

ISCAD ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: AUTHORSHIP

S. Gaspari
(University of Toronto, Italian Studies)

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Main References to Authorship in Dante's Works

- *De vulgari eloquentia* II.viii.4:

Circa hoc considerandum est quod cantio dupliciter accipi potest. Uno modo, secundum quod fabricatur ab autore suo; et sic est actio; et secundum istum modum Virgilius, primo Eneidorum, dicit Arma virumque cano. Alio modo, secundum quod fabricata profertur, vel ab auctore, vel ab alio quicumque sit, sive cum soni modulatione proferatur, sive non; et sic est passio. Nam tunc agitur: modo vero agere videtur in alium; et sic, tunc alicuius actio, modo quoque passio alicuius videtur. Et quia prius agitur ipsa quam agat, magis -- immo prorsus -- denominari videtur ab eo quod agitur et est actio alicuius, quam ab eo quod agit in alios. Signum autem huius est quod nunquam dicimus, Hec est cantio Petri eo quod ipsam proferat, sed eo quod fabricaverit illam

[And on this point it must be taken into account that cantio has a double meaning: one usage refers to something created by an author, so that there is action - and this is the sense in which Virgil uses the word in the first book of the Aeneid, when he writes 'arma virumque canò' [I sing of arms and a man]; the other refers to the occasions on which this creation is performed, either by the author or by someone else, whoever it may be, with or without a musical accompaniment - and in this sense it is passive. For on such occasions the canzone itself acts upon someone or something, whereas in the former case it is acted upon; and so in one case it appears as an action carried out by someone, in the other as an action perceived by someone. And because it is acted upon before it acts in its turn, the argument seems plausible, indeed convincing, that it takes its name from the fact that it is acted upon, and is somebody's action, rather than from the fact that it acts upon others. The proof of this is the fact that we never say 'that's Peter's song' when referring to something Peter has performed, but only to something he has written (transl. by Steven Botterill)].

- *Convivio* IV.vi.3:

È dunque da sapere che "autoritade" non è altro che "atto d'autore". Questo vocabulo, cioè "autore", senza quella terza lettera C, può discendere da due principii: l'uno si è uno verbo molto lasciato dall'uso in gramatica, che significa tanto quanto "legare parole", cioè "auieo". E chi ben guarda lui, nella sua prima voce apertamente vedrà che elli stesso lo dimostra, ché solo di legame



di parole è fatto, cioè di sole cinque vocali, che sono anima e legame d'ogni parole, e composto d'esse per modo volubile, a figurare imagine di legame.

[It should be known, then, that "authority" is nothing but "the pronouncement of an author." This word, namely "auctor" without the third letter c, has two possible sources of derivation. One is a verb that has very much fallen out of use in Latin and which signifies more or less "to tie words together," that is, "auieo." Anyone who studies it carefully in its first form will observe that it displays its own meaning, for it is made up only of the ties of words, that is, of the five vowels alone, which are the soul and tie of every word, and is composed of them in a different order, so as to portray the image of a tie (transl. by Richard Lansing)].

- *Monarchia* I.v.3:

Asserit enim ibi venerabilis eius autoritas quod, quando aliqua plura ordinantur ad unum, oportet unum eorum regulare seu regere, alia vero regulari seu regi; quod quidem non solum gloriosum nomen autoris facit esse credendum, sed ratio inductiva.

[Now this revered authority states in that work that when a number of things are ordered to a single end, one of them must guide or direct, and the others be guided or directed; and it is not only the authors illustrious name which requires us to believe this, but inductive reasoning as well (transl. by Prue Shaw)].

- *Monarchia* II.i.7:

Veritas autem questionis patere potest non solum lumine rationis humane, sed etiam radio divine auctoritatis: que duo cum simul ad unum concurrunt, celum et terram simul assentire necesse est.

[The truth of the matter can be revealed not only by the light of human reason but also by the radiance of divine authority; when these two are in agreement, heaven and earth must of necessity both give their assent (transl. by Prue Shaw)].

- *Monarchia* III.iii.16:

Quod si traditiones Ecclesie post Ecclesiam sunt, ut declaratum est, necesse est ut non Ecclesie a traditionibus, sed ab Ecclesia traditionibus accedat auctoritas. Hiique solas traditiones habentes ab hoc -- ut dicebatur -- gignasio excludendi sunt: oportet enim, hanc veritatem venantes, ex hiis ex quibus Ecclesie manat auctoritas investigando procedere.

[Now if the traditions of the church come after the church, as has been shown, it must be the case that the church does not derive its authority from the traditions, but that the traditions derive their authority from the church. And so those who rely only on traditions must be excluded from the arena, as we said; for those who seek to grasp this truth must conduct their investigation by starting from those things from which the church's authority comes (transl. by Prue Shaw)].



Annotated Bibliography

1920s

Auerbach, Erich, *Dante, Poet of the Secular World* [1929] (New York: New York Review Books, 2007).

Auerbach's seminal work in Dante studies begins with a historical introduction tracing the roots of Provençal poetry and its arrival on the Italian peninsula, and setting up this literary movement as a precursor to Dante's own powerfully authoritative voice within the group of *stilnovisti* that formed in Italy in the latter half of the 13th century. In Chapter 2, he develops a comparison of Dante's early works with those of Guinizelli and Cavalcanti. Through a careful analysis of Dante's direct apostrophes to the reader (→ see Annotated Bibliography: Readership) we see how his singular *auctoritas* as poet of the *dolce stil nuovo* sets him apart from his friends, even at the beginning of his career. The subsequent chapters deal almost entirely with the *Commedia* and its subject, structure, and presentation, respectively.

1980s

Barolini, Teodolinda, *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the 'Commedia'* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

Barolini's work is divided into three sections in which she analyzes Dante's poetic journey from the early lyrics, through his vernacular forebears, and finally to his Classical models (Virgil and Statius for the most part). The discussion of authority is, for the most part, developed in the third section. Here Barolini points out that while Virgil (as master and author) is the only one of Dante's sources who can be even remotely compared to true *auctoritas* (God), he inevitably falls short. Only Dante with his *poema sacro* is able to, in his turn, overtake Virgil as the scribe who writes what Love dictates (which corresponds to the claim to divine poetic authority).

Picone, Michelangelo, "La *Vita nuova* fra autobiografia e tipologia," *Dante e le forme dell'allegoresi* Ed. Michelangelo Picone (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1987): 59-69.

Picone examines the history of critical approaches to the *Vita Nova*, both as evolution of the authorial "I" in medieval thought, and as laic *Bildungsroman* and autobiographical record of Dante's life. He views the work as characterized by the opposition or contrast of two temporal Dantes (*nunc* and *tunc*) resulting in an authorial "I" that is much further conceptually from the Italian love poets than it is from the *auctor* of the final voyage of Christianity, the *Commedia*.

Botterill, Steven, "'Quae Non Licet Homini Loqui': The Ineffability of Mystical Experience in *Paradiso* I and the *Epistle to Can Grande*," *Modern Language Review* LXXXIII.2 (1988): 332-41.

A concise and careful examination of the original passages from six *auctores* (three biblical and three extra-biblical) that the author of the *Epistle to Can Grande* appropriates in order to develop his exegesis of *Paradiso* I. Botterill shows that the *topos* of the ineffable nature of the vision of God, repeated over and over in the biblical sources (Paul, Ezekiel and Matthew) is, in fact, an impetus to speak of that experience. He shows that in these *auctores*, the speaking out of the experience often occurs after some time, and despite the ineffability of said experience, because



it is important and necessary for others to know of it. The other three *auctores* (Richard of St Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Augustine) follow a similar pattern in their discussion of ineffability and the need to speak out regardless. Botterill argues that the author of the *Epistle* refers to these writers in order to justify the attempt of going beyond the unspeakable-ness of the Pilgrim's experience in *Paradiso*, effectively authorizing Dante to narrate the *visio Dei* with the same authority as previous mystics and scholars.

Hollander, Robert, "Dante's *Commedia* and the Classical Tradition: The Case of Virgil," *The "Divine Comedy" and the Encyclopedia of Arts and Sciences: Acta of the International Dante Symposium November 13-16, 1983*. Ed. Giuseppe Di Scipio and Aldo Scaglione (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins Pub. Co., 1988): 15-26.

A brief look at the way in which Dante "de-authorizes" Virgil by close-reading several passages from the *Inferno*. Hollander points out that the epithets of *maestro* and *autore* applied to the pagan writer are both true and misleading within the progressive evolution of Dante-*personaggio* from follower to leader in the *Commedia*. According to Hollander, Dante's reading of Virgil's pagan oeuvre into a journey of a man (Aeneas) "compared to Paul's ascent to heaven, [and] regarded as being specifically sanctioned by God" is in reality an authoritative rewriting of Dante's most central Classical figure in the work.

Ascoli, Albert Russel, "The Vowels of Authority (Dante's *Convivio* IV.vi.3-4)," *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. Ed. Kevin Brownlee and Walter Stephens (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1989): 23-46. See Ascoli 2008.

1990s

Higgins, David H., "Biblical Authority and the Authority of the *Divina Commedia*," and "Charism and the Author of The *Divina Commedia*," *Dante and the Bible: An Introduction* (Bristol: University of Bristol Press, 1992): 18-29 and 30-37.

In chapter 2, with Bruno Nardi's *Dante e la cultura medievale* for a starting point, Higgins shows how the association of Dante with St. Paul allows Dante to take on a kind of prophetic authority himself. While not fully equal to the Apocryphal and Deuterocanonical writers, Higgins asks whether Dante can be seen as a slightly less-authoritative version of these *auctores*. He argues that Dante's own status as *auctor* is firmly rooted in the *Commedia*'s claim of authenticity as a prophecy or vision of the afterlife, a quality shared by Biblical texts. Continuing the discussion in chapter 3, Higgins applies C.S. Lewis' statement that one cannot approach the Bible as a mere literary text to the *Commedia*, arguing that the authority with which Dante speaks is rooted in religious inspiration. This chapter asks how precisely Dante understood inspiration in the biblical sense, and whether his poem was composed according to a similar pattern. Higgins concludes that Dante's concept of authority in the *Commedia* is as closely related to inspiration by a higher power – whether of the Holy Spirit or of Love – as theologians claim for the Bible itself, with himself as the instrument of a greater "Author".

Stillinger, Thomas C., *The Song of Troilus: Lyric Authority in the Medieval Book* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).

Stillinger analyzes the definition of what he calls "lyric authority" through Dante's *Vita Nova*, Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. In chapter 1 he scrutinizes the authority of these three medieval texts by applying St. Bonaventure's distinction of the four modes of writing – *scriptor*, *compiler*, *commentator*, and *auctor*. Chapters 2 and 3 (and parts of 4) are dedicated to Dante's construction of an authoritative voice within the *Vita Nova* by combining lyric and narrative temporalities, and a comparison with the *Filostrato*'s own formation



of authority. This analysis excludes any discussion of the evolution of that authority in the *Commedia*, and briefly considers the *Convivio*.

Ascoli, Albert Russel, “The Unfinished Author: Dante’s Rhetoric of Authority in *Convivio* and *De vulgari eloquentia*,” *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*. Ed. Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 45-66. See Ascoli 2008.

Kimmelman, Burt, “Alterity and History,” and “The Poet as Text, the Text as Name,” *The Poetics of Authorship in the Later Middle Ages: The Emergence of Modern Literary Persona* (New York: Lang, 1996).

The introductory chapter traces what Kimmelman calls the “poetics of authorship” through the later Middle Ages, by examining authors such as Guillem IX, Marcabru, Chaucer and Langland as well as Dante, who is the partial focus of chapters 1 and 3. Dante’s justifications for speaking of oneself laid out in the *Convivio* are a herald for the narrator created in the *Commedia*, which Kimmelman sees as a vital beginning for the trope of medieval authorship. He also stresses the act of naming (both himself and others) as an integral part of Dante’s strategy in establishing his authorial voice, an argument which he further elaborates in Chapter 3. Here, Kimmelman focuses on the *Commedia* and its textual dynamic of the doubled Dante – both character and poet, bearing his own name. This overt relationship to the historical Dante’s life and authorial voice is regarded as a pivotal moment in the medieval world. He also closely examines the varied poetic imagery that Dante uses within the *Commedia* to speak of the self, of knowledge and of epistemology, and the roots of these concepts in Augustine and Aquinas, underlining that the authority of these medieval authorities is passed down through Dante’s use of their arguments within his work.

Ascoli, Albert Russel, “Access to Authority: Dante in the *Epistle to Cangrande*,” *Seminario Dantesco Internazionale: Atti del primo convegno tenutosi al Chauncey Conference Center, Princeton, October 21-23 1994*. Ed. Zygmunt G. Barański (Florence: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1997): 310-52. See Ascoli 2008.

Botterill, Steven, “Dante and the Authority of Poetic Language,” *Dante: Contemporary Perspectives*. Ed. Amilcare A. Iannucci (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997): 167-80.

Botterill again takes up the question of Dante’s authority as one founded in the author’s literary appropriations along with religious beliefs. In this essay, he examines passages from the *Commedia* in detail, to refute the position of scholars who take the “ineffability-topos” and the limits of human language to mean that the *Commedia*’s inherent project is destined for inevitable failure. Botterill’s argument is that Dante’s own authorizing voice (which creates many neologisms within the poem and especially in *Paradiso*) gives hope and purpose to the work’s intended aim of describing that which cannot be described with mere language. “When the Christian poet speaks in the name of God, [...] the result is the creation of a truly sacred eloquence.” (179)

Hollander, Robert, “Canto II. Dante's Authority,” *Lectura Dantis: Inferno: A Canto-by-Canto Commentary*. Ed. Allen Mandelbaum, Charles Ross, and Anthony Oldcorn (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998): 25-35.

The first section of Hollander’s brief but crucial reading of *Inferno* II is dedicated to a parsing of the invocation in lines 7-9, and a discussion of whether *alto ingegno* and *mente* are two definitions for the same thing, or are separate entities invoked by the Poet (Hollander accepts this second conclusion). The rest of the essay analyzes the canto in order to determine that it is Dante to whom the *auctoritas* ultimately belongs, and not his *maestro* and *autore*, Virgil. By a close reading of this second canto Hollander argues that Dante’s aim is to establish his own poetic authority over Virgil.



Hollander, Robert, “Dante as Uzzah? (*Purg.* X 57, and *Ep.* XI 9-12),” *Sotto il segno di Dante. Scritti in onore di Francesco Mazzoni* (1998): 143-51.

Starting from the assumption that Dante set himself up as a new *scriba Dei*, Hollander analyzes *Purg.* X, 57 and *Epistle* XI, 9-12 in detail, asking whether Dante is a scribe of God in the form of a new David, or whether his self-authorization makes him another Uzzah, punished by God for presuming too much. The conclusion is that Dante, as usual, manages to (just barely) escape the role of heretical poet by, as Hollander puts it, “Dante’s complex art of illusion, which allows him a proper *mora* role as *scriba Dei*” (151), despite making the reader intensely aware of the fact that no human author has any business in speaking for a higher power at the same time as he justifies that arrogance.

Hawkins, Peter S., “The Scriptural Self,” *Dante’s Testaments: Essays in Scriptural Imagination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

In chapter 1, Hawkins examines the various Biblical personae that Dante assumes in the *Monarchia* and *Commedia*, from his strategic use of Daniel’s story to Isaiah, the *raptus* of St. Paul and the Psalms of David. His argument is that Dante’s authorial strategy is in fact the construction of a “scriptural self” that speaks with the authority of his Biblical predecessors, but in a new tongue and style. Hawkins also offers an overview of Dante’s spiritual formation in the *studia* of the Mendicant orders, Dominican and Franciscan, arguing that he came to have the Scriptural knowledge of a friar, and that his “lowly” voice becomes authorized in the *Commedia* by essentially preaching to his public in the name of God.

2000s

Levers, Toby, “The Image of Authorship in the Final Chapter of the *Vita Nuova*,” *Italian Studies* LVII (2002): 5-19.

Levers, closely following Stillinger’s view of the construction of authorship in the *Vita Nova*, sees Dante’s authorial persona as an appropriation of the authority given generally only to the Bible or authors of Classical status. Through a brief examination of Dante’s minor works, Levers shows how Dante’s narrative voice is in fact a combination of several voices that represent different aspects of authority – scribe, commentator, and glossator – and views these competing roles as the beginning of Dante’s “self-authorization.” He argues that in the final chapter of the *Vita Nova*, Dante becomes the figure of authority himself, revealed through the various roles he weaves together with prose and poetry: scribe, commentator, poetic subject, and, finally, “author of the entire text.” (19)

Canteins, Jean, “Les cinq voyelles d’“autorité”,” *Dante: II. L’homme engagé* (Milan: Arché, 2003): 123-145.

The first chapter of the second part of Jean Canteins’ second volume deals with the passage in *Convivio* IV.vi.3-4 in which Dante gives a not entirely clear explication of the relevance of the vowels in the word *autore*, tracing the etymology of the term to two possible etymologies. Canteins gives his own French translation of the passage in order to pinpoint the difficulties within the original text, breaking each “problematic” term (beginning with *autoritade*) into separate sections for a minute analysis. He shows how Dante is at pains to have the Italian *autore* derive from both *autoritade* and *auieo* in order to conclude that “the author is the master of language” (142).

Picone, Michelangelo, “La teoria dell’*Auctoritas* nella *Vita nova*,” *Tenzone. Revista de la Asociación Complutense de Dantología* VI (2005): 173-91.

Picone’s essay details the passage from *autore-poeta* in the VN to the *autore-filosofo* presented in the *Convivio*. By a close reading of relevant passages in each work, Picone demonstrates how the gradual movement up the



hierarchical scale of *auctoritas* leads to the *Commedia*'s "poeta-vate," the final *auctor*, who has received divine illumination in order to speak his experience in the afterlife.

Pacioni, Marco, "L'*auctoritas* poetica e il personaggio Cavalcanti nella *Vita Nova*," *Auctor/Actor: Lo scrittore personaggio nella letteratura italiana*. Ed. Gilda Corabi and Barbara Gizzi (Rome: Bulzoni, 2006): 41-61.

Detailed analysis of the Dante-*personaggio* in the *Vita Nova* and his literary friendship (*amicizia*) with Guido Cavalcanti. Pacioni traces the connection between that friendship and poetic authority in the work, showing how Dante both associates himself with the *rimatori* of his time, and distances himself from them. The chapter deals mainly with the *Vita Nova*, but it also briefly traces the transformation of that friendship with Guido into the deeper and more spiritual friendship with Beatrice in the *Commedia* and its correspondence to divine authority, as Beatrice represents Love – a direct emanation from God, the greatest *auctoritas*.

Regn, Gerhard, "Double Authorship: Prophetic and Poetic Inspiration in Dante's *Paradise*," *MLN* 122.1 (January, 2007): 167–85.

Regn's essay begins with the view expressed by Andrea Kahlitz that Dante's *Commedia* is nothing short of a Third Testament, a completion of a history of salvation by an author-prophet. In addition to this view, Regn believes that Dante's self-authorization goes further; as he puts it, "in addition to the prophet, there is still a secular author, whose poetics is just as worldly as it stresses the artistic character of the poetic work." (168) He concludes, through a detailed examination of various passages in the *Paradiso*, that Dante's authorship is a doubled one – he is at once the *poeta theologus* inspired by the Holy Spirit, and also the secular poet whose poetics are a matter of secular aesthetics as much as anything else.

Ascoli, Albert Russel, *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Ascoli's important work of reference combines several of his earlier articles, turning each into one of several chapters on different aspects of Dantean authority. The introductory section also includes issues of authorship in literary criticism, as well as the history and etymology of the words relating to authority (*auctor*, *auctoritas*). Subsequent sections examine vernacular authorship in the DVE, Dante's auto-commentary in the *Vita Nova* and the *Convivio*, as well as the notion of *auctoritas* in *Monarchia* and the temporal and spiritual conflict therein. The final section deals with the author of the *Commedia* and gets to the heart of Ascoli's reading of Dante's authorship – the creation of a modern author that we, as readers, can associate with more closely than with the "ancient" *auctor* represented by Virgil, among others.

Grønlie, Espen, "The Domestication of Vernacular Poetry: Measuring Authority in *De vulgari eloquentia*," *Dante: A Critical Reappraisal*. Ed. Unn Falkeid (Oslo: Unipub - Oslo Academic Press, 2008): 145-75.

Grønlie follows Ascoli's interpretation of authorship associated to the Italian *autore* and his stress on individuality. However, he supplements Ascoli's position by focusing on the structured approach of Scholasticism that characterizes the fundamental notion of authority in the *De vulgari eloquentia* (specifically the last four chapters of Book I). He argues that the work's agenda was "not only to situate the poets of Dante's generation in an authoritative position, but to do so in a way heavily influenced by philosophical conceptualization," (147) and examines the last four chapters of Book I in detail, breaking down specific paragraphs and terms in order to show that Dante wants to establish an older, more scholastic approach to authority than has been supposed by modern scholars.



2010s

Aleksander, Jason, “The Aporetic Ground of Revelation’s Authority in the *Divine Comedy* and Dante’s Demarcation and Defense of Philosophical Authority,” *Essays in Medieval Studies* 26 (2010): 1-14.

Aleksander examines in detail several passages from the *Commedia*, *Monarchia* and *Convivio* in order to demonstrate Dante’s view of the relationship between authority in the ecclesiastical and revelatory sense, and philosophical authority. His aim is to explore how Dante understood the conflictual relationship between these two forms of authority, one stemming from the spiritual half of his worldview, the other from the temporal. Aleksander argues that Dante “de-authorizes” himself in the *Commedia* by favouring ethics over metaphysics, leading him to conclude that the spiritual salvation that is the aim of the *poema sacro* is, in fact, indebted to the separation of spiritual and temporal power on earth.

Gragnotati, Manuele, “Authorship and Performance in Dante’s *Vita nova*,” *Aspects of the performative in Medieval Culture*. Ed. Manuele Gragnolati and Almut Suerbaum (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010):125-41.

Gragnotati’s essay discusses the innovative approach to authorship in the *Vita nova* and the way that it departs from notions of performance in the early medieval function of Occitan poetry. He proposes a new kind of *auctoritas* for Dante’s work, one in which “performativity” is the key to the function of the authorial voice. Drawing on Picone and Barolini’s works, Gragnolati shows that the Dante of the *Vita nova* is a multi-faceted *auctor* – one who performs an ideal spiritual journey, but also one who performs an equally relevant poetic one. He stresses the point that the “birth of this [new] author is performative and not constative [...] the author emerging from the *Vita nova* does not pre-exist his text but is performed by it.” (141)

Federici, Theresa, “Dante’s Davidic Journey: From Sinner to God’s Scribe,” *Dante’s Comedia: Theology as Poetry*. Ed. Vittorio Montemaggi and Matthew Treherne (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2010): 180-209.

The majority of Federici’s essay deals with the biblical allusions to the Psalms in the *Paradiso*, and to a close reading of those passages in which they are reproduced. The latter sections of the essay, however, explicitly detail the way in which Dante’s own presentation of David as *auctor* only of the poetic *form* of the Psalms (their content being divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit) is fundamental to understanding his role as *scriba Dei*. Aligning herself with Hawkins’ view, Federici shows that Dante is putting himself forward as the “new” David, an authorial role that is just as divinely inspired as the Psalmist, but in which the poetic talent itself is, “on a strictly human level, in a sense superior to that of biblical authors.” (201)

Greenaway, James, *The Differentiation of Authority: The Medieval Turn toward Existence* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2012): 154-66.

Greenaway’s book offers insight into the emergence of individual existential authority in the late medieval period. His work is focused on the discussion of political authority within the works of various authors ranging from John of Salisbury to Marsilius of Padua, and the book draws heavily on the work of E. Voegelin. Dante is casually mentioned throughout, with the exception of Chapter 5, in which his notions of political authority in the *Monarchia* and *Paradiso* are discussed in detail. Greenaway also echoes Voegelin in his conclusion that Dante’s political theory “balloons into a massive civilizational construction project of the Christian world by God himself,” (164) quite literally an authoritative *deus ex machina*.

Brilli, Elisa, “The Interplay between Political and Prophetic Discourse: A Reflection on Dante’s Authorship in *Epistles V-VII*,” *Images and Words in Exile: Avignon and Italy during the First*



Half of the 14th Century. Ed. Elisa Brilli, Laura Fenelli and Gerhard Wolf (Florence: SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2015): 153-69.

Brilli's essay examines Dante's political letters and their departure from the *ars dictaminis*, by strict comparisons with similar political letters written by other artists of his time (Francesco da Barberino, for one). Brilli demonstrates how Dante's authorial stance in the epistles lies "at the crossroads between the *ars dictandi* tradition and that of prophetic discourse," (167) going against the grain of epistolary conventions because of his need to speak out for himself and, as "exul inmeritus," without an official authorization.

Combs-Schilling, Jonathan, "Tityrus in Limbo: Figures of the Author in Dante's *Eclogues*," *Dante Studies* 133 (January 2015): 1-26.

Combs-Schilling examines Dante's *Eclogues* – often overlooked in the poet's repertoire – by focusing on the way in which, as he puts it, "the proem of Dante's second eclogue represents the threshold between the poet of the *Commedia* and the poet after the *Commedia*." (7) By a close reading of the second eclogue, Combs-Schilling demonstrates how the poet and author of the *sacro poema* is appropriated in this later work in the same way that Classical and early Italian lyric authors were appropriated in the *Commedia*. However, the Dante-*personaggio* (now named Tityrus, and advanced in age) is in dialogue with this *auctor* of a past work, allowing the Dante of the eclogues to effectively debate with himself over the notion of authority.

Mainini, Lorenzo, "Il fondamento giuridico dell'*auctor* romanzo: Per leggere l'incipit e la metafora del Convivio," *Dante Studies* 133 (January 2015): 98-121.

As he states in his introduction, Mainini is concerned with the progression in phases of Dantean *auctoritas*, with special focus placed on the shift from *Vita nova* to *Convivio*. The "second" idea of authority that emerges in the latter work, as Mainini argues, is informed by not only poetic but also juridical-political themes and images. The foundation of this *auctoritas* is examined by means of a historiographical analysis of Dante's works, followed by a theological and juridical overview of the scholastic and medieval disciplines he draws upon and, in a sense, decontextualizes. Mainini concludes that this search for a new authority in the vernacular is only intelligible if we combine the scholastic, philosophical and juridical foundations that lie at the heart of Dante's own ideals.

Todorovic, Jelena, *Dante and the Dynamics of Textual Exchange: Authorship, Manuscript, Culture, and the Making of the Vita Nova* (New York: Fordham, 2016).

Todorovic's book delves into Dante's formation as a reader and writer by examining his own cultural background and the varied influences (from Provençal lyric to Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*) that helped to form his authorial stance. Chapter 2 especially examines both the poetic *auctores* and the tradition of the *accessus ad auctores* used to introduce Scriptural texts in the classroom as fundamental parts of the authorial Dante that emerges in the *Vita Nova*.

Ascoli, Albert Russell, "Performing Salvation in Dante's *Commedia*," *Dante Studies* 135 (2017): 74-106.

Ascoli takes up the question of authorship in Dante in this work that focuses on cantos 2 and 24 of the *Purgatorio*. He views these cantos as central to an understanding of the way Dante's self-constructed *auctoritas* rests on a "'performative' becoming in which poet-'singer' enacts and embodies the substance of his composition." (74) His reading of this canto also demonstrates how Dante's new definition of poetic authorship in the *Commedia* effectively repudiates the definition previously given in *De vulgari eloquentia* II.8.



STUDIES ON DANTE'S CONTEXT

Spitzer, Leo, "Note on the Poetic and Empirical "I" in Medieval Authors," *Traditio* 4 (1946): 414-22.

Although not strictly concerning authorship, Spitzer's fundamental essay on the poetic and empirical "I" of the *auctor* in the medieval period is still of relevance to Dante studies, and authorial considerations in Dante generally. Spitzer discusses the composite "I" of the Pilgrim and Poet in the *Commedia* and underlines the individual experience of the journey as fundamental to Dante's innovative approach as an author (compared to, for example, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, where the poet is happy to merely retell the Muses' tale).

Minnis, Alaistar J. *Medieval Theory of Authorship* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

A. J. Minnis' indispensable work has as its primary objective the demonstration of just how important Scholasticism was for the development of literary values in the late medieval period. The *auctoritas* of the biblical text, through the status of the human author in biblical commentaries, moved "from the divine realm to the human." (vii)

Autor und Autorschaft im Mittelalter. Ed. E. Andersen et alii (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998).

Selection of twenty-two contributions that provide a general overview of the concept of authority and the role of the author in western medieval culture. There is no introduction to the volume, or to the problem of authority in modern debates by the editors. Themes considered include: a literary perspective on the relationship between word and image, the *accessus ad auctores* and its importance as a starting point for discussions on authority, anonymity *VS* naming of the author, and the relationship between authorship and the singer's role. The volume concentrates on German authors (such as Hartmann) and anonymous epics of the medieval period, with a few references to French and Italian writers (Isidore of Seville, Dante, Petrarch), and the majority of the papers take the medieval love-song as the main topic of inquiry.

Auctor et auctoritas: Invention et conformisme dans l'écriture médiévale. Ed. Michel Zimmerman (Paris: École des Chartes, 2001).

This collection of contributions is divided into seven thematic sections that include: on the correct use of authorities, *auctoritates* through citation and appropriation in medieval literature, and the emergence of the authorial signature in the XII and XIII centuries. The volume generally treats biblical and patristic texts, with certain papers focusing on medieval French authors; its relevance to Dante studies lies in its examination of the conception and formation of notions of *auctoritas* in the works of authors that Dante himself appropriates (among them St. Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas).

Autorschaft und Autorität in den romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters. Ed. Susanne Friede and Michael Schwarze (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015): 74-95.

Contains a short essay by Nelting, David, "'...per sonare un poco in questi versi': Dichterische Autorität und Selbstautorisierung bei Dante ("Inf." IV - "Par." XXXIII)," on poetic authority and self-authorization in *Paradiso* XIII.



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