

lese-Russo), and discussing methods for investigating and representing the genesis of specific kinds of texts (Albonico, Tomasi, Francioni), as well as by editing texts for the first time (Zanardo, Perdichizzi).

With a topic of such richness it is inevitable that some areas are left aside. It might have been interesting, for example, to see more discussion of how the *fonction auteur* in Petrarch and Boccaccio differs from the self-representation of the author found in the earlier lyric tradition, or of Dante Isella's fundamental contribution to the evolution of the *critica delle varianti* into *filologia d'autore* through the development of a method to synoptically represent authorial variants. Considering, however, how much the volume intertwines concepts and methods from the Italian scholarly tradition with those of *critique génétique* (cf. Raboni, p. 107; Francioni, p. 122), it would also have been appropriate to discuss the possibility of finding a theoretical common ground between *filologia d'autore* and *critique génétique*, as this much-needed academic dialogue, to which this issue gives a fundamental contribution, still lacks a proper theoretical basis.

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BELLOMO, Saverio and Stefano CARRAI, eds. 2019. Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio*. Torino: Einaudi. ISBN 9788806189617. Pp. 602. €60,00.

After his edition of Dante's *Inferno*, published in 2013, we now have Saverio Bellomo's commentary of *Purgatorio*, the second canticle of Dante Alighieri's *Commedia*. The notable scholar sadly passed away in 2018, leav-

ing an almost complete commentary, which his friend and distinguished Italianist Stefano Carrai brought to a conclusion, addressing the remaining canti xxix, xxxii, and xxxiii, supplying an introduction, and revising the entire commentary. In this work, Carrai was able to turn for expert assistance to Leonardo Bellomo, Luca Lombardo (who edited the final indices), and Cristiano Lorenzi.

In his preface to the previous volume of commentary for the *Inferno*, Bellomo declared two main purposes for his work: to address a specific audience and to say something new in the face of a poem that boasts an illustrious tradition of more than a hundred commentaries. Bellomo's declared audience consists of readers who wish to reread the *Commedia* and who have some literary knowledge, without however an expert's knowledge of Dante. In addition to this specific yet broad target, Bellomo and Carrai's commentary offers a new point of reference for Dante scholars and, at the same time, a suitable guide for university students. This double task of saying something new and of addressing non-specialized readers is the greatest challenge of any Dante commentary. But the *Purgatorio* commentary manages to achieve it by virtue of a calibrated balance of content, as well as of structural and stylistic choices. Bellomo himself recognized its originality more in the form of its exposition than in its contents, in a critical language that fosters new perspectives on Dante's poem. This commentary constitutes a new model that has already inspired commentators of other authors: while avoiding rhetorical heaviness and repetition, it remains rigorous and original, turning to an elegant but clear style.

The edited text upon which Bellomo turns his critical attention is the national edition formulated by Giorgio Petrocchi over fifty years ago (*La "Commedia" secondo l'antica vulgata*, 1966–1967). Some variants preferred by more recent scholarly editors such as Antonio Lanza, Federico Sanguineti, and Giorgio Inglese, are discussed in the commentary, but the Bellomo–Carrai commentaries do not intend to provide a new critical edition. In fact, Bellomo notes in his preface that he refuses to introduce some variants within the text, as other commentators do, choosing instead to discuss them in the notes because he believes that these editorial choices, especially for a text with such a complex textual tradition, should only be included in a comprehensive editorial program.

Carrai's introduction to *Purgatorio* is divided into six sections that focus on different aspects of the canticle: 1) meaning and structure of Purgatory; 2) travel: body, time, and hope; 3) the Orphic model and Beatrice; 4) liturgy and prophecy; 5) art; and 6) poetry. Carrai's introduction is both concise, examining almost all the fundamental elements necessary to

reread the second realm of Dante's afterlife, and pointed, offering interesting specific angles for interpretation. For example, Carrai's own work on the presence of the myth of Orpheus in Dante's works enriches the focus on the importance of this model behind Dante's ascent up the mountain to Beatrice and to salvation. Like Ulysses, Orpheus is an anti-model assumed by Dante, the Christianized Orpheus. For each topic, a useful selection of critical references is discussed.

Bellomo's selection of critical materials from the vast bibliography on Dante gives the volume a utility for readers who wish to pursue further interpretative leads. All such useful sources are listed after the introduction to each canticle.

The commentary has a tripartite structure. Each canto is preceded by a brief summary to indicate the canto's setting, main themes, and characters. A second introductory section presents the main characters in greater detail, providing their biographical details, describing their vices and afterlife conditions, and offering historical context. The footnotes, which constitute the traditional line-by-line commentary, are mainly devoted to paraphrases of the text, the literal explanation of the most complex passages, intertextual references, and, where necessary, editorial issues. This second layer of commentary avoids more complex interpretations and focuses on the readability of the poem.

Bellomo and Carrai's critical interpretation of the canto follows in the form of a concluding note that explores the overall meaning of the canto in relation to the whole poem, its narrative structure, its formal, prosodic, and stylistic features, and its intertextual elements, in dialogue with other critical interpretations. Bellomo notes that the concentration of all the technical observations in the final note leaves the reader free to skip them altogether if the reader wishes. These brief, concluding essays for each canto are where we find the balanced and thoughtful observations of both commentators.

Throughout the commentary great attention has been paid by Bellomo and Carrai to individual sources and first commentaries of the *Commedia* dating back to the fourteenth century, one of Bellomo's main areas of expertise. This focus brings us closer to Dante and his contemporary audience. Especially in the brief, contextualizing introductions to the canti, we are introduced to Dante's characters through ancient sources and Dante's contemporaries. For *Purgatorio* I, the commentators provide Lucan's presentation of Cato in the *Pharsalia*. In the case of *Purgatorio* XI, we learn of Provenzano Salvani's story (ca. 1220–1269) through the commentary known as the "Ottimo" (1333–1338) ("dicesi, che messer Provenz-

ano fece porre uno desco, susovi uno tappeto, nel campo di Siena [. . .]”) and through Andrea Dei’s *Cronica sanese*. Taking a page from the critical method and Dante commentary of Natalino Sapegno, the footnotes’ literal interpretation often relies, like Sapegno’s, on early commentators as well, together with Dante’s sources, briefly referenced in parentheses: “*I mi sobbarco*: ‘subcingo, idest erigo pannos ad cincturam, ut sim expeditior ad aliquid agendum’ (Benvenuto)” (*Purg.*, vi.135). The commentators turn especially to early sources and commentaries for complex interpretations, to which they again turn in their concluding notes at the end of the canti. One example will have to suffice. For the allegorical interpretation of Dante’s second dream in *Purgatorio* XIX, Bellomo argues for a more literal reading preferred by ancient commentators since Dante intended his text to be understood by readers, “sarà da privilegiare, tra le varie possibili, l’interpretazione *facilior* e soprattutto quella più vicina al sentire dei lettori antichi” (327).

The layers in the commentary have the merit of allowing a differentiated reading experience not only for different readers but also for the same reader in different moments — that is, the re-reader, who may have varying needs in returning to the text. All readers can very easily find what they need here without having to browse through ponderous footnotes. And those who need technical information will find it quickly in concise summaries.

Bellomo and Carrai’s commentary to *Purgatorio* provides us with a new and useful reference and tool for our consideration of Dante’s work. This commentary meets the challenge of proposing new insights to a text about which, as Bellomo noted in the preface to his *Inferno*, everything and its opposite has already been said.

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