Document généré le 28 avr. 2024 14:17

RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne
Canadian Art Review

RACAR
Revue d'art canadienne | Canadian Art Review

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Anne Dunlop

Volume 20, numéro 1-2, 1993

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1072757ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/1072757ar

Aller au sommaire du numéro

Éditeur(s)

UAAC-AAUC (University Art Association of Canada | Association d'art des universités du Canada)

ISSN

0315-9906 (imprimé)
1918-4778 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer cet article

Dunlop, A. (1993). "El Vostro Poeta:" The First Florentine Printing of Dante's *Commedia*. *RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, *20*(1-2), 29–42. https://doi.org/10.7202/1072757ar

Résumé de l'article

Le 30 août 1481, Cristoforo Landino présentait à la population de Florence une édition de la *Divine Comédie*, imprimée dans la ville natale du poète. Ce n'était pas le premier tirage de l'oeuvre; mais cette première édition florentine se distinguait nettement des exemplaires précédents. Pour la ville de Florence, l'ouvrage remplissait une triple fonction : il témoignait de la maîtrise, voire de la suprématie, des Florentins dans le domaine de l'impression, il marquait le rapatriement symbolique du poète et de son oeuvre et soulignait les mérites du vernaculaire toscan comme langue littéraire. Cependant cette "ré-inscription" de l'oeuvre se heurtait à la longue histoire visuelle, textuelle et orale du poème : le vernaculaire de la *Comédie* avait engendré un grand nombre de légendes et de mythes qui liaient l'oeuvre à un public de lecteurs et d'auditeurs ignorants et illettrés.

Pour faire de la *Divine Comédie* un poème savant et proprement florentin, les éditeurs avaient fait appel à toute une gamme de stratégies textuelles, visuelles et typographiques : les "*Commenti*" de Ficino et de Landino, un format *in-folio* propre aux livres savants, des caractères "humanistes" et dix-neuf illustrations dont la structure visuelle était connue de l'élite florentine. Raffinées structurellement et très détaillées, les images permettaient à chacun des lecteurs de reconstruire individuellement les épisodes du poème, d'une manière qui correspondait étroitement aux pratiques de lecture des humanistes et des élites toscans.

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"El Vostro Poeta:" The First Florentine Printing of Dante's *Commedia**

Anne Dunlop, University of East Anglia

Résumé

Le 30 août 1481, Cristoforo Landino présentait à la population de Florence une édition de la *Divine Comédie*, imprimée dans la ville natale du poète. Ce n'était pas le premier tirage de l'oeuvre; mais cette première édition florentine se distinguait nettement des exemplaires précédents. Pour la ville de Florence, l'ouvrage remplissait une triple fonction: il témoignait de la maîtrise, voire de la suprématie, des Florentins dans le domaine de l'impression, il marquait le rapatriement symbolique du poète et de son oeuvre et soulignait les mérites du vernaculaire toscan comme langue littéraire. Cependant cette "ré-inscription" de l'oeuvre se heurtait à la longue histoire visuelle, textuelle et orale du poème: le vernaculaire de la *Comédie* avait engendré un grand nombre de légendes et de mythes qui liaient l'oeuvre à un public de lecteurs et d'auditeurs ignorants et illettrés.

Pour faire de la *Divine Comédie* un poème savant et proprement florentin, les éditeurs avaient fait appel à toute une gamme de stratégies textuelles, visuelles et typographiques: les "*Commenti*" de Ficino et de Landino, un format *in-folio* propre aux livres savants, des caractères "humanistes" et dix-neuf illustrations dont la structure visuelle était connue de l'élite florentine. Raffinées structurellement et très détaillées, les images permettaient à chacun des lecteurs de reconstruire individuellement les épisodes du poème, d'une manière qui correspondait étroitement aux pratiques de lecture des humanistes et des élites toscans.

On August 30, 1481 the government and people of Florence were presented with the first Florentine printed edition of Dante's *Divine Comedy.*[1] Although this was probably the ninth printing of the *Commedia* in Italy, the first having appeared in Foligno in 1472, this first edition from the city that claimed Dante as an illustrious forefather distinguished itself from its predecessors in several ways. Unlike most earlier editions, the 1481 Dante included various texts as accompaniments to the poem's verses: an enthusiastic letter by Marsilio Ficino, a eulogy of the city, a life of Dante, and, notably, the "neo-Platonic" commentary by Cristoforo Landino written especially for the Florentine edition; printed as a folio, the complete bound volume consisted of 372 unnumbered pages. But perhaps the most significant innovation of all was the inclusion of nineteen illustrations to accompany the text (Figs. 1-6), engraved by Baccio Baldini based on images by Sandro Botticelli.

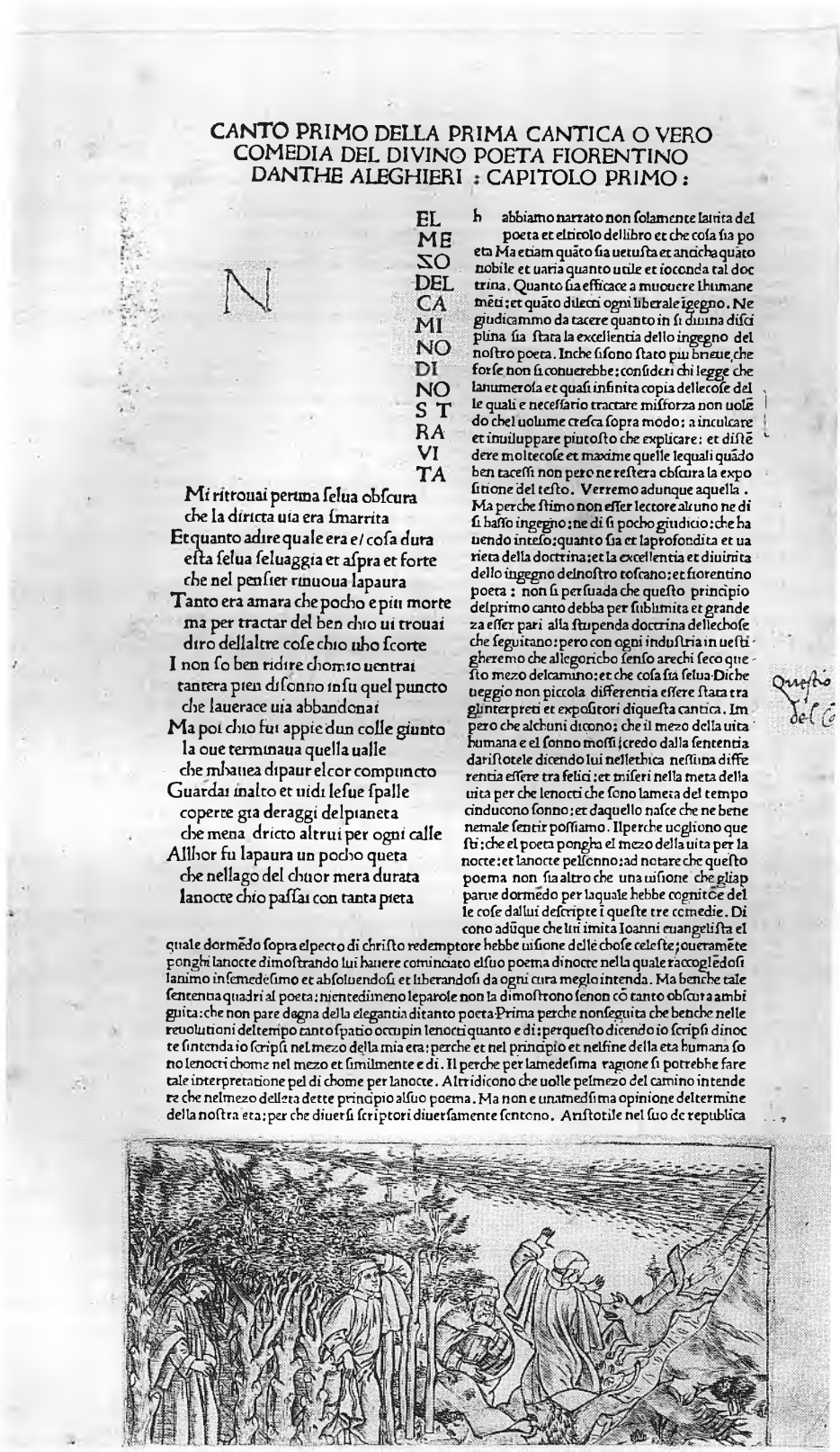
This was not the first illustrated book to be printed in Italy, or even in Florence, having been preceded in 1477 by *Il Monte Santo di Dio*, printed with three illustrations by the same Niccolo Tedesco or Niccolò della Magna who was responsible for the *Comedy*.[2] But the intended scope of the 1481 *Commedia*'s programme, one illustration of approximately 97 x 175 mm for each of the one hundred cantos of the poem, far surpassed the *Monte Santo*, or anything else attempted up to that date.

And if the form of the edition was exceptional, so too were the circumstances of its appearance, directly linked to the *élite* intellectual circles around Lorenzo de' Medici. The mastermind of the 1481 edition was Cristoforo Landino (1424-1498), a scholar who had been lecturing on Latin classics and on the *Commedia* itself in the Florentine Studio since 1458; he was also the Magnifico's teacher and a prominent member of his coterie.[3] Lorenzo's cousin, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, financed the edition.[4]

In August of 1481 Lorenzo de' Medici and his supporters were in the midst of consolidating their already strong hold on power; despite criticism and opposition, sweeping changes had been made to the government of the Commune in the spring of 1480, which extended Lorenzo's power to influence any political decision.[5] The War of the Eight Saints and its interdicts were behind him, and while the Medici bank held numerous bad debts, Lorenzo's reign as "First Citizen" of Florence was entering a period of relative strength and renewal.[6] It is interesting, at this key moment, that the appearance of the printed *Comedy* was explicitly constructed by Landino and his Medici associates as a civic undertaking: a public ceremony was staged for the people of Florence, in which Landino presented the Signoria with an edition with sumptuous hand illumination, printed on parchment and bound in a cover with studs and slabs of silver.[7] Under the vaults of San Giovanni, where Dante and most other notable citizens had been baptised, Landino made a speech to mark the important occasion of Dante's official repatriation, enjoining the Florentines to read Landino's "poor offering" and calling Dante "*el vostro poeta primo splendore del nome fiorentino.*"[8] Copies of Landino's oration were printed and circulated throughout the city the very next day, by the same Niccolò della Magna who had printed the *Commedia*.

But why should the printing of this work, almost a decade after its first appearance elsewhere, be marked by such elaborate pomp and circumstance? What did Landino and his associates think was at stake in this edition, and how was the printed *Comedy* that they produced shaped by their interests and concerns?

Figure 1. *Dante's Commedia with the Commento of Cristoforo Landino.* Florence, 1481. Niccolò della Magna, printer, Baccio Baldini, copper-plate engravings. British Museum print AV 2(1). Inferno, Canto I: Dante Lost in the Dark Wood. Outer dimensions of image 9.7 x 17.4 cm. (Photo: British Museum, London).


CANTO PRIMO DELLA PRIMA CANTICA O VERO COMEDIA DEL DIVINO POETA FIORENTINO DANTHE ALEGHIERI : CAPITOLO PRIMO :

NEL MEZO DEL CAMIN DI NOSTRA VITA

Mi ritrouai per una ſelua obſcura
che la diricta uia era ſmarrita
Et quanto adire quale era e/ coſa dura
eſta ſelua ſeluaggia et aſpra et forte
che nel penſier rinuoua lapaura
Tanto era amara che poco e piu morte
ma per tractar del ben chio ui trouai
diro dellaltre coſe chio uho ſcorte
I non ſo ben ridire chomio uentrai
tantera pien diſonno inſu quel puncto
che lauerace uia abbandonai
Ma poi chio fui appie dun colle giunto
la oue terminaua quella ualle
che mhauea dipaur elcor compuncto
Guardai inalto et uidi leſue ſpalle
coperte gia deraggi delpianeta
che mena dricto altrui per ogni calle
Allhor fu lapaura un poco queta
che nellago del chuor mera durata
lanocte chio paſſai con tanta pieta

h abbiamo narrato non ſolamente latrita del poeta et eltitolo dellibro et che coſa ſia poeta Ma etiam quãto ſia uetuſta et anticha quãto nobile et uaria quanto utile et iocunda tal doctrina. Quanto ſia efficace a muouere lhumane mẽti: et quãto dilecti ogni liberale igegno. Ne giudicammo da tacere quanto in ſi diuina diſciplina ſia ſtata la excellentia dello ingegno del noſtro poeta. Inche ſiſono ſtato piu breue, che forſe non ſi conuerebbe: conſideri chi legge che lanumeroſa et quaſi infinita copia dellecoſe delle quali e neceſſario tractare miſforza non uolẽdo chel uolume creſca ſopra modo: a inculcare et inuiluppare piutoſto che explicare: et diſtẽdere molte coſe et maxime quelle lequali quãdo ben taceſſi non pero ne reſtera obſcura la expoſitione del teſto. Verremo adunque aquella. Ma perche ſtimo non eſſer lectore alcuno ne di ſi baſſo ingegno: ne di ſi pocho giudicio: che hauendo inteſo: quanto ſia et laprofondita et uarieta della doctrina: et la excellentia et diuinita dello ingegno delnoſtro toſcano: et fiorentino poeta: non ſi perſuada che queſto principio delprimo canto debba per ſublimita et grandeza eſſer pari alla ſtupenda doctrina dellechoſe che ſeguitano: pero con ogni induſtria in ueſtigheremo che allegoricho ſenſo arechi ſeco queſto mezo delcamino: et che coſa ſia ſelua. Diche ueggio non piccola differentia eſſere ſtata tra glinterpreti et expoſitori diqueſta cantica. Impero che alchuni dicono: che il mezo della uita humana e el ſonno moſſi ſcredo dalla ſententia dariſtotele dicendo lui nellethica neſſuna differentia eſſere tra felici: et miſeri nella meta della uita per che lenocti che ſono lameta del tempo conducono ſonno: et daquello naſce che ne bene ne male ſentir poſſiamo. Ilperche uogliono queſti: che el poeta pongha el mezo della uita per la notte: et lanocte pelſonno: ad notare che queſto poema non ſia altro che una uiſione che gliapparue dormẽdo per laquale hebbe cognitõe delle coſe dallui deſcripte i queſte tre comedie. Dicono adũque che lui imita Ioanni euangeliſta el quale dormẽdo ſopra elpecto di chriſto redemptore hebbe uiſione delle choſe celeſte; oueramẽte ponghi lanocte dimoſtrando lui hauere cominciato elſuo poema dinocte nella quale raccoglẽdoſi lanimo inſemedeſimo et abſoluendoſi et liberandoſi da ogni cura meglo intenda. Ma benche tale ſententia quadri al poeta: nientedimeno leparole non la dimoſtrono ſenon cõ tanto obſcurita ambiguita: che non pare degna della elegantia ditanto poeta. Prima perche nonſeguita che benche nelle reuolutioni deltempo tanto ſpatio occupin lenocti quanto e di: perqueſto dicendo io ſcripſi dinocte ſintenda io ſcripſi nel mezo della mia eta: perche et nel principio et nelfine della eta humana ſono lenocti chome nel mezo et ſimilmente e di. Il perche per lamedeſima ragione ſi potrebbe fare tale interpretatione pel di chome per lanocte. Altridicono che uolle pelmezo del camino intendere che nelmezo delleta dette principio alſuo poema. Ma non e unamedſima opinione deltermine della noſtra eta: per che diuerſi ſcriptori diuerſamente ſentono. Ariſtotile nel ſuo de republica

To answer these questions, it is necessary to consider the 1481 edition as a visual and textual representation of the poet and the poem, created at a time when the printed form was still be codified. This article will therefore discuss some of the issues and debates about printing, literature and the vernacular which surrounded the appearance of Landino's *Comedy* ; it then moves to a detailed examination of the 1481 edition itself in light of these issues, using recent work on the history and development of printing as a tool for the analysis of the *Comedy*'s visual form.

Printing had come very late to Florence, and in 1481 was still practiced on a remarkably small scale. The technology reached Italy in 1464 and was quickly adopted throughout the peninsula, but the first printed book in Florence, issued in three parts, only appeared in 1471-72.[9] While Venice quickly established itself as the leading printing centre in Europe, in Florence with its long flourishing industry, the city notables seemed to take little interest in the new process and few presses were established. There are only nineteen publishers recorded in Florence in the fifteenth century, against one hundred and thirty-one in Venice, and total Florentine book production in the fifteenth century represents about a fifth of the Venetian output.[10] More specifically, while in Venice twelve firms are known for the period from 1471-74 alone, at the beginning of 1481 there were still only two printers in the entire city of Florence, Niccolò Tedesco and the Dominicans of the Convento di Ripoli. Perhaps because of increased interest in printing sparked by projects like Landino's *Commedia*, three other firms had emerged in the city by the end of 1481. None achieved any great degree of permanence however and even Tedesco, successful by Florentine standards, closed up shop just five years after the *Commedia* project.[11] Under such circumstances, the 1481 edition was a mammoth project for the Florentine printing industry, as well as an obvious attempt to stake out a technological claim for the city and to recapture lost ground. It was also an ideal patronage opportunity for the Medici, a family that had always known the importance of visibly supporting projects of civic interest: unable to secure the return of Dante's body to Florence, they could at least repatriate his most famous work.[12]

The most compelling reason for the choice, however, lay in the *Commedia*'s immense and enduring popularity. Its early prominence throughout Italy is partly indicated by the range of manuscripts which are known of it: it is second only to the Bible in the number of Trecento manuscripts that have come down to us.[13] There is a tradition that a copyist in Florence around 1350 single-handedly produced 100 manuscripts of the poem, allowing him to provide generous dowries for his numerous daughters. Still in the fifteenth century, so the story goes, the offspring of these women would refer to themselves as *dei Centi* i.e. "of the Hundred."[14] The market for manuscripts seems to have been fairly diverse, and not only limited to Tuscan speaking regions; there is a corresponding diversity in the manuscripts that have come down to us.[15] Ten years after Dante's death the poem was already known in selected *élite* publics throughout Italy and by 1335 the text was so popular that the Provincial Chapter of the Dominicans forbade the youngest brothers to own Dante's vernacular work, which was not to be considered on a par with patristic and exegetical writings.[16] Not surprisingly, the *Commedia* was a good business risk for publishers. The number of Quattrocento editions made it the single most printed work of the day in all of Italy.[17]

But as Elizabeth Eisenstein has pointed out, book ownership is only a very partial index of any given public's access to a text. As an indicator of access for readers lower down the economic scale, it is extremely inaccurate.[18] In the case of the *Commedia*, we know that private reading was not the only way in which the text reached audiences prior to and at the beginning of printing. In 1373 citizens of Florence petitioned the government to institute public lectures of the work, and from October of that year Giovanni Boccaccio and others after him would hold public readings of the text in various churches of the city, often in the Duomo itself to accommodate the large crowds. Cristoforo Landino undertook a series of these readings in about 1473 and the *Prolusione* he made to mark the occasion is still known.[19] These readings, usually accompanied by explicative commentaries, form an almost continuous chain of public presentations of the text across the century that separates Boccaccio from the first printings of the *Comedy*.

Yet the very popularity of Dante's work generated its own mythology for the literary élites, already by the end of the fourteenth century "popular," even vulgar, admirers of the *Comedy* had become the stuff of stereotype and legend, especially in Florence. Ribald humour directed at Dante's humble followers emerges in one of Franco Sacchetti's *Trecentonovelle*, where he recounts the following: one day Dante Alighieri was walking down the road when he came upon a man driving asses heavily laden with garbage. The donkey master was rumbling along reciting verses of the *Comedy* to himself and at the end of each verse he would shout "Get up!" When the ass-driver drew level with Dante, the poet reached over and gave him a tremendous blow on the shoulder, yelling, "I didn't put that 'Get up' there!" The donkey man replied by sticking his tongue out at Dante and making an obscene gesture at him, saying "Take that!"

To which Dante replied, "I wouldn't give you one of mine for a hundred of yours." In another story Sacchetti has weavers and blacksmiths reciting the cantos of the *Inferno* to each other as they work, with one storyteller answering another verse for verse. One of Sacchetti's stories suggests that popular veneration of Dante long preceded the attachment in the sixteenth century of the epithet "divine" to his work: upset by his losses, a gambler entered the church in Ravenna which contains Dante's tomb. Cursing the crucifix on the high altar and blaming it for not taking better care of him, the gambler moved the votive candles placed before it to the poet's tomb, telling the poet: "Take them, for you are more worthy than he!"[20]

For Boccaccio, the poet's first biographer, Dante and the *Comedy* also had a popular stamp, which could be turned to ridicule. In his *Life of Dante*, Boccaccio relates that the poet was on a walk one day, this time in the town of Verona where he was living in exile. He passed a group of women talking in a doorway, and as he went by one woman said to the others: "Do you see the man who goes down into hell and returns when he pleases, and brings back tidings of them that are below?" Another woman answered: "You must indeed say true. Do you not see how his beard is crisped, and his color darkened, by the heat and smoke down there?"[21]

Whether based in fact or not, these stories do point to an interesting problem for Landino's Florentine edition, linked to wider Quattrocento debates about the role of the vernacular in poetry and literature. As a work in the *volgare* with a long and varied presence in the "oral" realm, the *Commedia* was potentially accessible to a large range of publics; they included audiences whom the literary *élites* considered both incapable of understanding the work and unworthy of its glories. When illness forced him to suspend his lectures, even Boccaccio, Dante's great proselytiser, expressed regret at having expounded Dante to the "illiterate" and "unlearned."[22]

In the on-going dispute about the relative virtues of Latin and the vernacular for poetry and prose, the position of the *Commedia*'s merits was a constant theme.[23] Already, in their early lives of Dante, both Boccaccio and Leonardo Bruni had felt a need to justify and explain the poet's use of Tuscan. Boccaccio characterized the vulgar tongue as "foul in comparison with the lofty, masterful style used by every other poet."[24] But fifty years later Bruni's opinion shows a symptomatic change: "Whether the composition be in the vulgar or the literary style is of no importance, nor is there any difference save as between writing in Greek and writing in Latin. Every tongue has its own perfection, its own music, and its own polished and artistic utterance."[25]

By 1481 this defence of the vernacular, and specifically the Tuscan vernacular, as a proper language of poetry had been taken up by most of the Florentine humanists, including Landino and the circle around Lorenzo de' Medici.[26] One way of underlining the virtues of Tuscan was to point out the long literary tradition it brought with it and this is precisely what Medicean Florence set out to do. Although printed book production under Medici rule was very small, it followed a definite trend: almost three-quarters of Quattrocento Florentine production was in the vernacular, compared to only 13 percent in Venice[27] and the main genres, especially under the Medici, were classics in translation, religious works, and poetry. The differing proportion of vernacular to Latin works was partly due to market strategies, for while Venice had overwhelming control of the national and international marketplace, Florentine publishers circumvented Venetian competition by tailoring their production to local publics with a taste for books in their own language.[28] But it was also a definite assertion of Tuscan worth and power through affirmation of the language's important literary roots and its continuing vibrancy and preeminence.

It should be not surprising then that on August 30, 1481 the printed *Commedia* was so ceremoniously presented to the people of Florence, in a symbolic reclaiming of Dante, his poem, and the new printing technology for the Medici city. As a text crucial to a cultural programme, the 1481 Dante was a privileged and even necessary site for the articulation of these claims. Nor is it surprising that in his presentation speech Landino held up Dante as a model for the elegant use of Tuscan, praising him as the founder of a new literature in the vernacular. This was all very well and good, but it engaged an inevitable tension: how could the Tuscan poetry of Dante, and of Lorenzo de' Medici himself for that matter, be distinguished from the *volgare* used by the rag-pickers and ass-drivers of Florence? If positioned and framed correctly, the 1481 printing could present Dante as the proud Florentine forefather of an outstanding and unique Tuscan literary tradition in the vernacular, associated with and equal to the tradition of classical antiquity. But to do this, strategies needed to be developed to separate the poem from the illiterate masses with whom it had been linked both in literature and legend. This was no easy task.

In his work on the history of printing, Roger Chartier has argued that meaning in the early printed form was constructed through the interaction and combination of three elements. The first variable was the text itself, as composed by the author. The second was the physical, printed support used to convey the text, including such aspects as print

Figure 2. Inferno, Canto XII: The Punishments of the Murderers. 9.7 x 17.4 cm. (Photo: British Museum, London).

font, illustrations, disposition of text and images on the page, and inclusion of other texts to accompany the main work. The final element was the creative act of interpretation that appropriated the work in reading, so that a reader's understanding of a text was dependent on its content and presentation, but also on his or her imaginative reconstruction of the work through the deciphering of its visual and textual codes. This interpretation was obviously personal, but it is also true that any individual reader necessarily belonged to one or more "interpretive communities," that is groups of readers who shared the same reading styles and strategies of interpretation.[29]

In the Florentine attempt to reframe and reposition Dante and his work, the first pole of Chartier's tripartite model, the text of the poem, was not espeically helpful; Florence and Florentines do figure in the *Comedy*, but most notably as denizens of Hell. Perhaps it is understandable, then, that the textual purity of the poem itself seems to have been a minor concern in the 1481 edition, with little effort made to catch or edit the numerous printing errors.[30] It was the "support" of the edition, Chartier's second pole, which offered Landino and the Florentines the greatest scope for reinscribing both poet and poem. Thus, drawing on already established typographic and bibliographic conventions, and introducing their own innovations, the creators of the 1481 Dante made every attempt to direct and influence the prospective reader to a "correct" interpretation of the work; in practice, what this involved were constant references, in every aspect of the support, to the classical and literary culture of the *élite*.

The first, and perhaps most obvious step, was the inclusion of other texts "supporting" the *Comedy*, to reinforce Dante's links to both (Medici) Florence and to the canon of great literary works. As accompaniments to Dante's poem the 1481 edition contained a text by Marsilio Ficino and Cristoforo Landino's *Commento*, an entirely new exposition of the *Commedia*. Although Dante's work had in fact already generated numerous commentaries which could have been used, the Florentines felt the need for one of their own.[31] While the *Commento* cannot be treated here in depth, a few points should be mentioned briefly. First, Landino makes clear that part of his mission is to repatriate Dante, to make him once again recognisable as a Florentine; thus Landino devotes a good deal of space to the accomplishments of famous Florentines in such varied fields as commerce, painting, and law. This supporting text is also an opportunity to refute charges implicit in the poem itself; an entire section of the *Proemio al Commento Dantesco* is dedicated to, in Landino's words, "defending Dante and Florence" from those who insist on the writer's estrangement from his native city. The glory of the poet is also linked very closely to the language that he used. Landino states

Figure 3. Inferno, Canto VIII: The Styx and the Punishments of the Wrathful. 9.6 x 17.6 cm. (Photo: British Museum, London).

that he felt it necessary to liberate "*el nostro cittadino*" from the barbarisms of non-Tuscan commentators and, through his efforts, to bring Dante's exile to an end. About Tuscan, Landino adds:

> That this language surpasses all other Italian idioms is proven by the fact that no one of any genius or learning ever wrote verse or prose without striving to use the language of Florence.[32]

One of the most striking aspects of Landino's text compared to the various commentaries which preceded it is the special emphasis placed on the linguistic and poetic innovations of the *Comedy*. In this emphasis, Landino deploys a specialised vocabulary which serves to divorce the vernacular in the *Divine Comedy* from common spoken Tuscan; his work is littered with references to "repetition, dissolution, correction, and adjunction," alliteration, circumlocution, metonymy, periphrasis, and "what the Greeks call chronography." All of these figures are part of oral language, but this is a very different speech, linked to the history and rhetorical learning of the *élite*, emulated from classical sources. Through the traditional vocabulary of rhetoric and oratory, Dante's text is here interpreted according to the important stress on rhetoric and oration in Medicean humanist circles.[33] His language not longer the *volgare* of ass-drivers.

The next step for the publishers was to make this distinction visible rather than just legible. By 1481 certain definite significations were attached to specific printed styles and forms, and the *Commedia* (Fig. 1) made full use of these conventions. It was printed as a folio, the format associated with scholarly cathedra readings.[34] Both the poem and its commentary were printed in the same script; the *Commento* surrounds the poem on each page, enclosing it both textually and visually, and although printed in a smaller font, it actually takes up far more room. This layout also had scholarly overtones; classical works were almost without exception accompanied by modern commentaries, which purported to do exactly what Landino gave as one of his goals: to expose the hidden but divine meanings of the privileged writer.[35] The script used for the printing has become known as "humanist" or "roman"; for many readers it would be inexorably linked to the preferred calligraphic style of the Florentine humanists themselves, who believed that in forming their letters in this fashion they were reviving the style of the ancient classical writers they so admired. This hand was explicitly distinguished from the "gothic" script used in the printing of religious texts and from the script used by the humanists' contemporaries in their day-to-day mercantile dealings, which the humanists also called "gothic."[36] Thus for those audiences familiar with bibliographic conventions, classical and humanist associations

Figure 4. Inferno, Canto IX: The Styx and the City of Dis. 9.7 x 17.5 cm. (Photo: British Museum, London).

were stamped into the format of the book and the very letters of the poem.

But the final step was perhaps the most audacious one: the inclusion of illustrations, evocative of the luxurious, hand-done illumination of the most precious books. One illustration was planned for each of the one hundred cantos of the poem; copperplate engraving was chosen as the medium, rather than the more commonly used wood block reproduction, allowing much more elegant, finely detailed images and more nuanced effects of light and shade. This choice was a logical one in a city famed for its outstanding metal workers and goldsmiths, but it also reflects the fact that the Florentines had little experience with printing on a large scale. The images were incised, but typescript is raised in relief, so that two completely different printing techniques were required to include the vignettes: one for the positive, raised impression of the type, and another for the negative, incised copperplate images. The illustrations for the first two cantos were printed directly onto the paper, but all the others were printed separately; a blank spot had to be left for them when the text was printed, and the images pasted in later, in a time-consuming and often woefully imprecise fashion. In three cases the blank space for the image was forgotten entirely, while in others it was not large enough, so that several images, including the first (Fig. 1), had to be cut down. Only nineteen illustrations were ever produced, and most copies of the 1481 *Commedia* that have come down to us have no illustrations at all or only the images for *Inferno* I and II; according to Hind, there are only nineteen or twenty extant examples with all nineteen *Inferno* images.[37]

The nineteen illustrations are generally considered to have been executed by Baccio Baldini, a Florentine engraver, after designs by Sandro Botticelli, an inference which relies on two textual sources. The first is Vasari, who tells us that Botticelli, on his return from Rome, "commented a part of Dante, and illustrated the Inferno and printed it, and in so doing he wasted a lot of time, and by not working greatly disrupted his life."[38] The second source is the Anonimo Magliabecchiano, an anonymous Florentine codex, which states: "He (Botticelli) depicted and illustrated a Dante on parchment for Lorenzo di Piero Francesco de' Medici, which was held to be a marvellous thing."[39] Although relatively little is known about Baldini, Botticelli was certainly an obvious choice for the task of creating the new illustration programme; not only was he much patronised by the Medici circle, including Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco himself, he also, according to Vasari at least, had strong views on Dante's glory. "For a joke," Sandro once accused a friend of heresy because, he said, "although he scarcely knows how to read and write he did a commentary on Dante and took his name in vain."[40]

Figure 5. Zanobi di Domenico, Jacopo del Sellaio, and Biagio d'Antonio. The Morelli Cassone, central image, "The Gauls Defeated by Marcus Furius Camillus". 1472.

These illustrations must be considered another example of Florentine bravura, another attempt to outdistance technically all previous editions. But with their inclusion came a new complication, the necessity to position them in relation to the many visual representations of Dante and the *Comedy* which existed in the public sphere. Dante's history in Florence was not only oral and aural, it was also visual: frescoes based more or less exactly on the *Inferno* covered the walls of many churches, including the Strozzi Chapel in Santa Maria Novella.Even a more distant image like the fresco in the Pisa Camposanto was known through a variety of Florentine prints which circulated in the 1460s and 70s.[41] Obviously, if the poet and poem were to be distinguished from the culture of the masses, the illustrations could not be allowed to recall widely accessible images.

Perhaps the most important image of all was the 1465 fresco of Dante by Domenico di Michelino, which ensconced the poet in the pantheon of Florentine notables commemorated in the Duomo.[42] Its position rather high up on the north aisle, probably marks the spot below which readings from the *Commedia* were held, and in many ways this image was as clear a statement of dogma as Landino could possibly have desired. In the work Dante stands proudly before late Quattrocento Florence, which in absolute terms is the largest single element of the composition; the dome of the Cathedral, another triumph of Florentine technology, is also featured prominently. In his left hand Dante holds a book with the first verses of the *Commedia* and divine light is given off by its leaves. Around him the spaces of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise are carefully and clearly indicated with Hell to his lower right, Purgatory behind, and the abbreviated circles of Heaven above, while at the bottom of the image a Latin inscription lauds the poet and his birthplace. A large Florentine print of this image allowed its propagation far beyond city walls; in it the Latin inscription was replaced by a Tuscan phrase praising the "divine poem" of Dante, "*poeta fiorentino.*"[43] What Michelino's fresco offered was a synthetic view of the poet and the space of the *Comedy*, linked to the public space of the Cathedral and to the public readings of the work; the visual, the textual, and the oral were intertwined and represented in a single coherent image.

The 1481 image for Canto XII (Fig. 2), on the other hand, would be better characterised as a series of juxtaposed episodes within a single frame. Dante and Virgil have entered the first division of the seventh circle of Hell, where the shades of murderers are submerged in a river of blood. At the top left the poets are shown with the Minotaur; in the centre of the composition they encounter the three Centaurs Chiron, Nessus, and Pholus, while across the bottom of the frame other Centaurs shoot at the souls who try to raise themselves from the bloody stream. Finally, at the

Overall size of *cassone* 109.2 x 193 x 76.2 cm. Lee Collection, Courtauld Institute Galleries, London. (Photo: Courtauld Institute Galleries, London).

bottom right, the poets are shown at the other bank of the river. The illustration for Canto VIII (Fig. 3) presents an even more extreme case in which Dante and Virgil are seen four times: in the top centre the poets descend from the fourth circle to the Styx, filled with the shades of the wrathful; at the extreme right, they appear talking to Phlegyas; in the centre, they traverse the Styx; and at the left, try to gain entrance to the city of Dis, whose fiery tombs are just visible at the bottom of the image. These illustrations are also typically devoid of text.

There is a possibility that it might be hard to get one's bearings in these images without recourse to the written word. The space is crowded, the zig-zagging motion of the poets might be confusing, and the incident in the centre of Canto VIII, where Virgil stops Filippo Argenti from climbing into the boat, is only partly visible behind Dante at the gate. Such an effect could only be increased by the next image, relating to Canto IX (Fig. 4), where the space of the preceding image is duplicated but the gate tower's appearance has been altered slightly and the tombs are no longer visible. According to Lamberto Donati and, following him, Alessandro Parronchi, there may be a concrete reason for this potential confusion: the vignettes for the 1481 Dante may have been based on a synthetic view of the funnel of Hell created by Botticelli.[44] The diagramming of Hell was already a well-established Florentine science by 1481; Vasari relates that Brunelleschi had spent time calculating and quantifying the spaces of the *Inferno* according to Dante's description.[45] Yet although many subsequent printings of the *Divine Comedy* did contain such a diagram, the image presumed by Donati and Parronchi to serve as spatial template structuring the images was extrinsic to the 1481 edition as printed. A guide to complete visual orientation within the poem seems implicitly to have been evoked in the images but curiously suppressed in Landino's opus in favour of an exclusively verbal spatialisation: his *Commento* includes a section, closely based on the Florentine Antonio Manetti's earlier exposition, entitled *Sito, forma, e misura dello 'Nferno e statura de' Giganti e di Lucifero.*

But the matter is not that simple, for the images cannot be understood simply as spatial markers for the narrative. They also construct a specific viewing situation of their own, and one which relies on a rather specialised type of visual culture. The 1481 illustrations presented their potential viewers with something very different from a synthetic public image like Michelino's painting. They offer a journey experienced on an intimate scale, in which the viewer could linger over the details of the scene at close range, opening the possibility of multiple private mappings and reconstructions of the narrative in a manner unavailable with the Duomo fresco, necessarily viewed from a distance and below, in the uncertain light of the church.

Figure 6. Inferno, Canto XVII: The Punishments of the Usurers. 9.7 x 17.5 cm. (Photo: British Museum, London).

Manuscript images of the *Commedia* had always "reproduced" the space and time of its narrative, but the method used to do so in the 1481 illustrations was a departure from earlier Quattrocento works, even where these portrayed successive episodes within the same frame.[46] In the crowded minuteness of the description, in the layout of the scenes, in the repetition of major characters, the 1481 vignettes are more evocative of the visual codes used in another genre associated with the Florentine *élites*: the painted scenes on domestic furnishings. The 1472 Morelli Cassone (Fig. 5) is in many ways quite typical of this genre; created for a wedding, it is painted with personifications of Virtues and scenes of Roman history drawn from classical sources. The central scene, "The Gauls defeated by Marcus Furius Camillus," is taken from Livy, Book V, XLIX, which describes how Furius Camillus, elected dictator of the besieged city, routs the Gauls and liberates Rome, returning in triumph.[47] These images relied on a knowledge of their normally classical sources, but also on the ability to read very specific visual codes: the viewer could reconstruct the disjointed narrative of the image through the identification of significant juxtaposed episodes, presented across the detailed space of the horizontal plane: The *Odyssey*, for example, became a series of its protagonist's encounters, where actions and reactions were represented through familiar and restricted gestures and types. Furthermore, the rather crowded detail of these images offered another pleasure to their viewers, that of an opportunity for elegant verbal descriptions based on ancient models. For Landino and his learned circle, who sought every occasion to emulate classical rhetorical models, this visual style allowed the composition of virtuoso examples of ekphrasis, which Grant F. Scott has called "not only a form of mimesis, but a cunning attempt to transform and master the image by inscribing it."[48] The virtues of antique heroes could be recalled and discussed, while a general literary impression could be created through the cumulative effect of many single evocative details.[49] The importance of these rhetorical possibilities for Landino and his compatriots should not be underestimated; even a painter like Apollonio di Giovanni, whose large workshop churned out one furniture painting after another, was lauded as a Tuscan Apelles by the humanist Ugolino Verino.[50]

This is not to suggest that the Dante illustrations were based on furniture painting, or that readers associated them with household decoration; clearly the two genres were quite distinct and unlikely to be conflated in any viewer's mind. Rather, what is important is that the visual conventions used in both were a part of the everyday visual culture of the *élite* in Medici Florence; this "interpretive community," when faced with the 1481 illustrations, could mobilise the visual codes which underpinned the images. They were dis-

Figure 7. Inferno, Canto XVIII: The Malebolge with the Panderers and the Flatterers. 9.6 x 17.6 cm. (Photo: British Museum, London).

posed to read the scenes as a series of encounters between the poets and Hell's inhabitants, juxtaposed in a layered space and would easily track Dante and Virgil's three apearances in Canto XII not only by the text itself but by such visual clues as the half-turn that they execute in their progress through the narrative. That the poets are also moving through the continuous space of the *Inferno* narrative would be indicated as well: the rocks visible at the top of the composition are included in the bottom of the previous image, while the thorns at the bottom of Canto XII reappear in the illustration for Canto XIII, the thorny wood of the Suicides. The crowded scenes of Canto VIII and IX contain similar clues to create a passage through space and time; the fact that Virgil repelling Argenti is behind the figure of Dante marks it as an earlier episode. In representing the poets' journey into Hell the images even seem to figure the reader's creative and private journey into the text. The spatial construction varies within and throughout the nineteen individual scenes, always to allow the viewer more complete and privileged access. In most illustrations the ground has been tilted upward, exposing more of the scenic space to the viewer's gaze, and in some illustrations the spaces of three and even four different cantos are laid in parallel strata from the top to the bottom of the image. Yet the horizon line seems to creep higher and higher as the poets, and the reader, move deeper into the abyss. By Canto XVII (Fig. 6) in which usurers are punished, the fall of the Phlegethon cuts steeply across the space and Geryon, whose head had appeared at the bottom of the abyss in Canto XVI, now descends through the bottom of the illustration and across the pages of the typeface, into the Eighth Circle itself, where in *Canto* XVIII (Fig. 7) he reappears. It would seem that the 1481 representations were intended to privilege some types of viewers over others, curtailing the access of different publics to the mysteries of the text.

Where then does this leave us? Certainly the Florentine edition was a concerted effort to reclaim both Dante and the new printing technology for Florence. An attempt was made in the visual and textual presentation of Dante's text to link this "modern" Tuscan work to the classics of antiquity and to the learning of the *élite*, and no doubt by extension, Medici Florence with the golden flowering of Greece and Rome. But the straight-forward appropriation of the *Commedia* as one element of a broaderr Tuscan cultural programme was complicated in several ways. Because of its real or perceived "popular" status, the text and its images needed to be situated carefully vis-à-vis a broad spectrum of extant visual, textual, and literary portrayals and made esoteric relative to a "vulgar" audience that Landino and his adherents did not want associated with their newly canonized vernacular classic. The commentary, the image, the printed support, and even the festive, civic presentation of

the book worked to tie the poet and poem to the literate and *élite* culture of Medicean Florence, while the intimacy and detail of the nineteen illustrations played upon cultivated qualities of individual knowledge, structured by very specific visual codes of a private reading experience. The various textual and visual elements of the "support" of the work thus did not function in a monolithic fashion, but rather as complementary facets of a production presented as simultaneously learned and private rather than popular, and vernacular and classical rather than vulgar.

That the Florentines were at least partially successful in their strategies is made clear by later editions of the work. All subsequent printings of the *Divine Comedy* produced in Italy in the fifteenth century reprinted Landino's commentary, while the 1487 Brescia edition, and the Venetian editions of March 1491, November 1491, 1493, and 1497 all included xylographed vignettes, the first nineteen based quite clearly on the Florentine endeavour.[51] But before we assume that readers passively consumed Landino's reconstructed literary classic, it is important to remember the idiosyncratic nature of Chartier's third pole, the act of interpretation that appropriates the text. While every effort was taken to prescribe the possible readings of the 1481 edition, it is still true that even documents as programmatic as Landino's *Commento* and the 1481 *Commedia* could be apprehended by different groups of readers in idiosyncratic ways.

For a reader familiar with the *Commedia* and comfortable with its visual codes, the illustrations could act as mnemonic devices, mixing into the act of reading a more or less active recollection of other encounters with the text. For Landino and others like him it may even be that this too was a mirroring of the act of reading a classical author, in which the reader would approach the text with its reputation and content always already fixed in mind. But it is also possible that the images with their representation of successive episodes, repetition of spatial clues and major figures may have guided a reader familiar with Dante's text but not necessarily fluently literate to situate himself or herself from one passage to the next in the narrative. From one image to the next, from one Geryon to the next, for example, or from one Dis to the next, a discontinuous but still decipherable visual bridge was created, interrupting and disrupting the flow of "humanist" type, text and commentary across the page. In encouraging a private experience of reading and deciphering, the publishers of the 1481 Dante offered the viewer/reader the possibility and pleasure of multiple movements in the text; the images could serve both as referents to Dante's poem, and as access points for different mappings of space and time within and across the narrative of the *Commedia*. For the reader/viewer of the 1481 edition, several disjointed moments came together: the space and time of Dante's narrative of eternity experienced in 1300; the structuring paradigm of Landino's *Commento*, linked very explicitly to 1481 and a specific moment in Medicean and Florentine history; and the "eruption" and "disruption" of the space and time of actual reading and viewing, with its possibilities for repetition and movement separate from the determining codes of the poetic narrative.[52]

It is very difficult to reconstruct the access of different publics to the work, or to trace their response. But it is worth recollecting that one reader of Landino's version of Dante was Michelangelo, another would-be Tuscan poet, who in 1519 signed a petition to Pope Leo X to have Dante's remains repatriated to Florence and offered to sculpt the tomb himself.[53] This same version was also known to Menocchio, the miller of Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms*, who took Dante and Landino's words on the creation of human beings as one more component of his own heretical cosmology, in which human beings were created, like worms from cheese, to replace the fallen angels.[54]

* This article is the result of a seminar held by Dr. Rose Marie San Juan at the University of British Columbia in 1992. I would like to thank all of the participants in that seminar, especially Bill Wood, as well as Frances Thomas of the University of Leeds.

1 The best discussions of this edition are found in Lamberto Donati, *Botticelli e le prime illustrazioni della Divina Commedia* (Florence, 1962); A. M. Hind, *Early Italian Engraving: a Critical Catalogue* (London, 1938-48), III, 99-116; and Alessandro Parronchi, *Botticelli fra Dante e Petrarca* (Florence, 1985). For the history of fifteenth-century *incunabulae*, see *Dante Alighieri MCCLXV - MCMLXV* (Rome, 1965); *Pagine di Dante: Le edizioni della Divina Commedia dal torchio al computer* (Perugia, 1989); and *La Raccolta Dantesca della Biblioteca Evan Mackenzie con la cronologia delle edizioni della Divina Commedia* (Genoa, 1923).

2 Donati, *Botticelli e le prime illustrazioni*, 89. On Niccolo Tedesco, also known as Niccolò della Magna, see Roberto Ridolfi, *La Stampa in Firenze nel secolo XV* (Florence, 1958), 49-62.

3 *Enciclopedia Dantesca* (Rome, 1971), III, 566-68.

4 Yvonne Batard, *Les dessins de Sandro Botticelli pour la Divine Comédie* (Paris, 1952), 6.

5 Nicolai Rubenstein, *The Government of Florence under the Medici* (1434 to 1494) (Oxford, 1966), 174-228.

6 Christopher Hibbert, *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall.* (New York, 1975), 152-160.

7 Francesco di Pretoro, *La Divina Commedia nelle sue vicende attraverso i secoli* (Florence, 1965), 35.

8 "Your poet, first splendour of the Florentine name." Cristoforo Landino, "Orazione di Messere Cristoforo Landino fiorentino

avuta all'illustrissima signoria fiorentina quando presentò el comento suo di Dante" in *Scritti critici e teorici*, Roberto Cardini ed. (Rome, 1974), I, 173.

9 Leonardas Vytautas Gerulaitis, *Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth-Century Venice* (Chicago and London, 1976), 128-129.

10 Hans Lulfing, "Libro e classi sociali nei secoli XIV e XV," *Libri e lettori nel medioevo: Guida storica e critica*, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo (Rome and Bari, 1977), 212-213; Gerulaitis, *Printing*, 129.

11 Ridolfi, *Stampa in Firenze*, 16-22.

12 There have been many studies of Medici patronage, which was extensive and all-pervasive: a contemporary said of Lorenzo's grandfather Cosimo that "he had emblazoned even the monks' privies with his balls" (i.e. the Medici *palle*). For an introduction see André Chastel, *Art et humanisme à Florence au temps de Laurent le Magnifique* (Paris, 1961); Cristina Acidini Luchinat, ed., *Renaissance Florence: The Age of Lorenzo de' Medici 1449-1492* (Milan and London, 1993); or Martin Wackernagel, *The World of the Florentine Renaissance Artist: Projects and Patrons, Workshops and Art Market*, Alison Luchs, trans. (Princeton, 1981), 251-264.

13 *Pagine di Dante*, 51.

14 *Pagine di Dante*, 52-53.

15 Gianfranco Folena, "La tradizione delle opere di Dante Alighieri," *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi Danteschi* (20-27 aprile, 1965) (Florence, 1965), 3. Obviously manuscript ownership did not remain restricted to a small *élite*: it has been calculated that a typical manuscript of the Quattrocento, by the time it was completely finished and bound, cost between seven and ten ducats, the equivalent of the monthly pay of a middle-level official at the royal court of Naples. [Carl Buhler, "Scribi e manoscrittti nel Quattrocento europeo" *Libri, scrittura e pubblico nel Rinascimento: Guida storica e critica*, ed. Armando Petrucci (Rome and Bari, 1979), 41.]

16 Folena, "Tradizione," 4.

17 Gerulaitis, *Printing*, 117.

18 Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1983), 31.

19 Pretoro, *La Divina Commedia nelle sue vicende*, 40; "Prolusione Dantesca (Orazione fatta per Messer Cristoforo Landino quando cominciò a leggere la *Commedia* di Dante in istudio)" in *Scritti critici e teorici*, I, 41-55.

20 Franco Sacchetti, *Il Trecentonovelle*, ed. Viacenzo Pernicone (Florence, 1946). The *novelle* featuring Dante are VIII, CXIV, CXV, and CXXI.

21 Giovanni Boccaccio, "The Life of Dante"in *The Earliest Lives of Dante*, James Robinson Smith trans. (New York, 1963), 43.

22 Michael Caesar, ed., *Dante: the Critical Heritage 1314(?)-1870* (London and New York 1989), 12.

23 For the reputation of the *Commedia* and the poet, and for a selection of early critical reactions, see Caesar, *Dante*.

24 Boccaccio, "Life of Dante," 77.

25 Lionardo Bruni Aretino, "Life of Dante" in *The Earliest Lives of Dante*, 92-93.

26 The complicated history of Trecento and Quattrocento literary debates on the vernacular can only be touched upon briefly here, but see for example Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (Princeton, 1955), I, 297-312; Carlo Dionisotti, *Gli Umanisti e il volgare fra Quattro e Cinquecento* (Florence, 1968); and Lauro Martines, *Social World of the Florentine Humanists 1390-1460* (Princeton, 1963). A discussion of Landino's position is found in Manfred Lentzen, "Le Lodi di Firenze di Cristoforo Landino," *Romanische Forschungen* XCVII (1985), 36-46; and in Mario Santoro, "Cristoforo Landino e il volgare," *Giornale Storico della letteratura italiana* CXXXI (1954), 501-547.

27 Gerulaitis, *Printing*, 130-33.

28 Gerulaitis, *Printing*, 130-33.

29 Roger Chartier, "Texts, Printing, Readings" in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley, 1989), 154-175. See also the essays in *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, Lydia G. Cochrane trans. (Princeton, 1987), and *Les usages de l'imprimé (XVe-XIXe siècle)*, Roger Chartier ed. (Paris, 1987).

30 Antonio Angelini, *Due studi danteschi: le edizioni quattrocentesche della Divina Commedia* (Aquila, 1960), 17.

31 For recent studies of the work, see Paolo Procaccioli, *Filologia ed esegesi dantesca nel Quattrocento: L'Inferno' nel 'Commento sopra la Comedia' di Cristoforo Landino* (Florence, 1989); Deborah Parker, *Commentary and Ideology: Dante in the Renaissance* (Durham and London, 1993).

32 This whole passage is quite revealing: "*avere liberato el nostro cittadino dalla barbarie di molti esterni idiomi ne' quali da' comentatori era stato corrotto ed al presente così puro e semplice è paruto mio officio apresentarlo a voi, illustrissimi Signor nostri, acciò che per le mani di quel magistrato el quale è sommo nella fiorentina republica sia dopo lungo essilio restituito nella sua patria e riconosciuto né romagnuolo essere né lombardo né degli idiomi di quegli che l'hanno comentato, ma mero fiorentino. La quale lingua quanto tutte l'altre italiche avanzi manifesto testimonio né sia che nessuno nel quale apparisca o ingegno o dottrina né versi scrisse mai né prosa che non si sforzassi usare el fiorentino idioma.*" Landino, *Scritti critici e teorici*, I, 102.

33 For the importance of oration and eloquence for the humanists, see Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition 1350-1450* (Oxford 1971, 1991), 1-7; and Andrea di Tommaso, "Oral Tradition, Performance, and Interpretation in Renaissance Italy," in *Performance of Literature in Historical Perspectives*, David W. Thompson et al. eds. (Lanham, New York and London, 1983), 191-210, and especially 203-206.

34 Armando Petrucci, "Alle origine del libro moderno: libri da banco, libri da bisaccia, libri da mano," *Libri, scrittura e pubblico nel Rinascimento: Guida storica e critica*, Armando Petrucci ed. (Rome, 1979), 140-146.

35 Carlo Dionisotti, "Dante nel Quattrocento," *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi Danteschi*, I, 361-365.

36 Ernst Philip Goldschmidt, "Il Libro umanistico dall'Italia all'Europa," *Libri, scrittura e pubblico nel Rinascimento: Guida storica e critica*, 101-102. The humanists were mistaken about the antique sources of their script: what they actually copied was a hand based on the bureaucrats and scribes of the Carolingian period.

37 A.M. Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*, II, 99-116; see also Herbert P. Horne, *Alessandro Filipepi, Commonly Called Sandro Botticelli: Painter of Florence* (London, 1908, [reprint Florence, 1986]), 189-205.

38 Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, ed. Rosana Bettarini (Florence, 1971), III, 516-517.

39 Anonimo fiorentino, *Codice Magliabecchiano*, C. Frey ed. (Berlin, 1892) 105; quoted in Alessandro Parronchi, *Botticelli fra Dante e Petrarca* (Florence 1985), 14. (My translation). Lamberto Donati, *Botticelli e le prime illustrazioni*, 11 and 92, argues that the two references are actually for two different undertakings, Vasari referring to a complete set of drawings and a commentary, now lost, and the Anonimo to a private edition created for the same patron, of which the illustrations in Berlin and the Vatican remain. The 1481 engraved illustrations would be based on yet another set of Dante illustrations by Botticelli, executed before he left for Rome in 1481. Since eight of the first nineteen *Inferno* drawings are missing, however, it is difficult to reconstruct their links. Donati's conclusions are accepted by Parronchi, *Botticelli fra Dante e Petrarca*, 14, who adds to the potential confusion by arguing that the Berlin drawings are the record of a decoration programme for the Florentine Duomo which was never carried out. For the drawings, see Kenneth Clark, *The Drawings by Sandro Botticelli for Dante's Divine Comedy* (London, 1976); and Peter Dreyer, *Dantes Divina Commedia mit den Illustrationen von Sandro Botticelli* (Zurich, 1986).

40 Vasari, *Le Vite*, III, 517.

41 For these images see Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*, II, 49-50.

42 This work is illustrated and discussed in Rudolf Altrocchi, "Michelino's Dante," *Speculum*, VI (1931), 15-59.

43 On the print see Altrocchi, "Michelino's Dante," 22-51, and Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*, II, 50.

44 Donati, *Botticelli e le prime illustrazioni*, 9-37; 92; Parronchi, *Botticelli fra Dante e Petrarca*, 14.

45 Vasari, *Le Vite*, III, 144.

46 Horne, *Sandro Botticelli*, 191-2; cf. the illustrations in Peter Brieger, Millard Meiss, and Charles S. Singleton, *Illuminated Manuscripts of the Divine Comedy* (Princeton, 1969).

47 *Livy in Fourteen Volumes*, ed. B.O. Foster (London and Cambridge 1967), III: Books V, VI, and VII, 164-170; the chest is described in *The Lee Collection - Courtauld Institute of Art* (London, 1958), 28. For strategies of representations and readings involved in such works, see Rose Marie San Juan, "Mythology, Women and Renaissance Private Life: the Myth of Eurydice in Italian Furniture Painting," *Art History* 15/2 (June 1992), 127-145 and Ellen Callmann, *Apollonio di Giovanni* (Oxford, 1974), with many illustrations.

48 Grant F. Scott, "The Rhetoric of Dilation: Ekphrasis and Ideology," *Word and Image* 7/4 (October-December 1991), 302.

49 On the development and importance of *ekphrasis* for the humanist *élites*, Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, 78-96; for the tradition they inherited, Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, 1953), especially 193-202.

50 E.H. Gombrich, *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (London, 1966), 11-28; Callmann, *Apollonio di Giovanni*, 11.

51 Donati, *Il Botticelli e le prime illustrazioni*, argues that the similarity of these illustrations is proof that one hundred designs were created for the 1481 edition, even if only nineteen were executed. The later images would then be copies based on plates after Botticelli in circulation in the years immediately following the 1481 edition.

52 I am borrowing the terms "eruption" and "disruption" from Laura Mulvey's article "Changes: Thoughts on Myth, Narrative and Historical Experience," in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1989), 159-176; see especially the discussions of narrative forms and consequences, 168-163.

53 Caesar, *Dante*, 29, nt.53.

54 Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, John and Anne Tedeschi trans. (New York, 1982), 57.