a secondary figure. Just as it is crucial that a selection of *canzoni* and *sestine* from the *RVF* appears in Antonio’s anthology, it
is also clear that Dante is the authority there, and Boccaccio is his herald. The Marciano,
deriving from Dondi’s materials, portrays Petrarch as the authority, and Boccaccio here is,
instead, re-functionalized as Petrarch’s herald. But in the very same city of Padua, in the
fifteenth century, the Capodivacca family owned a volume like MS Ash. 478, where Dante
comes after Petrarch, but still plays an important role. Thus, although Petrarch’s poetry
becomes more and more central in the cultural field, and his oeuvre and intellectual figure are
more and more elevated as poetic and moral models, nonetheless the narration that sees Dante
as forgotten, especially outside Florence, must be reconsidered. Indeed, an attentive analysis
of lyric collections reveals a remarkably frequent interplay of both Petrarch and Dante. As late
as the sixteenth century, many anthologies written, copied or owned by poets, such as Isidoro
Mezzabarba or even Pietro Bembo, materially show that Dante continued to have a major role
as a literary model for the concrete practice of writing vernacular poetry. Through the analysis
of both physical books and texts, it would be possible to follow this thread, exploring ways in
which major and minor Petrarchists deal with Dante, and how his poetry was still a model for
the European Cinquecento.
Conclusion: Dante, the Creator of Italian Literature

... è constatazione ovvia che la storia della nostra lirica delle origini si fa ancora secondo schemi danteschi, corrispondenti certo a esigenze critiche generali dell’epoca, ma veramente esistenti dopo l’imperativo di Dante (costituzione di scuola siciliana, di dolce stile, limitazione sicula del guittonismo); e a maggior ragione quella della lirica stessa di lui. (G. Contini, Introduzione to Dante’s Rime, 1939)

While traveling through Purgatory, Dante meets Oderisi of Gubbio, the most famous illuminator of his time, whose fame has been surpassed and erased by the new generation of book painters. Oderisi predicts to Dante that “just so, one Guido has taken from the other the glory of our language, and perhaps he is born who will drive both of them from the nest” (“Così ha tolto l’uno a l’altro Guido|la gloria de la lingua; e forse è nato|chi l’uno e l’altro caccerà del nido,” Purg. 11.97-99): just as Guido Cavalcanti obscured Guido Guinizelli’s fame, someone else is already born who will be more famous than them, Dante himself. Notably, this encounter happens in the first terrace, where the sin of pride is purged, in a decisive connection with Dante’s life and writings. Indeed, Dante—showing self-awareness—portrays himself as a future inhabitant of that same terrace. Nonetheless, although from his perspective placing himself at the summit of the vernacular literary tradition was probably a gamble in which pride played a major role, starting from the following generation, and in particular with Boccaccio, Dante’s narrative of the history of the newborn vernacular literary tradition is embraced, in a poetic genealogy that, as Contini has written, still governs the basic history of the earliest Italian literature today.

Dante is one of the most important figures in what is defined as World Literature. With his choice to write in the vernacular and his ability to speak to everyone, through the
Commedia Dante has influenced Western culture for seven hundred years. In the process of globalization, Dante now has a universal reception, and translations and rewritings make his poem second only to the Bible as the most diffused text in the world. Such uninterrupted interest in Dante’s multifaceted oeuvre touches on diverse issues still relevant in our present. As this study has shown, the so-called *opere minori*—minor works—are of crucial importance to define the cultural heritage that Dante, as an intellectual and an author, has impacted. In particular, early anthologies preserve the first reception of Dante as an intellectual and a lyric writer, while later poetry books portray his canonization both in parallel and in contrast to the “Dante poeta theologus” of the *Commedia*. Indeed, it should be remembered that he began writing the *Commedia* after 1305, when he was over 40 years old, after having been a protagonist in the political and cultural life of his time, first in Tuscany and later in the courts of northern Italy. His lyric production, thus, is not just complementary to the great poem, but it represents the first, fundamental stage of his literary career, as is evidenced by the philosophical and ethical dimension permeating Dante’s lyric poetry, from as early as the *Vita Nuova* (1292-1294 ca.), becoming evident in his series of major *canzoni*. The major cases of its fortunes show the ways in which such theoretical weight has reverberated through the centuries, from the earliest anthologies copied even before Dante finished writing the *Commedia*, to twentieth-century editions.

Texts, books, prominent and less-prominent historical figures have participated in the canonization of Dante as the father of Italian literature in a *longue durée* process, started by Dante himself in his treatises, especially in the *DVE*, and corroborated by his lyric poetry before and independent of the *Commedia*. As L.P. Hartley wrote in *The Go-Between*, “the past is a foreign country” and each time we edit, read, interpret, adapt authors like Dante, we mirror
ourselves and define our identity by relating to or contrasting their views. And so did many others before us, whom we must also confront. In shaping the Dante-function, as other comparable author-functions, global culture has, in turn, been shaped for centuries. The present research has explored a part of this process, a single tile in the mosaic defining our cultural history, from the Middle Ages to Modernity, to our contemporary times.
## Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ai fans ris</th>
<th>Altre rime di Dante</th>
<th>Commedia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 6</td>
<td>che 'ngannator non è degno di laude</td>
<td><em>Tre donne</em> 80 (Giunta) cader co' buoni è pur <strong>di lode degno</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 7-9</td>
<td>Tu sai ben come gaude miserum eius cor qui prestolatur: je l'esper [t]ant, et pas de moi ne cure.</td>
<td><em>Amor, tu vedi ben</em> 1-2 (Brugnolo) <em>Amor, tu vedi ben</em> che questa donna la tua verità <strong>non cura</strong> in alcun tempo <em>Dolgia mi reca</em> 38 (Breschi) Morte repugna sì, che lei <strong>non cura</strong> <em>La doloroso amor</em> 31 (De Robertis) nè il penar <strong>non cura</strong> il quale <strong>attende</strong> <em>La dispietata mente</em> 54 (Breschi) e vegna dentro al cor, che lei <strong>aspetta</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 10</td>
<td>Ai Dieus, quante malure</td>
<td><em>Inf. V</em> 112-113 (Giunta) Quando rispuosi, cominciai: “Oh lasso, quanti dolci pensier, quanto disio”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>a colui ch’aspettando il tempo perde, né già mai tocca di fioretto il verde.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>che per un matto guardamento d’occhi vous ne dovries aver perdu la loi; ma e’ mi piace che li dardi e stocchi semper insurgant contra me de limo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6 | 18-22 | semper insurgant contra me de limo,  
don't je serai mort, par foi que je croi.  
Fort me desplait pour moi,  
ch'io son punito ed aggio colpa nulla,  
nec dicit ipsa: «Malum est de isto» |
|---|---|---|
|   |   | *E' m'increco di me* 10-14 (Brugnolo)  
Oimè, quanto piani,  
soavi e dolci *ver' me si levaro*  
quand'elli incominciaro  
là morte mia, che *tanto mi dispiace*,  
dicendo: «Nostro lume porta pace».

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>Ben avrà questa donna cuor di ghiaccio</th>
</tr>
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</table>
|   |   | *Io son venuto* 72 (Brugnolo)  
Se 'n pargoletta fia per *cuore un marmo*  

*Amor, tu vedi ben* (Brugnolo): tema della donna fredda, con parola rima *freddo*

| 8 | 28-30 | et tant d'aspresse que, par ma foi, est  
nisi pietatem habuerit servo.  
Bien set Amours, se je n'en ai secors |
|---|---|---|
|   |   | *Amor da che convien* 69-70 (Breschi)  
s'a costei non ne cale,  
non spero mai d'altrui aver *soccors*.  

*La dispietata mente* 14-18 (Breschi)  
Piacciavi, donna mia, non venir meno a questo punto al cor che tanto v'ama,  
poi sol da voi *soccorro* attende  
ché buon signor già mai non restringe freno  
per *soccorrer* lo *servo* quando 'l chiama  

*l' son chiamata* 3-4 (Breschi)  
per contarvi novella  
d'un vostro *servo* che *muore* amando
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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</table>
| 9 | 31-32 \( \text{La doloroso amor} \) 1-2 (Breschi)  
\( \text{Lo doloroso amor che mi conduce} \)  
\( \text{a'ffin di morte per piacer di quella} \)  
\( \text{Così nel mio parlare} \) 9-12 (Breschi)  
\( \text{Ella ancide, e non val ch'uom si chiuda} \)  
\( \text{nè si dilunghi da' colpi mortali} \)  
\( \text{che, com'avesser ali,} \)  
\( \text{giungono altrui e spezzan ciascun'arme} \)  
\( \text{Amor da che convien} \) 45-46 (Breschi)  
\( \text{dagli occhi che m'uccidono a gran torto.} \)  
\( \text{Qual io d'evengo si feruto, Amore} \)  
\( \text{Perché vedi giovine e bella} \) 5 (Breschi)  
\( \text{po' che d'ancider me, lasso, ti prove} \)  
\( \text{Io sento sì d'Amor} \) 2-3 (Giunta)  
\( \text{io non posso durare} \)  
\( \text{lungamente a soffrire, ond'io mi doglio} \)  |
|   |   |
| 10 | 33  
\( \text{Così nel mio parlare} \) 24-25 (Giunta)  
\( \text{perché non ti ritemi} \)  
\( \text{si di rodermi il cuore a scorsà a scorza} \)  
\( \text{Inf. XV 114} \) (Breschi)  
\( \text{dove lasciò li mal protesi nervi} \)  |
| 11 | 35  
\( \text{Ciò che m'incontra} \) 2 (De Robertis)  
\( \text{quando vegno a veder voi, bella gioia} \)  
\( \text{quand' i vegno a veder voi, bella gioia} \) (VN)  
\( \text{Spesse fiate} \) 11 (De Robertis)  
\( \text{vegno a vedervi, credendo guerire} \)  
\( \text{Inf. XVI 83} \)  
\( \text{e torna a riveder le belle stelle} \)  
\( \text{Par. II 4} \)  
\( \text{tornate a riveder li vostri liti} \)  
\( \text{Inf. XIV 60} \) (Chiamenti)  
\( \text{non ne potrebbe aver vendetta allegra} \)  |
| 12 | 39 | quantum spes in me⁷⁴⁹ de ipsa durat | *Purg. VIII 77* (Brugnolo)  
*quanto in femmina foco d'amor dura*  
*Purg. XI 92* (Brugnolo)  
*com' poco verde in su la cima dura* |
| 13 | 40 | Chanson, or puez aler par tout le monde | *Se Lippo amico* 20 (Giunta)  
e possa andar là 'vunqu'è disiosa |
| 14 | 42 | ut gravis mea spina | *Io son venuto* 49 (Contini)  
e la *crudele spina* |
| 15 | 43 | si saccia per lo mondo. Ogn'uomo il senta | *Doglia mi reca* 118 (Brugnolo)  
Io vo' che ciascun m'oda |
| 16 | 3, 6, 7 | fraude : laude : gaude | *Par. XIX 35-39* (Breschi)  
plauda : laude : gaude |

⁷⁴⁹ Lazzerini and Giunta: *<iam>*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>17</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>Ben avrà questa donna cuor di ghiaccio</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7, 24, 30</td>
<td>Tu sai ben…</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ella sa ben…</td>
<td>Bien set Amours…</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ben convertrà che la mia donna mora</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Donna pietosa</strong> 34 (Brugnolo)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ben ti faranno</strong> il nodo Salamone (Brugnolo)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Al poco giorno</strong> 31 (Brugnolo)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Brugnolo)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ma <strong>ben ritornerranno</strong> i fiumi a’ colli</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Io sento si d’Amor</strong> 33 (Brugnolo)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ben</strong> è verace amor quel che m’ha preso</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[non si tratta dello stesso modulo <strong>ben</strong>+futuro+soggetto+compl., il cosi detto uso potenziale, ma è sempre in apertura di verso]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>La dispie</strong> 7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>tante mente</strong> 67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ché <strong>tu sai ben</strong> che poco tempo omai</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inf. XX 114</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ben lo sai</strong> tu che la sai tutta quanta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inf. XXXII 66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>se tosco se’, ben sai</strong> omai chi fu</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Purg. V 109</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ben sai</strong> come ne l’aere si raccoglie</td>
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<tr>
<th>18</th>
<th>35, 36</th>
<th>allegra : integra</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inf. VII</strong> 122, 126 (Breschi)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>s’allegra : integra</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Par. XXVII</strong> 7-8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oh gioia! oh ineffabile <strong>allegrezza</strong>!</td>
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<tr>
<td>oh vita <strong>integra</strong> d’amore e di pace!</td>
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<tr>
<th>19</th>
<th>38-39</th>
<th>curat : durat</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inf. XXXIII</strong> 41-43; <strong>Purg. XVI</strong> 77, 81; <strong>Par. IV</strong> 17-19 (Breschi)</td>
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<tr>
<td>cura : dura</td>
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Princeton Dante Project etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/

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Biography

Laura Banella (Genova, Italy, 08/16/1986) has been a PhD Candidate in Romance Studies-Italian at Duke University since August 2013. She is graduating in May 2018.

After graduating from University of Pisa and Scuola Normale Superiore, she earned a doctorate in Italian literature from the University of Padova. Her main research interests lie in medieval Italian literature and material philology, with a particular focus on Dante and the transmission of his lyric works. Some of the results of her research have been published in some journals of the field, such as Studi sul Boccaccio, Rivista di Studi Danteschi, and Dante Studies. Her first book, La 'Vita Nuova' del Boccaccio. Fortuna e Tradizione, has been published in 2017 (Rome-Padua: Antenore).

Laura Banella participates in the digital project Dante's Library: Rebuilding a Medieval Network of Knowledge, Duke University - Humanities Writ Large Project, Emerging Networks Mellon Grant (co-convener with M. Eisner), and in 2017-2018 she has been Fellow of the PhD Lab in Digital Knowledge at the John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke University.

She is member of the American Boccaccio Association, the American Association for Italian Studies, the Modern Language Association, the Società Dantesca Italiana, and the Renaissance Society of America.