

Nuove prospettive sulla tradizione della Commedia. Una guida filologico linguistica al poema dantesco. A cura di Paolo Trovato. Firenze: Cesati, 2007. Pp. 742.

La *Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata* by Petrocchi appeared in 1966-1967 and for decades has been the “critical edition” of the poem, superseding Vandelli’s edition of 1921. Vandelli had come to the conclusion that it was not possible to classify in any reasonable way the overwhelming number of manuscripts (827 in the latest count by Marcella Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri. Die ‘Göttliche Komödie’ vergleichende Bestandsaufnahme der Commedia-Handschriften*, Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 1984) even if basing their collation on the “four hundred critical loci” selected by Michele Barbi on the commission of the Società Dantesca. Vandelli decided that the best use of these selected passages and other important variations was to make a stemma for each case; as a result the strategy of proceeding through loci critici was abandoned, until recent times, as we will see. A few years later Mario Casella attempted to establish a general stemma (1924), and notwithstanding some durable insights, the general criteria for this edition (especially the kind of mistakes on which the stemma was based) fell short of general acceptance. Plans for a new “edizione nazionale” were postponed indefinitely until Giorgio Petrocchi deemed the project feasible by limiting the collation to the manuscripts dated before 1350, that is just before Boccaccio produced his untrustworthy editions of the poem around the middle of the Trecento. Petrocchi collated 27 manuscripts copied (or known to be copied through later *testimonia*) between 1330 and 1340, plus 4 more of around 1350. It was meant to be an edition of the “antica vulgata” that is the standard edition of the 1330s; indeed Petrocchi never called it “edizione critica” although he considered it an indispensable starting point for any textual problem concerning the poem. It was an impressive work and promoted much research, but also raised many objections, concerning the reliability of the stemma, its use, the value of the “vulgata” among others. In 1994 Federico Sanguineti proposed a stemma much simpler than Petrocchi’s and proceeded to simplify it even further in his “edizione critica” of 2001. Yet new problems arise from the ones just settled, and the present volume addresses them aiming primarily at having a better knowledge of the complexity of the textual tradition, explaining why two so different stemmas coincide on so many points and ultimately to improve the stemma. The present volume paves the way towards those goals.

A team of seasoned and young scholars worked on this project, devised and directed by Paolo Trovato, a foremost scholar in the field. It is an ambitious project that coordinates the research in several fields (paleography, codicology, dialectology, bibliography, metrics and stemmatics) all leading to the same point; and on the way readers get well informed on the maze of Dante philology,

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the problems of attributions and circulation of mss, their scribes and language, their location and all sort of information which Dante scholars do not possess and do not find easily available; also readers get as close as possible to the philological labors of building a stemma. In this sense this volume is “una guida filologico-linguistica al poema dantesco” as the sub-title claims, and as such it deserves to be presented to the readers of this journal. They should keep in mind that reviewing a book of this dimension and variety of contributions on technical matters can just highlight the main point of each piece: philological demonstrations often amount to lists of minute details, and reviewing them thoroughly would require a lengthy monograph. However our simple summary should give sufficient indications as to the importance of this collective work.

We will follow the sequence of the book which can be divided roughly into four topics: a survey of the materials to undergo re-examination, geographic and linguistic mapping of the manuscript tradition, closer analysis of some groupings or families, and the proposals of a stemma for a new edition of the *Comedy*. The opening bibliography of works cited in the book in abbreviated form (15-47) stands by itself and it is not signed: it gives an idea of the wealth of data considered in this volume.

The first contribution, Fabio Romanini, “Manoscritti postillati dell’ “Antica vulgata” (49-60), describes the manuscripts collated by Petrocchi for the “antica vulgata,” updating or even correcting Petrocchi in minor particulars (type of handwriting, date, attribution etc.) by relying on new research, some of which is contained in this volume. In the subsequent contribution, “Altri testimoni della *Commedia*” (61-94), Fabio Romanini describes some one hundred manuscripts that will be studied in the course of this volume. The thorough description of each one of them is in itself a remarkable contribution; and it is of great help to the readers who must constantly return to it in order to move comfortably among scores of abbreviations and keep track of what is what.

A similar motivation of “helping the readers” prompts Paolo Trovato to dedicate a few pages (96-98) to “Famiglie e sottofamiglie di testimoni nelle classificazioni oggi in uso,” which contain Petrocchi’s and Sanguineti’s stemmas so that readers can easily visualize their grouping of manuscripts and their relations every time a reference is made to them (as happens constantly).

Caterina Brandoli, “Due canoni a confronto: i luoghi di Barbi e lo scrutinio di Petrocchi” (99-214), compares Barbi’s famous 400 *loci critici* (in fact they were 396) and Petrocchi’s list of key mistakes on which to base the stemma: both operations were meant to streamline the grouping of mss. Barbi selected his *loci* at the end of the Nineteenth century thinking that this was the most economic way of collating manuscripts, but Vandelli, as we saw, made poor use of them; Petrocchi instead offers a much longer list of mistakes and variations taking them from the manuscripts used for his “antica vulgata.” Brandoli compares the nature of the mistakes considered by both editors, and separates “monogenetici” from “polygenetic” mistakes, considering that only those of the

first kind have a decisive weight in building the stemma. In her estimate Barbi's *loci* have a much higher percentage of the first type of mistake: it is an indication that Barbi's 400 *loci* still retain a high operative value, and the course of the present research will prove it.

Vincenzo Guidi, "I numeri della tradizione dantesca" (215-28), provides statistical data on the poem's production, dividing it by centuries, region, scriptoria, copyists and many other categories. Far from being dry statistics, these data will look very interesting later on when we will learn more about the relationship between the Northern and the Tuscan centers of diffusion of the *Comedy*, and we begin to see that the oldest Tuscan manuscripts contain intriguing traits of dialects spoken North of the Apennines.

Paolo Trovato, "Tavola sinottica dei manoscritti trecenteschi della *Commedia*. Datazione e area linguistica" (229-41), is a sort of 'appendix' that integrates the previous survey. He studies the manuscripts of the fourteenth century, dates them and establishes the linguistic origin of their copyists rather than linguistic area where they were copied: it is important to know, for instance, that a manuscript copied in Genoa was the work of a *marchigiano* scribe. Of the 293 manuscripts taken into consideration, 72 remain without a precise dating and some 40 are not ascribed to any definite linguistic area.

Gabriella Pomaro, "Ricerche d'archivio per il 'copista di Parm' e la mano principale del Cento. (In margine ai 'frammenti di un discorso dantesco')" (243-79), opens the series of paleographic studies in this volume concerning specific manuscript or specific manuscripts family. She analyzes the manuscript "Parm" (preserved in Parma and dated around the mid of Trecento), and identifies the hand of the copyist responsible for other Florentine documents as well as other manuscripts of the *Comedy*. In the second part of her article, Pomaro revises the situation of the "Cento", a series of manuscripts generally held as coming from a scriptorium in Florence and carrying the same text; but Pomaro maintains that there are differences both in hands and in the text; moreover she isolates within the so-called "Strozzi" group 19 manuscripts belonging to same hand.

Fabrizio Franceschini, "Stratigrafia linguistica dell'Ashburnhamiano e dell'Hamiltoniano" (281-315), studies the language of two manuscripts of Petrocchi's canon. The first (Ashb 828) known as the "Antichissimo" for being the oldest manuscript of the *Comedy*, contains the poem and, by a different hand, a *Capitolo* or *Divisione* by Jacopo Alighieri, which also has the date of 1335, a date which has been discredited for being too early, but Pomaro considers it accurate. The linguistic analysis shows that in spite of being the work of a Pisan scribe the text exhibits some Northern relics and that the scribe is rather learned (as seen, for example, by the etymological orthography); also the *Capitolo* shows Pisan traits. The Hamilton 293 is also Tuscan and contains the *Capitolo*. Linguistic analysis assigns it to the area of Lucca (Northern Tuscany) with Pisan traits, but has no Northern elements as Ashb 828. Moreover Ash 828 was not copied in a scriptorium as Ham 293 was. This

latter point is detailed in the “Appendice. Appunti su Ash” (317-30) by Gabriela Pomaro, who also confirms that the date of Ashb has a *terminus ante quem* in 1335, and its writing shows a time lapse between *Inferno* and the rest of the poem. The hand of the *Capitolo* is the same one that makes corrections in the text of the poem. Should these two manuscripts be grouped together as Petrocchi and Sanguineti do?

Francesca Geymonat, “Sulla lingua di Francesco di ser Nardo” (331-75), analyzes another pair of Petrocchi’s manuscripts, the Triv 1080 (at the Trivulziana Library in Milan), dated 1337, and the incomplete Ga (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Gaddiano 90 sup. 125) dated 1347, both attributed to Francesco di ser Nardo. Since this scribe was native of Barberino, a village in Valdelsa near Certaldo, and he transcribed the *Comedy* in Florence, it is interesting to see what influence his native dialect might have had on the Florentine of the time: this is the purpose of this study. An “Appendice. Tabelle comparate” (377-86) compares some linguistic phenomenon (for example, the future tense of “essere”) in other Florentine mss by the same scribe as well as the Mart (a manuscript of 1330-1331 known to us only through the variants written by Luca Martini on the margins of the Aldus edition of 1515), in order to verify some of Francesco di ser Nardo’s writing peculiarities.

Fabio Romanini, “Codici di tradizione settentrionale nell’“antica vulgata.” La lingua del Madrileno e del Riccardiano Braidense” (387-409), broadens the research on the dialectal coating of two Northern mss deemed very important already by Petrocchi. They are one from Genoa or the Ligurian area, and the other R (which designates two manuscripts, one the Riccardiano 1005, containing the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*, and the Braidense AG XII 2, containing the *Paradiso*) from Bologna. The Madrileno (Mad) shows traits of Emilian dialect although the prevailing elements clearly point to the Ligurian. The attention given to these Northern manuscripts will be fully justified as the general picture of the textual tradition will unfold.

Carla Maria Sanfilippo, “Primi appunti sul volgare di Ravenna nel secondo Trecento” (411-56), paves the way to that conclusion by studying Ravenna dialect in archival and literary documents which are practically untapped from a linguistic angle. It is the only contribution in this volume not to deal with Dante’s work, but it is a fundamental piece because it can ultimately prove whether it is possible to locate the archetype in Ravenna, or at least the manuscript Ph which we will soon see.

Marco Praloran, “Alcune osservazioni sul ritmo nella *Commedia*” (457-66), takes us into a quite different field from the textual problems. However this brief contribution reminds us that metrics can be an important tool in deciding of some readings of any poetry text, and the *Comedy* is no exception especially considering that different dialectal interference can alter the prosody.

Carlo Pulsoni, “Un testo ‘antichissimo’ (il perduto codice Vettori) attraverso le postille di Bartolomeo Barbadori, Jacopo Corbinelli, Vincenzo

Borghini" (467-98), reviews the episode of a group of Florentine philologists, interested in the purity of their own language, who collated the 1515 Aldus edition of the *Comedy* with several manuscripts owned by Luca Martini, already mentioned, producing what is known as Mart (today at the Braidense Library), containing readings believed to be taken from "very old manuscripts"; but then Luca Martini collated a later Aldus edition with another manuscript in his possession, producing Mart₄₆, gone lost. While reviewing this episode Pulsoni discovers yet another "postillatore" of the *Comedy*, Bartolomeo Barbadori, who took the variant readings from a ms probably belonging to the "Cento" family. Thus the supposedly "very old" manuscripts belong to the Cento family, certainly not the oldest nor the purest.

Michele Bordin, "Prime approssimazioni ad altri testi 'antichissimi': dai postillati Valori e Malpigli alla perduta Aldina Martini del 1545-1546" (499-571), tries to reconstruct the lost Mart₄₆, studying the "postille" of Baccio Valori (Val) and Camillo Malpigli (Mal), and comes to conclusions similar to those reached by Pulsoni, namely that the supposed "antichissimi" mss belong to the "Cento" and to the Vatican families, showing traits of that contamination which was pervasive in the earliest stages of the Florentine tradition of the poem, but which was also a stabilizing factor in preserving that "Florentine" tradition from any outside influence.

Marco Veglia, "Sul codice Cortonese e su altre copie attribuite a Romolo Ludovici" (573-82), expunges from the canon of "pre-Boccaccian" manuscripts the Codice Cortonese (Co), considered quite old and authoritative in Petrocchi's edition. Veglia downgrades the status of Co as well as of T (a manuscript from Trento) and Landau Finaly 123, both work of Romolo Ludovici: they are not as old and reliable as previously thought; however, they can show us some of the editorial practices of the times through their mistakes.

Camilla Giunti, "L' "Antica vulgata" del *Capitolo* di Jacopo Alighieri con un'edizione (provvisoria) del testo" (584-10), does what the title of her contribution announces. The edition is based on mss of the "antica vulgata", and some relations fit into Trovato's stemma found at the end of the volume. It is important to remember that the *Capitolo* was composed in 1322, several months after Dante's death, and very likely it accompanied a copy of the *Comedy* donated to Guido Novello da Polenta, Capitano del Popolo in Bologna in that year; thus the copy of 1322, now lost, must have been one of the earliest if not the first copy of the poem.

Paolo Trovato, "Intorno agli stemmi della *Commedia* (1924-2001)" (611-49), begins drawing the conclusions of this volume by starting to review the stemmas of Casella (1924), Petrocchi (1966-1967) and Sanguineti (2001); then he proposes some modifications of Sanguineti's in preparation of his own given in the last chapter of this volume. Needless to say, it is a major undertaking since it contains the basic motivation for entire book: understanding what is still valid and what is not in the work done in the past, means mastering the problem,

seeing possibilities and pitfalls, and getting, above all, a clear idea of what remains to be done and drawing the sufficient strength to face the immense task of editing the *Comedy*, and the sense of direction to guide the team of co-workers. Casella's stemma located an archetype from which stem branch □ comprising the oldest Tuscan manuscripts, and branch □ containing mostly the Florentine manuscripts (the Vat. and the Cento); however the independence of the two branches was not firmly proven and this allowed Petrocchi to blur their relationship and move part of the □ manuscripts or an entire subfamily into the □ branch.

Petrocchi's stemma has its merits but also its vital flaws. Trovato shows the weakness of some of its key points: one being the relation of La (the "Landiano" in Piacenza Biblioteca Comunale Passerini Landi. n. 190) with U (the Urbinate in the Vatican. Urbinate lat. 366, a manuscript of fundamental importance); another is the importance given to Co considering it an ancestor when in fact it is not; still another is the ease with which Petrocchi classifies as "monogenetic" mistakes that are in fact "polygenetic"; an even more basic weakness is the failure to locate an archetype and replacing it with two sorts of archetypes from which the "vulgata" would derive; and even the notion of "vulgata" itself raises a question on which Trovato will return.

Sanguineti's stemma is the immediate 'ancestor' of Trovato's, therefore a number of suggestions are made towards its improvement, and several considerations of a theoretical nature prepare the next step. Sanguineti's tree is much simpler than Petrocchi's and also much clearer, thanks to the trimming away of the mss considered void of weight in building the stemma; also thanks to the elimination of ancestors like Co, and to the grouping larger families under new ancestor. His collation uses Barbi's "loci critici" as a base. Sanguineti's stemma is bipartite and this prompts Trovato to digress on the phenomenon of the two-branched stemmas which caused Joseph Bédier to raise serious objections to Lachmann's method maintaining that bipartition was found by editors in order to fulfill their desire of choosing between variant readings. Over half a century ago Castellani found that bipartition was the result of a "maximum production" system pursued by scribes, and this thesis has found wide acceptance. Trovato puts forth a different explanation that has its key in a "decimation system" which obliterates weak families making it easier for the surviving ones to group in fewer branches, often as few as two. Trovato bases his theory on probabilistic calculations made on printed books. And before going back to Sanguineti's stemma, Trovato deals with the problem of contamination or conflation, reminding us that it is not the disease without remedy as it is generally assumed, in fact it can be brought under control by few crucial medicines: one is the historical knowledge of the textual tradition; second is the understanding that the mss of the lower level of the stemma are not to be seen as mechanical descendents from the archetype; third is the keeping in mind Giorgio Pasquali's law that *recentiores non sunt deteriores*, and that

manuscripts copied in areas remote from the “center of production” often preserve readings closer to the original; and finally, the economic principle of limiting as much as possible the places of contamination (for example: not seeing common readings always as the “necessary” result of direct filiation but as a polygenetic outcome. This second digression is done keeping in mind some flaws of Petrocchi’s edition who did not pay attention to the fact that the oldest Florentine manuscripts present signs of contamination in a higher degree than the manuscripts copied in the second half of the Trecento, that is beyond the limits of the “vulgata”, and in a “peripheral” area, that is North of Tuscany where a lower production does not mean less pure quality. Vincenzo Guidi calculates that in the period of 1330 and 1350 (the years of the “vulgata”) Florence must have produced about 400 copies in its eight known *scriptoria*, while the Northern *scriptoria* must have produced less than half of that number.

Sanguineti’s stemmas of 1996 and 2001 give the possibility of reconstructing the archetype by dividing the tradition into two branches, one (□) represented by U (Urbinate) and the other (□) containing the Madrieno (Mad) and R (Riccardiano) already seen and both belonging to the Northern tradition. Trovato raises a minor objection to Sanguineti (such as the importance given to a LauSC, known as “codice di Filippo Villani” or “codice di Santa Croce”), while accepting his removing Mad and R from □ (actually supporting it with new argument of the two forming a family — in Trovato’s stemma it will be x1 — set apart from the rest of the families which form the majority of the Florentine manuscripts (especially the “Cento” and the “Vatican”). So in the midst of the testimonies of the “antica vulgata”, is possible to identify two different “rivoli” of Northern provenience. The result is a stemma that we could call Sanguineti-Trovato because Trovato modifies the one proposed by Sanguineti. Trovato goes further to make the stemma clearer: from the archetype he sees to be deriving □ (represented only by U) and □, from which depend x1 (Mad +R) and x2 or □ (ancestor of all the remaining families). It seems that □+xi allow the reconstruction of the archetype, namely an archetype of Northern provenience. It is a proposal of major consequences, one that confirms an intuition by Mussafia and some of Casella’s points, and explains why the oldest Florentine manuscripts maintain Northern traits, which the Florentine *scriptoria* tried to minimize or completely erase in order to return the poem to its original language. Trovato, looking into the tradition outside of the “antica vulgata, adds a extra proof of this process: it is a manuscript Ph today preserved in Austin, at the University of Texas, and once belonging to the Phillipps Library at Cheltenham, copied in 1363. Petrocchi saw it in London in 1967 just hours before being auctioned by Sotheby, and did not appreciate its importance. Trovato, on the contrary, sees in it (in the forms readable under the correction of a second hand) characteristics that make it a direct descendent of □, thus conferring to it a high stemmatic value. But this is still a stemma that modifies

Sanguineti's and not yet the more elaborate stemma that Trovato will present in closing the volume where Ph will undergo a new evaluation.

The penultimate contribution is by Federico Sanguineti, "Sui manoscritti Estense it. 474, Florio, Urbinati lat. 365 E 366" (651-667), who groups the manuscripts indicated in the title as a subfamily of \square thus broadening this family previously represented solely by U. Sanguineti suggests that the edition of the poem should be based on U (a "good manuscript"), cleaning it from its obvious mistakes and the "antiflorentine" forms due to the copyist.

Paolo Trovato closes the volume with "Fuori dell'antica vulgata. Nuove prospettive sulla tradizione della *Commedia*" (669-715). As the title suggests, his collation adds 21 manuscripts to the 27 considered by Petrocchi, and they were all copied North of the Apennines, except one which is Tuscan. Moreover Trovato considers some 200 "loci critici" including 60 of those selected by Barbi, because this new selection allows a better understanding and utilization of the Northern tradition. The resulting stemma, although still provisional, is justified by detailed lists of different readings, of mistakes and other variations as this kind of research requires in order to establish families, ancestors, groups and subgroups whose relations will all be represented in a stemma. It is not possible to give an account of them here; suffice it to say that Trovato's mastery is impeccable, always "economical" or essential in selecting the data, never hiding a doubt when there is a reason for it (often just the need of further research, but also the objective difficulty of problems can be solved only in a hypothetical or probabilistic way), always aware of the limitations imposed by time and by the loss of capital data, and yet confident of being moving in the right direction. His stemma — and this time is entirely a "Trovato stemma" — is a first step in this new direction, a big step indeed. It has an archetype — though some data point to the existence of an extrastemmatic source possibly the closest one to the original copy — and two branches, one \square , descending fairly directly from the archetype and with very few ramifications and few signs of contamination, and the other \square which is much richer in branches, eight in all, some of which group Northern manuscripts (for example the family x1, already seen, in a peripheral position), others formed by Tuscan manuscripts; and some families of this second branch are highly contaminated. A bit of a surprise is to see that Ph, so highly recommended in the previous essay, is not included in this new stemma, but as we learn at pp. 692-93, new inspection of it, in the light of a better knowledge of the Northern tradition, has shown it to be quite contaminated; moreover, Sanfilippo's study of Ravenna dialect excludes the possibility that this manuscript comes from the Ravenna area, as Contini and Campana had ascertained. This inconsistency gives us a clue to the *in fieri* nature of the book, to its working: probably Trovato wrote about this manuscript before Sanfilippo wrote her essay, and certainly before he himself knew all that much on Northern tradition. It is interesting that Ph appears in a more complete stemma that Trovato has published in *Studi in onore di Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo*

per i suoi settant'anni (Florence, Il Galluzzo, 2007, vol. I, p. 265): it is a sign of a work in real progress. Trovato's stemma allows the reconstruction of the archetype, which, however, has a strong Northern linguistic varnish: thus it cannot be the faithful to Dante's original which was certainly Tuscan. Indeed, what was the linguistic coating of the archetype if in the Trivulziano, one of the oldest Tuscan ms, we find forms like *preghirà* and *orolosio* which belong to a dialectal area North of the Apennines? Was the Trivulziano copying its text from a Northern manuscript? It seems the only possible answer. This finding opens the great editorial problem of reinstating the language of the original. The archetype can be located in the Emilia-Romagna area between Ferrara and Bologna. That archetype also presents a high number of Florentine forms of Dante's day belonging to the literary language, whereas the Tuscan tradition modernizes or trivializes them: for example, some of the best Northern mss preserve *ternaio* and *Capraia*, genuine Florentine forms of Dante's day, but in other Northern manuscripts they become *ternaro* and *Cavrara* which are typical Northern forms, and these latter forms are found even in early Florentine manuscripts. These findings bring Trovato to conclude that the earliest copies of the *Comedy* were made around the 1320s and one them fathered the □ branch, and another one heads the more productive □ branch. We have seen a copy as early as 1322, a date in which Jacopo Alighieri's *Capitolo* or *Divisione* was sent to Guido Novello di Polenta, Capitano del Popolo in Bologna. These early copies done by Northern scribes contain the dialectal traits we have mentioned; and around the 1330s Tuscan scribes claimed for their own dialect the poem of the great Tuscan. Thus there were not, as commonly believed, two archetypes, one Florentine or Tuscan and another Northern, nor it is true that the closest text to the original is represented by the oldest Tuscan mss of the "antica vulgata".

These pages give only an approximate idea of the richness of problems, solutions and data contained in this book; however I hope they convey a clear idea of its importance and usefulness. Dante students will learn a great deal about what lies behind the text they read and teach: few of them are aware of reading a text that may not show its original Tuscan coating, although its syntax and morphology are unmistakably Tuscan; and very few are aware of the maze of problems editors have to go through in order to get as close as possible to the original voice of Dante. This impressive volume provides an ample panorama on all this history. They also learn a great deal of the work of a philologist, of the rigor and caution and breadth of erudition it takes. In this respect the volume is a "manuale" or "guide" which can be easily consulted through the accurate indexes of "manuscritti e postillati" by Fabio Romanini and the "indice dei nomi" and the "Indice onomastico dei testi ravennati" by Giulia Pellecchia. But it is above all a strong promise of a new edition of the *Comedy* by Paolo Trovato. One can foresee that it will be an edition of epochal stature, considering the "ordito" or warp announced here. The actual weaving will be in the hands of a superbly qualified philologist, and very likely he will not keep us

waiting for a very long time: his lucid way of streamlining the immense textual tradition of Dante, will allow him to work more expeditiously than we may think. *Hoc est in votis.*

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