American Dante Bibliography for 2002

Steven Botterill

This bibliography is intended to included all publications on Dante (books, articles, translations, reviews) appearing in North America in 2002, as well as reviews from foreign sources of books published in the United States and Canada.

Translations


Books


Chiamenti’s monumental effort at last makes it possible for twenty-first-century readers to use, and profit from, a reliable text of the third version of Dante’s son’s commentary on his father’s poem. Exemplary in its scrupulous and exhaustive attention to the text and its impeccable observation of the norms of philology, this is an indispensable resource for readers interested in the fourteenth-century tradition of commentary on the Commedia.

A compendium of previously published articles and essays by major Dante critics. The collection is organized by theme and covers the entire range of Dante’s literary works. The texts, representing the American and British critical heritage and dating from post World War II to the present, appear in their original format. The editor provides a general introduction to the series as well as topical introductions and bibliographies for each set of articles.


Fortin takes a decidedly historiographical and politicized approach to Dante’s work, one which attempts to extract a specifically historical meaning from the texts while conceding that this is an inherently difficult enterprise because of Dante’s refusal to limit his own approach in this way. He extends his argument by considering Arabic and Hebrew texts of Dante’s era; because of the essentially humanistic outlook of Dante’s work, it is very dissimilar from these, but still linked to them by ties of a historical nature.


Fraser constructs her comparison of Dante and Joyce by introducing the image of a medieval diptych, with its two separate, but related, panels. Authors are obviously separated by features such as chronology, but their works can be brought into fruitful relationship through close examination. By subjecting Dante’s text to such examination, Fraser seeks to prove that Joyce’s narratives take on a new, changed meaning. Fraser goes on to inquire if it is Dante who influences Joyce, or if it is the reader who is changed after the experience of reading each author’s work. She concludes that, at the very least, familiarity with Joyce’s work may change the reader’s outlook on the Commedia.


Dante makes a perhaps rather unexpected appearance in this collection of mostly twentieth-century authors of “Christian myth,” but Hein makes a plausible case for his relevance in this context, especially since many of the writers appearing here (Lewis, Williams, Tolkien, for starters) acknowledged his importance to their own work. By and large he avoids the obvious dangers of anachronism as he conducts an analysis that will perhaps appeal above all to declaredly Christian students of literature, but whose usefulness and implications – like Dante’s own work – in the end reach far beyond any narrowly confessional definition.


In the part of this collection of reprinted writings that deals with Dante, Parks, a distinguished British novelist and commentator on Italian society, literature, and culture, analyzes the allegorical significance present in Inferno, and poses the question – familiar to perhaps more readers of the Comedy than Dante scholars would care to admit – of how anything in Purgatory
and Paradise can possibly compete with what Dante presents to his readers while conveying them through Hell. Particularly interesting is Parks’ description of the poem as a means both of making Dante famous, and of allowing him to renew the relationship with Beatrice that was interrupted by her untimely death.


Schildgen presents the argument that Dante created the *Comedy* as a work about Europe, not simply because of inherent “Eurocentrism,” but because of the political and ecclesiastical turmoil in Italy. The “matter of the East” is transformed into a localized Crusade to save Florence, Italy, Europe, and the Christian church. She discusses the state of geographical knowledge in the thirteenth century; how Crusade literature may be compared to Dante’s “crusader epic;” how Dante uses the Crusader narrative in order to save Europe; Dante’s introduction of the Indus and how it is able to represent the areas outside his “Orosian geopolitical world”; and finally, how Dante makes all physical and geographical realities a metaphorical instance through his representation of a miraculous vision, because its ontological status surpasses that of all the travels recounted by medieval authors.

**Articles**


Rejecting the explanations offered by earlier commentators, Albrecht proposes that the “cenno” in this line is the sign of the cross, but that the real significance of the episode lies in what does not precede that sign, namely the verbal response “and eternal life” invited by Statius’ salutation (as the familiar formulation in the Liturgy of the Hours would suggest). Virgil is debarred by his damnation from invoking in speech an eternal life of salvation in which he does not share, but he is still capable of making an appropriate, indeed exemplary, physical gesture of response.


Argues that the fluctuating status of Rustico’s reputation after it reached a peak in the 1280s and 1290s makes it relatively less likely that a much later author (such as Stefano
Finiguerrri, “il Za”) wrote the *tenzone* ascribed to Dante and Forese Donati than that Dante and Forese themselves did.


Noting the use on several occasions in the *Comedy* of imagery derived from manuscript production, Allaire examines the extent to which visual images in *Paradiso* may be owed to, or at least connected with, watermark designs available in Dante’s time.


**Ascoli, Albert Russell.** “Dante after Dante.” In *Dante for the New Millennium (q.v.)*, 349-68. Warns of the perils of reading Dante’s works theoretically rather than historically, arguing that a simply theoretical reading of the *Commedia* will distort an understanding of the text’s narrative.

**Ascoli, Albert Russell.** “‘Neminem ante nos’: Historicity and Authority in the *De vulgari eloquentia*.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 1: 46-91. Reprinted from *Annali d’Italianistica*, 8 (1990), 186-211.


Points out that “medieval psychology assigned the perception of time not to the intellect but to a precise faculty of the sensitive soul,” and uses this fact, unremarked by previous commentators on his chosen passage, as the starting-point for a more accurate interpretation. This interpretation also justifies the reading “questa” for “quella” in line, found in Urb. Lat. 366 in the Vatican Library but not adopted even by Federico Sanguineti in his edition based on that manuscript.


Noting an apparent lack of connection, remarked by various commentators, between the fourth Beatitude (“blessed are they that weep”), sung as Dante leaves the fourth cornice of Mount Purgatory (Purg. 19.49-51), and the vice of accidia that is purged there, Fosca uses Aquinas and Augustine to argue that the beatitude is associated with the gift of knowledge, and that ignorance is seen as a form of accidia. Fosca concludes that “l’incompatibilità fra dono della scienza e vizio dell’accidia pare costituire la base dottrinale del segmento narrativo in cui il canto della terza beatitudine si accompagna all’eliminazione della quarta ‘P’.”


Kallendorf, Craig, and Hilaire Kallendorf. “‘Per te poeta fui, per te cristiano’ (Purg. 22.73): Statius as Christian, from ‘Fact’ to Fiction.” Deutsches Dante-Jahrbuch 77 (2002), 61-72.


It has not hitherto been thought worthwhile to invoke the “canon of human proportions” derived from Vitruvius’ De architectura in connection with the giants in Inferno 31, because no
complete copy of the work (as opposed to the summary in Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum maius*) was known to have been available in Dante’s Italy. Now, however, several such copies have been identified, and their attested presence in Dante’s cultural situation licenses the reading of the giants episode that Kay goes on to conduct.


**Kleinhenz, Christopher.** “The Poetics of Citation: Dante’s *Divina Commedia* and the Bible.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 4: 301-321.


**Leo, Ulrich.** “The Unfinished *Convivio* and Dante’s Rereading of the Aeneid.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 2: 189-212. Reprinted from *Medieval Studies*, 13 (1951), 44-64.


Argues that Ciacco’s significant use of the second-person singular possessive pronoun (rather than the first-person plural, given that both he and Dante-personaggio are Florentines) reflects “un tirarsi indietro polemico” on the character’s part, connecting him with subsequent condemnations of Florence by Farinata, Brunetto Latini, and the Florentines of *Inferno* 16. Manescalchi concludes, speaking of Ciacco, that “[l]o spessore del personaggio forse è superiore a quanto creduto sinora.”

Cites Augustine’s discussion of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (De doctrina christiana 2. 7-9) as a previously unnoticed source that further illuminates the symbolic meaning of the seven candelabra in the procession depicted in Purg. 29.


Argues that “in the context of other passages of the Purgatorio regarding the importance of caring for the dead and mourning for loved ones, the pilgrim’s memory of grieving for Forese testifies to the poet-pilgrim’s own participation in offices of piety for the dead as they were practiced in late medieval Florence.”


Edits and introduces marginal and interlinear glosses from two Commedia manuscripts now in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence, one dated 1418 (Pluteo 40. 24) and one datable to the last quarter of the fourteenth century (Pluteo 90 superiore 130).


**Thompson, David.** “Figure and Allegory in the *Commedia.*” In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 4: 165-175. Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 90 (1972), 1-11.


Disputing recent assertions that the Cacciaguida episode offers an “alternative” to crusading rhetoric, attempts to connect instances of such rhetoric with textual details of *Paradiso* in order to provide a more substantial context within which to read the episode.


**Reviews**


